

Mormons, the rhetorical space created by the language of Joseph Smith's revelations, and the way that sources closest to the Book of Mormon translation are used or ignored by both believing and non-believing historians.

—Josh E. Probert

*Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment*, edited by George B. Handley, Terry B. Ball, and Steven L. Peck (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006)

Latter-day Saints are becoming increasingly environmentally sensitive. LDS scripture and modern prophetic utterance is full of counsel regarding their responsibility to the environment. Bringing together seasoned experts in fields from public management to botany, *Stewardship and the Creation* gives compelling interpretations to that surprisingly ubiquitous prophetic counsel.

In the past century, there has been little practical consensus among Latter-day Saints with regard to an environmental ethic, but in reading the various viewpoints that *Stewardship and the Creation* has to offer, a more unified consensus begins to emerge, one based on the principle of subduing the earth so that it brings forth more abundantly. Several articles address the significance of technology, ingenuity, and human energy as resources that can be employed to bring forth bounteous life of all kinds on the earth. Respect for the earth isn't so much about conserving God's creations as it is in multiplying his creations. Though preserving natural habitats may be a great work, actively managing habitats is a greater, even sacred, work. The latter work has ties back to Adam, who, as a steward with dominion over all things, actively tended the Garden of Eden and then

later subdued the earth in order to bring forth plant, animal, and human life more abundantly. Godliness has deep ontological meaning for Latter-day Saints, and an environmental tradition that places Latter-day Saints in the position of co-creators with God in bringing forth life more abundantly has great potential to resonate with them. *Stewardship and the Creation* successfully resonates in this way.

Of particular interest is the book's dialogue concerning LDS eschatology: If God rarely does things that we can do for ourselves, why would we not be involved in returning earth to its paradisiacal, edenic state at the Second Coming of Christ? And, as that great day of regeneration approaches, what are we as Saints doing, environmentally speaking, to prepare for it?

A few of the articles seemed too forceful in attempting to reconcile the current political environmental movement with LDS religious principles. Notwithstanding this, those Latter-day Saints who read the book and take their stewardship over the earth seriously will find themselves vastly more educated and equipped to inspire others in why and how we should care for the environment.

—James T. Summerhays