

CARING FOR CREATION AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CHECKLIST FOR SEMINARIES

This checklist is designed to encourage seminaries to do a complete inventory of environmental practices, to determine new arenas for development, and to identify areas where a seminary may desire more information and resources.

Caring for God's creation in the face of the environmental crisis is an integral part of every dimension of the life of a religious community. Just as we are called to love God and to love one another as humans, so also we have a mandate from God and a covenantal relationship with God to care for the earth.

Love for one another and care for the earth are not in conflict with each other. All the critical problems of the environment—from global warming to the presence of toxic waste, from clean air and water to issues of bio-diversity—have implications for issues of human justice. As religious communities, seminaries have a significant opportunity to express their convictions and bear a witness to the world by manifesting a wholistic care for creation.

We have developed this checklist in an effort to see in what ways seminaries are addressing environmental issues. The checklist will give you an opportunity to reflect on the ways your seminary already expresses a commitment to care for creation. It will also give you an opportunity to identify new ways to establish and expand your environmental justice ministry.

You may use this checklist for your own internal purposes. You may also want to share what you are doing with the other seminaries. If so, please send a copy of the results to Web of Creation 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615. We will lift out those items you are currently practicing and make them available on the website. Your willingness to make this material available will assist our efforts to provide an eco-justice network among seminaries for the purpose of mutual encouragement and resource-sharing. Thank you.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- (1) Put a check next to those items you are already doing.
- (2) Immediately below the items you have checked, give a brief explanation of those activities. If accompanying materials are available, such as worship resources, course syllabi, or faculty publication information, we would be grateful to receive these.
- (3) Place an X next to an item if you wish to learn more about resources available to address this issue in your seminary.

I. Worship related to care for the earth

_____ Confessions, prayers, litanies, thanksgiving and praise, and incorporated into regular chapel services.

_____ Special liturgies on days of the church year, such as the Greening of the Cross Service in Lent.

_____ Celebrate special days or rites for the earth, such as a blessing of the animals, planting of trees, or a celebration of the harvest.

_____ Celebrate Earth Day/ Earth Week.

_____ Collect and make worship resources available for seminarians and congregations

_____ Other.

II. Curriculum designed to prepare students for environmental ministry

_____ Incorporated as part of regular courses across the curriculum. (please specify)

_____ Entire courses devoted to care for creation in theology, history, scripture, pastoral care, liturgy, and so on (Please specify).

_____ An environmental ministry major, minor, or emphasis in the curriculum.

_____ Field education opportunities to practice environmental ministry, such as within internships, with agencies, or at course field placements.

_____ Environmental justice resources in library (periodicals, devotional materials, information about the ecological state of the world, eco-theology, environmental ethics, etc.).

_____ Available workshops, lectures, conferences, retreats, and so on, on the environment.

_____ Other.

III. Training for environmental ministry in seminary life.

_____ Faculty development related to eco-justice issues.

_____ Maintenance staff and property committee training.

_____ Other groups or committees of the seminary such as the Board of Trustees or the development staff.

_____ Opportunities for students to work in environmental projects during time at seminary

IV. Organizational structure for caring for creation

_____ Environmental concerns committee of the seminary

_____ Part of job description for employees and/or committees.

_____ Part of mission statement.

_____ Opportunities for gifts and memorials for care of the earth.

_____ Career placement opportunities for seminarians wishing to pursue a career focused on environmental justice ministry.

_____ Other

V. Caring for creation in practices related to building and grounds

_____ Reducing air pollution (fuel efficiency, alternative fuel use, renewable

energy, among others).

_____ Building construction and renovation using federal “green building” guidelines.

_____ Low impact energy sources for heating and cooling (wind, solar).

_____ Energy conservation practices for users.

_____ Paper conservation policies (use of post consumer waste paper, paper use guidelines, etc.).

_____ Food purchases: local/bio-regional and organic.

_____ Waste reduction practices.

_____ Recycling of solid waste (paper, plastic, metal, etc.).

_____ Transportation management (carpooling, etc.).

_____ Water conservation practices (efficient faucet heads, low impact toilets, water use guidelines, etc.).

_____ Avoidance of herbicides and pesticides.

_____ Eliminate use of toxic materials in paints, cleaning materials, etc..

_____ Sustainable landscaping.

_____ Use of land for community gardening, nature sanctuary, orchard, rooftop

gardening, and so on.

_____ Other

VI. Commitment of members to care for creation at home and work

_____ Members of the seminary community devoted to living a lifestyle that is environmentally sensitive in their personal living space.

_____ Means to foster ecologically sensitive lifestyle at home and work for spouses and families of seminary students, staff, and faculty.

_____ Other.

VII. Public Ministry for environmental justice

_____ Make known publicly your commitment to care for the earth.

_____ Addressing local environmental justice issue (toxic waste, polluted stream, factory air pollution, lead abatement, etc.).

_____ Joining with other seminaries/ agencies to carry out seminary functions related to care for creation or to address local environmental issues.

_____ Joining with other seminaries for low prices and contractors discounts on energy projects.

_____ Sponsor environmental justice workshops for area seminaries, parishes, and the public.

_____ Advocate for regional or national legislation and policies on eco-justice issues (awareness, letter writing, petitions, etc.).

_____ Advocate for national policies of cooperation with global accords on eco-justice issues (awareness, letter writing, petitions, etc.)

_____ Other.

Please use the space below to comment on any aspect of this survey and to provide any additional information about your seminary or context that would help us understand your response to this survey.

Name of seminary:

Denomination/ religion:

Street address:

Telephone:

E-mail address:

Website address of your seminary:

Name, address, phone, and e-mail of contact person:

Name, address, phone, and e-mail of person filling out this survey:

Thank you for your willingness to fill out this checklist. If your participation in this survey leads you to want to learn more about opportunities for you and your seminary to express greater care for creation, we urge you to consult other areas of our website.

The Web of Creation is eager to provide ideas and resources that might better enable seminaries to express their commitment to care for creation. Throughout this site, you will find resources for worship, education, building and grounds, personal lifestyle, public ministry, and links to many other helpful sites.

If you contact us at the address below, we will do our best to address your particular situation and to meet the particular needs and desires you have identified on this form.

If you are willing to share this information with other seminaries in order to foster networking and the sharing of ideas and resources, please send it to:

Mail Web of Creation (Seminary Project)
 1100 East 55th Street
 Chicago, IL 60615

e-mail <webofcreation@lstc.edu>

Phone (773-256-0774)

website www.webofcreation.org

The Web of Creation is an environmental website providing eco-justice, interfaith resources for faith-based communities. The Web of Creation (www.webofcreation.org) is a non-profit organization supported by the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, and Theological Education to Meet the Environmental Challenge. The website office is located at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and is staffed by students from several Chicago seminaries.