

Paul Martens*Religion and Environmental Ethics in North America: A Report*
(Religion / Arts and Sciences)

In recent years, care for the environment has become a mainstream concern in North American society. In line with this generally expressed concern, Christians of nearly all denominations have begun to articulate care for the environment in their own ways. The research proposed in this project attempts to examine to what extent self-identified Christian groups, organizations, and denominations express this concern for the environment practically. In essence, this project seeks to get behind the rhetoric and examine the sociological expression of Christian concern for the environment in North America.

Methodologically, the research analyzes three types of Christian groups in North America and asks two types of questions. The three types of groups under consideration are: (a) Christian non-denominational organizations devoted specifically to environmental concerns (i.e. Restoring Eden); (b) Christian denominational organizations (i.e. United Church of Christ); and (c) other Christian organizations and churches not officially affiliated with a denomination that organize environmentally concerned programs among others. The two types of questions which are addressed to all three groups through a survey and follow-up conversations assess: (a) programming (i.e. particular programs, participation level, budget allocation, etc); and (b) rationale (i.e. mission statements, long-term goals, etc).

The results of this research will provide one comprehensive snap-shot of the current state of Christian care for the environment in North America, allowing further reflection and comment not only concerning the particular programs and rationales but also concerning the convergence of action and rationale. It is also our intention to carry out this research again five years from now in precisely the same manner, thereby building on the results in order to initiate a longitudinal survey. An initial summary of these results will be prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and a more expansive summary will be published in *Environmental Ethics*.