ForeWord Reviews

NATURE

Walking Gently on the Earth: Making Faithful Choices about Food, Energy, Shelter, and More

Lisa Graham McMinn
Megan Anna Neff
Kirsten McCammon, illustrator
InterVarsity Press
978-0-8308-3299-6
(Sep 28, 2010)

Walking Gently on the Earth is a self- proclaimed primer for understanding how to "walk gently" in God's creation by balancing careful stewardship of the earth's resources with enjoyment of those resources. The book, which is aimed at Protestant Christians exploring their roles in caring for the earth and other people, provides an overview of the moral, theological, and practical issues involved. Chapters present information on subjects such as farming practices, consumer behavior, energy sources, and even family planning. Accompanying preludes explore the moral and spiritual implications of our indi-vidual and collective choices in these matters.

The authors have written thoughtfully and take lessons from their personal efforts. Lisa Graham McMinn is a professor of sociology at George Fox University. She and her husband care for a property called Fern Creek in Oregon. Megan Anna Neff has spent time in Malawi and Ghana studying African Christianity and works in Oregon as a postpartum doula. Both women interject examples from their experiences throughout the book, contributing to its honesty and authenticity.

In a market where many books on environmental stewardship can come across as negative and at times apocalyptic, McMinn and Neff exude an incredible amount of hope, matching each environmental problem with examples of groups overcoming these challenges. This is also one of the few books in its genre that really addresses Protestant (Evangelical) concerns about these issues in an honest, non-condescending way. It begins by addressing Christians' attitudes toward the environment, and goes beyond by talking about how Christians feel about the *conversation* surrounding these things. In this way the authors give the reader emotional 'room to breathe' and perhaps also open readers' minds to new ideas.

While the authors seem to hit all the major categories for discussion, it is surprising that

in a book that is meant to be an overview, there is no discussion of nuclear energy or genetically-modified foods. Both of these subjects would be wonderful additions, given their inherent ethical dilemmas.

Although the authors do not seem to be saying anything groundbreaking about the environment or even about the Christian approach to the environment, they represent the growing response of compassion and holism within the Protestant traditions with regard to environmental problems. The authors achieve this with a good dose of hope, making *Walking Gently on the Earth* a book that any Christian or student of Christianity and environmental ethics would benefit from having on the shelf.

Gabriela Worrel