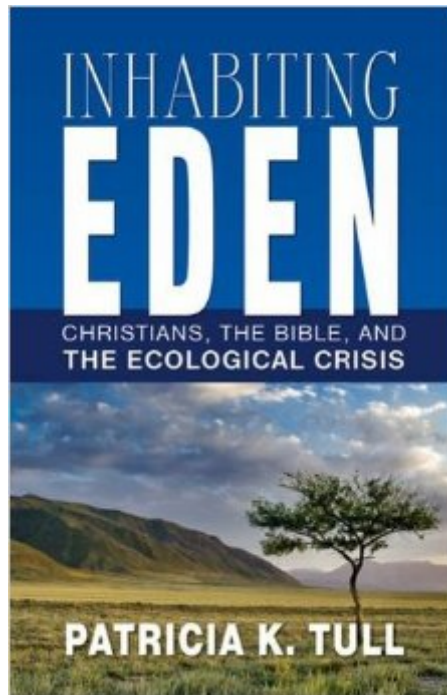


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# Inhabiting Eden: Christians, The Bible, And The Ecological Crisis



## Synopsis

In this thoughtful study, respected Old Testament scholar Patricia K. Tull explores the Scriptures for guidance on today's ecological crisis. Tull looks to the Bible for what it can tell us about our relationships, not just to the earth itself, but also to plant and animal life, to each other, to descendants who will inherit the planet from us, and to our Creator. She offers candid discussions on many current ecological problems that humans contribute to, such as the overuse of energy resources like gas and electricity, consumerism, food production systems--including land use and factory farming--and toxic waste. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions and a practical exercise, making it ideal for both group and individual study. This important book provides a biblical basis for thinking about our world differently and prompts us to consider changing our own actions. Visit [inhabitingeden.org](http://inhabitingeden.org) for links to additional resources and information.

## Book Information

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How do you interpret the mandate given in the creation of humanity wherein God says that humankind is to be given â œdominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth?â • (Gen. 1:26 NRSV). Is this permission to use up everything in sight for our personal enjoyment, or is God committing to humanity stewardship for the creation? What is Godâ s desire when it comes to our place, as human beings, in this world? It is clear that Christians are not of one mind, but if the Bible is a key resource for understanding Godâ s

intention, then what does it say to us in this regard? There are an increasing number of resources written by Christians that speak to ecological and environmental issues. While there remain many skeptics when it comes to the human impact on the environment, especially regarding climate science, for many of us the science is clear. If, as seems clear to this reviewer, humanity is responsible for at least a significant part of the current warming of the planet, then surely we are responsible to do something about it. It is a matter of justice. It is a matter of caring for the least of these among us. Even if there is economic cost in the short run, don't we owe our descendants an environmental inheritance that will allow them to live fruitful lives? The image of Eden is an important one. It holds up an ideal, perhaps an ideal that is unreachable, but in this case one that reminds us of God's intention. To understand God's intention, we who believe that the biblical story has something important to say, even if it doesn't hold out all the answers, then this book written by Patricia Tull is a good place to start.

There are Christians who are passionate environmental activists, those who are mostly committed recyclers, and those who doubt that their faith has much to do with the concern for the earth. No matter what your current attitude, this book is a great resource for you. Hebrew Bible scholar Trisha Tull has written a thoughtful, scriptural book intended to stimulate conversation about the connections between our Christian faith and concern for the well-being of our shared planet. It is Tull's depth and approach as a biblical scholar and theologian that makes this book so rich and helpful. Tull starts in the most natural place-the story of creation in Genesis. This is well-covered territory when connecting the scriptures to concern for the environment. While Tull's analysis adds richness to the conversation on Sabbath and the imago dei, it is in the subsequent chapters that the book adds the most to the ongoing conversation. Most Christian authors on this subject stop after the simple implication that God created us to care for the earth, and therefore we should. Tull digs deeper, and uncovers many layers of biblical treasures that inform and impact our relationship with the natural world. For example, she moves immediately beyond the story of creation into Genesis 3-4, the story of the expulsion from the Garden and the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. She sees in the text the subtle language implying that the soil, the earth itself is damaged by these wounds, and she talks about the way God created human life to exist within limits-and the way we are punished and the earth hurts when we break those limits.

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