Lords, Stewards, Husbands or Guests in the Garden? In Search of an Environmental Theology Adequate to our Times

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The Context
I once took a guided tour of a forest sanctuary for chimpanzees in rural Uganda. It was a small patch of wild rain forest facing pressure on all sides from small-plot farmers who needed the land to grow the local cash crop (bananas) destined for European and urban African markets. Still, the people of the region saw value in the few wild chimps remaining in their area. The little sanctuary was maintained with tourist dollars. Our group was fortunate that day to encounter a troop gathered in a clearing, going about the daily business of survival. I retain a powerful impression from that encounter—the experience of gazing directly into the eyes of one of those chimps and being measured and appraised by him.

In that moment I felt a profound sense of connection, not only with the chimpanzees, but with all of nature. I felt that these chimps and I were made of the same stuff—the same earth that was all around both of us and in which the trees were also rooted. I understood that we were fellow creatures before God, both of us guests in God’s world. It seemed to me that I was a being formed out of the dust of the earth, just as this chimp was, and that meant a continuity between us: we were the same kind of being.

Simultaneous with this profound connection came the realization that I was in danger. I was face to face with a wild animal, not a long-lost brother or cousin. This chimp might well tear my arm off as he protected his home and family from an intruder. I was an alien in his rain forest home, not at all part of his natural environment. I knew with certainty that this was an animal and I was a human, and that meant a deep separation between us: we were complete strangers to one another, not at all the same kind of being.
It was a strange and paradoxical moment. As I looked into the eyes of this wild chimpanzee I felt both a close kinship and a profound alienation. In relation to the chimp and nature as a whole I felt both connection and separation. I was at once at home and a stranger.

This personal vignette reflects the deep ambivalence that marks our human relationship to the global environment. As societies and cultures we are both connected to and separated from the earth. Judeo-Christian traditions have certainly contributed to our society’s ambivalent attitudes towards the earth, supplying many of the metaphors by which we understand it. Thus modern biblical scholars and theologians have a role to play in the contemporary re-examination of this relationship.

This essay will explore three of the traditional metaphors Christians have used to describe the human relationship to the earth—the Lord, the Steward, and the Husband. Each has its roots in the creation narratives of Genesis. Their contemporary relevance will be tested—as all metaphors must be tested—by how well they describe actual human experience and by their practical results. How well do traditional metaphors account for the fundamental experience of simultaneous connection to the land and separation from it? How well is the dialectical tension between these two poles of experience held in balance? What have been and might be the environmental implications of these metaphorical ways of describing our world and ourselves in it?

After testing the traditional metaphors with these questions, I will test a fourth alternative based on a complementary reading of the creation stories, that of the Guest. This image may provide helpful insights into the character of our true relationship with our environment and help to form that relationship in positive ways. In the image of the Guest lies a biblical foundation for an ethic that will enable us to include soils, waters, plants, animals—collectively “the land.”

The Lord
The image of human beings as lords first appears in Genesis 1:1—2:4. The narrative moves steadily through six “days” towards the climax, the creation of human beings. On the sixth day, after everything else is in place and been declared “good!” God creates
humankind “in our image, according to our likeness.” (1:26). Because the text does not make this declaration of any other created things, commentators have traditionally understood that humans are unique in their status as bearers of God’s image. Commentator Nahum M. Sarna says the phrase “emphasizes the incomparable nature of human beings and their special relationship to God.”1 This scripture has been the foundation in Jewish and Christian tradition for the view of humans as lords of creation. Douglas John Hall writes that “much of the theology of the imago Dei concept...has readily supported an anthropology of humanity above nature.”1

Immediately following the statement that humans are to be created in the image of God, the text records God’s blessing to them. Like the fish and the birds, humans are commanded to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,” but unlike them, they are to subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing (1:28, NRSV).

The two Hebrew words translated in the NRSV as subdue and dominion contain particularly warlike imagery. Kabash (subdue) occurs in only thirteen other places in the Bible; in every case outside of this Genesis story the word is used in an immediate context of military conquest and occupation. Loren Wilkinson observes that “Kabash comes from a Hebrew root meaning to tread down; it conveys the image of a heavy-footed man making a path by smashing everything in his way.”5 He further notes that “The connotation of radah (dominion)...is no less harsh: it also conveys a picture of ‘treading’ or ‘trampling’ and suggests the image of a conqueror placing his foot on the neck of a slave.”5 Literary critic and translator Robert Alter concurs with his rendition of radah as “hold sway”. He notes that “The verb radah is not the normal Hebrew verb for ‘rule’...and in most of the contexts in which it occurs it seems to suggest an absolute or even fierce exercise of mastery.”5 It is clear that the two words dominion and subdue connect the first Genesis creation narrative with a hierarchical understanding of the human-land relationship: humanity is lord over all creation, ruling with a coercive and dominating power.

The words dominate and subdue imply a disconnection of humanity from nature; the land is something humans come to as alien conquerors; it is a thing to be fought, trampled down, subdued in the same way Israel “subdued” the Canaanites upon their entrance into the land—through a campaign of genocide! Moreover, with the
The concept of hierarchical dualism7 entailed in this metaphor comes a strong sense of the superiority of one over the other. The lord is not equal to the servant; they live and move in different worlds. Servants, or slaves, exist for the benefit of the lord. In the same way, humans are felt to be superior to animals and the rest of nature. This metaphor allows for an exploitive attitude towards nature: the view that the land exists to serve us and that we may do what we wish with it.

In light of the environmental disasters resulting from our recent history of exploiting the earth many have rejected altogether the metaphor of the Lord as an irresponsible reading of the Genesis stories. But Douglas John Hall believes that the concept of lordship, while it has its dangers in contemporary society, is redeemable if set in its proper biblical context. It is possible to talk about humans having dominion over nature, but only as long as it is understood that it is a penultimate lordship; God alone is the true Lord of all. The understanding of humanity as set over nature but only under God leads Hall to another biblical metaphor that for him best describes humanity's relationships with both God and nature: the Steward.

The Steward
The metaphor of the Steward builds on the foundation of lordship imagery, but alters its vision by making the dominion non-absolute. Whereas the image of the Lord concentrates on one individual, the Steward points beyond itself to a higher authority, thereby building into itself a sense of accountability. This metaphor sees God as King and Lord over all the universe. Humanity rules on behalf of God, taking care of creation for its real master. This is a metaphor which strives to take seriously the biblical texts that seem to diminish humanity's role in the world (e.g. Ps 115:14-16; Eccl 1:14) and also those that grant humanity a very high place in the order of things (e.g. Ps 8:5).

Scholars like Hall have pointed out that the stories which have supported the image of human beings as lords might be read more accurately as stories of humanity's establishment as Stewards. Rosemary Radford Ruether points out that in the first creation story, humans are not given ownership or possession of the earth, which remains "the Lord's." God, finally, is the one who possesses the earth as his creation.
Humans are given use of it. Their rule is the secondary one of care for it as royal steward, not as an owner who can do with it what he wills. This obviously means that humans are to take good care of earth, not to exploit or destroy it, which would make them bad stewards.⁸

The understanding of humanity as Stewards rather than lords of creation becomes clearer when the first creation story is read in the context of its immediate counterpart, the story of the Garden (Gen 2 - 3).

In the second story of creation, humanity’s subordinate place to God is in even greater evidence than the first. In this narrative, Adam is placed in a bountiful garden, and given a specific (and limited) mandate to cultivate and take care of the earth. It is a modest task compared with the first story’s grandiose vision of subjection and dominion. The story calls forth an image of humanity not as resplendent military lords with “dominion” over all the natural world, but as lowly servants labouring in someone else’s garden. And this Someone Else is an absolute authority who sets boundaries which the servants are not to cross. Adam and Eve are given permission to eat the fruit of every tree in the garden, except one. The story of the taking of that fruit is the story of humanity’s refusal to take the subordinate role of steward of creation, grasping instead for Lordship in place in place of God.

The metaphor of the Steward contains within itself a greater sense of connection to the world than “Lord.” Lords are from a different class than servants and live a different kind of life; there is a sharp separation between the two. Stewards, on the other hand, may have a great deal of authority and wide ranging powers over many matters, but in the end they are still servants, and their status before the Lord is the same as those over whom they have delegated authority. This strong sense of connection is contained within the second creation story in which Adam (or “earth creature”) is formed from the earth, just like all the animals. Being made from Adam’s rib Eve is likewise intimately connected with the earth. Clearly they are made of the same stuff as the animals, the same stuff out of which all the plants spring. The vocation of the earth creatures as tillers of the soil also connects them intimately with their environment. When they
accept the boundaries set for them—their role as servants, connected with all the other servants—the earth bears its fruit easily and they freely eat the gifts given: humanity is part of the ecological system. But when they reach for the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve are attempting to control the environment as though they had absolute authority over it. They refuse to accept their connectedness to the land.

So the image of the Steward implies having charge over a wide range of things. Yet it also includes the idea of accountability to the real owner. It captures the tension of feeling connected to others (having the same status as servants) yet also having a sense of disconnection (having authority over the other servants). Is this then a responsible metaphor to use in describing our relationship to the land? Scientist and theologian Celia Deane-Drummond is not sure:

The question which springs to mind is whether this idea of stewardship is sufficient to counter the exploitative instincts of humanity. Some modern theologians believe that stewardship alone will give too much priority to human interest, as the idea of stewardship suggests management of resources. If we treat the earth as a place to be managed it can more easily be exploited than if we treat the earth and all its creatures as having value in and of themselves."

In our present cultural context, which is much disposed to use the language of economics ("productivity," "efficiency," "profitability," etc.), it is very easy for us to approach the land as managers of inanimate resources set there for our benefit. The theocentric orientation of stewardship language is lost as it becomes co-opted by contemporary consumer culture. Anthropocentrism creeps back in. The authority of the steward over creation is emphasized while the connection to the land is virtually ignored. God becomes an absentee landlord and the metaphor of the steward slides back into a model of lordship with humanity acting as managers without a boss, accountable to no one except ourselves. And there are many voices today saying that we humans have turned out to be notoriously bad as managers of our environment, even when we have had good

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intentions. To get away from the managerial connotation of stewardship language in our relationship to our land, we may turn to another old metaphor that also has some biblical grounding: the Husband.

The Husband

Husbandry is a very old way to talk about agriculture. It implies a relationship of trust and caring between a farmer and the land. Where the images of the Lord and the Steward deal in broad ways with humanity’s relationship to creation, the idea of the Husband is connected specifically with agricultural practices. This metaphor does not easily allow a managerial approach to the land since it envisions a relationship between humanity and the land which is mutual; the land is an entity in itself that needs to be honoured and respected. The metaphors of the Lord and the Steward imply relationships of authority over the land, but the Husband is in relationship with it, as with his wife.

There are deep cultural associations of the earth with feminine imagery. Anne Primavesi points out that in our language:

Feminine nouns and pronouns are used for Nature which internalize and reinforce assumptions about its role vis-a-vis man. The closest relationship between him and woman is used to describe his proper relationship with the earth: “husbandry.” The connotations of this word are carried through when his work with Nature is described as that of the “husband” penetrating virgin forest or soil, sowing seed and raising crops from the fertilized earth beneath his feet.¹¹

This cultural understanding of the earth as female has grounding in ancient and pre-Christian religious traditions, traces of which even appear in the book of Genesis. In the first creation narrative in Genesis God is said to create the vault of the heavens on the second day. Many commentators feel that the background for this story is the ancient Mesopotamian myth, the Enuma Elish. In this creation story the god Marduk creates the vaults of heaven and earth from the dead body of his grandmother, Tiamat, the primal mother goddess from
whom the whole world (heavens and earth, gods and mortals) has sprung. She is identified originally with the earth, and by later writers with the forces of chaos, represented by the symbol of the deep waters. In the Hebrew story based on the *Enuma Elish*, Tiamat is not identified by name, but her presence is still felt in the opening words of Genesis: “the earth then was welter and waste and darkness over the deep”!!" The story goes on to describe the divine imperative to humans, already discussed, to subdue and dominate the land. Herein lies the problem: if the land is conceived to be female, a primeval mother goddess, then Genesis pictures a very violent relationship between husband (humanity) and wife (the land).

The violence inherent in this image has not escaped the notice of Primavesi. She says “the metaphor of the earth and the woman’s body as a field” is related to the action of a furrow. “Her body is marked, cut into, and ploughed in furrows by the cultivator; the body of the woman is not only the property of her husband but also the space in which he labours, a surface he breaks open and cultivates, the terrain where his heirs are produced.”!12

The harsh image of the Husband as subduer and dominator of the land, his “wife,” may be mitigated in the context of the second creation story. The story of the garden seems to indicate that the basic calling of the man is to till the land and take care of it (2:5, 15). Sarna notes of v. 5: “Agriculture is considered to be the original vocation of man, whose bond to the earth is an essential part of his being.”!13 There is a very intimate connection between the man and the land, intimate enough to be compared to a marriage. The man and the land he is to take care of are, in the language from later on in the narrative itself, “one flesh.” This becomes more obvious in light of Alter’s observation regarding the difficulties of translation:

> The stuff from which the first human is fashioned . . . *'adamah*, manifestly means “soil,” and it continues to have that meaning as it recurs at crucial junctures in the story of the Garden and the primordial banishment. But, alas, *'adamah* also means “land,” “farmland,” “country,” and even “earth.”!14

So the first human is intimate to the point of identification with the land. Thus the metaphor of the Husband emphasizes in the
strongest way possible the intimate connection of humanity to the rest of creation, but it also contains potential for great violence. It is itself an indication of extreme separation between the human and non-human worlds.

Turning from the traditional metaphors of the human-earth relationship and their associated readings of the Genesis creation narratives, I now read those stories in light of another biblical metaphor, the Guest. The experience of being a Guest, or Stranger, is a biblical theme with roots that run deep. In this section I trace the way in which the experience of being guests in the world informed Israelite self-identity. Then I reread the creation stories in light of that self-understanding, suggesting some implications for a contemporary environmental theology.

The Guest
The figure of the stranger, designated by the Hebrew word ger, appears early on in the Bible. The ger was a person who was an outsider to the Israelite community in terms of language, culture, or religion, but who had settled among the Israelite people. Translations of the word ger have included the generic “stranger,” the technical “resident alien,” the archaic “sojourner,” and the everyday “immigrant.” Another term that might shed light on the meaning of the word ger is “guest.” This word highlights an important dimension of how the people of Israel experienced the presence of the ger in their midst, and how they experienced themselves in relation to the land they occupied, along with its indigenous inhabitants. Prominent biblical traditions view Israel both as a host community with a special responsibility to welcome the vulnerable other as a guest in its midst, and as a guest-nation itself in the land of Canaan.

The place of the ger as a guest in Israelite society and Israel’s attitude of hospitality are shown in the various commands and injunctions of the Pentateuch. The picture of the ger that emerges is of someone who is consistently counted amongst the weakest and most vulnerable members of society, widows, orphans, and Levites. Like them, the ger did not own land and therefore had to be provided for through a tithe of produce (Dt 14:28-29), and was granted the right to glean the leftovers after harvest (Lev 19:9-10). The ger could work for a (most likely marginal) living (Ex 20:10; Dt 24:14), but could also become a slave to an Israelite (Lev 25:44-46). Finally, the
ger was subject to the same religious laws of purification as members of the Israelite community (Lev 17:13-15; Ex 12:44-49). Although the gerim were usually disenfranchised, it was possible for them to establish themselves and even prosper. Deuteronomy warns that if the gerim are not treated fairly, they will “ascend above you higher and higher,” eventually becoming powerful and oppressing the native Israelites (28:43). In short, the ger was a guest in Israelite society, a vulnerable outsider who had much in common with the weakest members of the community. The ger was to be treated with fairness and justice but was also expected to follow the rules of the household. Two key reasons that the gerim were to be treated with justice, or as honoured guests, was Israel’s memory of its origins as descended from the ger Abraham, and its former status as an oppressed people in Egypt.

The book of Genesis depicts Israel’s ancestors as gerim, frequently using the verbal form of ger to describe their travels. Norman Habel has shown that the Genesis traditions of Abraham and the land of Canaan form an “immigrant ideology” that sets the stage for the presentation of Israel as a nation of gerim. Within this tradition, Abraham is clearly portrayed as the mediator of peaceful relations with, and blessing in, the land. He is the symbol of an immigrant people seeking to live at peace with the land and to build bridges with the existing peoples of the host country, whose rights to the land are thereby acknowledged.

Israel’s ancestors, as gerim, are depicted in this tradition as guests of Yahweh who owns the land and of the inhabitants who live there. Abraham was the perpetual guest. He was a wandering stranger dependent all his life on the hospitality of others, but especially dependent on God’s providence. Abraham’s children and grandchildren lived according to the same semi-nomadic pattern of life. Eventually they settled in Egypt as guests of Pharaoh (Gen 47:1-12). Unfortunately, in a very short time they were made slaves instead. At this point Abraham’s descendants become gerim in a new sense. No more are they guests in an hospitable land. Now they are oppressed outsiders in a hostile land.

The tradition of the book of Deuteronomy, distinct from the Abrahamic traditions of Genesis, remembers Israel’s status as a marginalized people. They are ger not as guest but as vulnerable outsider. It encourages the people to retain that sense of not-
belonging even as they enter the Promised Land. Habel notices that “in the theocratic ideology of the book of Deuteronomy, Canaan is a land grant, an unearned gift from YHWH, its owner and custodian; the people of Israel have conditional entitlement to the land by treaty.” The treaty or covenant in this tradition is that the people of Israel may freely stay as guests in the land provided they remember their status as guests of God, and treat the strangers among them, their own guests, with justice. (cf. Deut 10:19 - “Love the stranger then, for you were once strangers in Egypt.”) In the Deuteronomic tradition, therefore, Yahweh is the sovereign host and landowner while Israel is the indebted guest.

The literary context of Deuteronomy’s “theocratic ideology” is an address by Moses to the Israelites at a watershed moment in their history. They are about to enter the land God has given them. But there is a danger in the new-found security of having a home that they will forget what the insecurity of being homeless felt like. It is important that they remember their origins and continuing status as a guest-people dependent on God’s hospitality. Otherwise they may begin to think their existence in the land depends on their own abilities to maintain or manage it. Remembering that they are guests, the people of Israel are more likely to treat with justice the other strangers and guests among them.

The Genesis texts with their Abrahamic “immigrant ideology,” as well as the Deuteronomic texts with their “theocratic ideology” were compiled either by scribes exiled in Babylon, or recently returned from exile there. As they remembered Abraham, the founder of their nation, they remembered him as someone whose original home was actually in the territory of Babylon (Ur of the Chaldees). But like them, Abraham also had the experience of being a resident alien in a foreign land. With the hindsight of history they could see that Israel’s inhospitality and attempts to control its own destiny in the land had led to its situation of landlessness. In addition, with the writings of the prophets now in historical perspective it was clear that Israel’s disobedience in the form of social injustice had resulted in its exile from the land.

It should not be a stretch to imagine Israel’s guest-host relationship to its land and its God as a resource for the broader context of our own thinking about the relationship of humanity to nature. Just as the Israelites were to consider themselves guests in the
promised land, so we as human beings are guests in God’s land, all creation. Just as their tenure in the land was contingent upon their just treatment of the guests in their midst, so our survival on this planet is contingent upon our just treatment of our fellow guests, human and non-human. Another reading of the creation narratives of Genesis may highlight the guest-host dynamics contained within them, and provide a basis for an environmental ethic of hospitality.

**Guests in the Garden**

The creation narratives, edited at the same time as the Abrahamic stories and Deuteronomistic history, reflect the same feeling of being guests in the world. The first story tells how God created a marvellous and ordered home out of the original chaos; a place that is hostile and unfriendly to human beings is turned into a gracious place of welcome. This home includes light and dark, night and day, sun and moon, plants and animals (Gen 1:1-25). At every stage God proclaims this home to be towb, a domestic word that describes the creation as a fair, a pleasant, and a delightful place. Last of all God makes human beings in God’s image. To be created in God’s image is to have special relationship to God and a unique vocation in the world; the relationship is that of the guest to the host, but the vocation is to be hosts to the rest of creation. Humans have “dominion over” the world in the way that hosts have dominion over the household in which they receive guests. This story, then, portrays people as simultaneously guests in God’s creation and hosts within that creation to all other beings. There is deep connection here as guests with everything else created - fellow guests in someone else’s home; yet as hosts there is also profound separation from all the rest of the world.

In the story of the Garden God appears not as the almighty cosmic creator fashioning an ordered home out of some primal chaos, but in a very homely role as an artisan home-builder or a gardener. In this story God “shapes,” “plants,” “makes,” “fashions,” and “walks,” then gives to the first humans the same home-making/gardening mandate and tangibly creative powers. This is a very concrete picture of a “down to earth” host who is pleased to have Adam and Eve for guests. There is no great separation between the humans in this story and the animals; all are formed from the earth itself. This account of human and animal origins portrays the strongest possible connection

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amongst all things; in fact, there is nothing that separates inanimate and animate, human and non-human—everything reduces in the end to the dust of the earth.

But there is also deep and dramatic separation recounted in the second creation story. In this case connection and separation are not simultaneous, but sequential. In the Garden there is at first a profound connection between God and humans, male and female, humans and all the rest of creation. All the guests are at peace in this primeval home. But like any home there are boundaries beyond which it is not appropriate for guests to pass: in this case there is one tree from which humans are not to eat. The act of taking the fruit of that tree is an infringement upon the hospitality of God, a refusal to accept the role of guests in the garden. By taking the fruit, Adam and Eve are acting as though they were in charge of nature. In fact they are guests whose only role is to accept what has been freely given by a gracious host. The expulsion from the Garden that results from this fundamental trespass is a symbol of the curse of separation that has fallen on humanity—a division that has fallen between humans and God, men and women, people and the rest of creation. This fundamental separation remains endemic to the human condition, but never completely overcomes the original connection.

As a metaphor for the human relationship with our environment, the image of the Guest accurately holds in dialectical tension the human experiences of being connected and separated from the world around us. As we have seen, this tension is present in the creation narratives themselves as we read them in light of Israel’s understanding of its relationship to its land. As guests in their land, the people of Israel were at once connected to and separate from it; connected in that their destiny was intimately bound up with the land they occupied, separate because of their origins and continuing status as a guest-people. As guests in creation we are connected in that we are one with it and our destiny is intimately bound to it. We are separate, in the perspective of the first creation story, because of our unique role and responsibility as hosts to everything else that exists. From the perspective of the second creation story, we separate insofar as we try to usurp God’s place as host.

The metaphor of the Guest connects environmental ethics intimately with social ethics; justice in the one area is tied to justice in the other. The Deuteronomic ideology constantly called Israel to
remember its tenure in the land was contingent upon its treatment of widows, orphans and strangers. Israel never was a landowner; it was in the land by God’s grace alone. If justice was not done, the land could be taken away, and was. In the same way, our tenure on this earth depends on our just treatment of our fellow-guests and the household itself.

Conclusion
The Lord, the Steward, and the Husband are all metaphors drawn from the biblical tradition and based especially on particular readings of the Genesis creation narratives. These powerful guiding metaphors have historically shaped our attitudes towards nature. But there are problems embedded in the images as well: they do not adequately represent the human experiences of connection to and separation from the earth, and they may be inadequate to meet the challenges of today’s environmental problems. They may in fact have contributed to the environmental crises we face in the modern era. In light of the inadequacies of the traditional images to describe modern reality or shape a useful contemporary environmental ethic a second look at these foundational metaphors is warranted. The creation narratives of Genesis need not be read as stories of humanity’s establishment as Lords, Stewards, or Husbands of the land, but their welcome as Guests in God’s beautiful home. This reading is rooted deeply in biblical traditions relating to the ger, bringing those traditions into creative conversation with the Genesis stories of the world’s origin. In this new reading is to be found a “land ethic” adequate to meet the complex environmental justice challenges of our times.

Notes


3 Douglas John Hall, The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 200. Hall himself disagrees with this notion of imago Dei. For him “the image of God does not refer to a quality that we possess (making us superior to other creatures), but to a
relationship in which we stand vis-a-vis our Creator, and vocation to which we are called within the creation" (200)


5 Ibid. 27.


7 Elizabeth A. Johnson defines hierarchical dualism as “a pattern of thought and action that (1) divides reality into two separate and opposing spheres, and (2) assigns a higher value to one of them. In terms of the three basic relations that shape an ecological ethic, this results in a view in which humanity is detached from and more important than nature; man is separate from and more valuable than woman; God is disconnected from the world, utterly and simply transcendent over it, as well as more significant than it.” In Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 10.

8 Radford Ruether Gaia & God, 21.


10 Anne Primavesi, From Apocalypse to Genesis: Ecology, Feminism and Christianity (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 34.

11 Gen 1:1, translation by Alter, Genesis, 3.

12 Primavesi, From Apocalypse to Genesis, 36.

13 Sarna, Genesis, 17.

14 Alter Genesis, xxix.


16 Writers write, cooks cook, and hosts even host, but what does a guest do? In the absence of a proper English alternative, perhaps one could coin a new term: they ‘guested’ in Canaan (Gen 12:10; 19:9; 20:1b; 21:23; 21:34; 26:3; 32:5; 35:27; 47:4).

17 Norman C. Habel, The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). Habel discerns six distinct biblical ideologies of the land: the “Royal” of I Kings and certain psalms; the “Theocratic” of Deuteronomy; the “Ancestral Household” of Joshua; the “Prophetic” of Jeremiah; the “Agrarian” of Leviticus; and the “Immigrant” of Genesis.
Habel, *The Land is Mine*, 129.

Ibid. 134.