The ‘Why on Earth’ Trilogy

**WHY ON EARTH DO YOU STILL READ THE BIBLE?**
A Lifetime of Lenses
Norm Habel
Morning Star Publishing
9780994470799
148mm x 210mm
102 pages
$19.95

Like many in the mainline churches, the author was encouraged to read the Bible through a single, safe, traditional lens, ensuring that the truth of the Bible could be discovered only through that way of interpreting the text. The book tells the story of what happens when other lenses appear, other ways of engaging the text, other fresh ways of connecting the text to its origins, its people and its context. These other ways involve not only the original contexts but the contemporary contexts where the Bible engages, challenges and acknowledges the expectations, needs and fears of people, and their deepest concerns. It is the story of an Australian biblical scholar's painful yet fulfilling discovery that education, study, research, lifestyle, travel, environment, science, ecumenism and interfaith issues provided new lenses through which to read the Bible and make sense of its wisdom and insight into the current human condition and our relationship with God and nature. It is a story to encourage others to use significant moments in life to revisit the Scriptures with fresh lenses and renewed hope, not afraid of the challenges the texts bring to our commitment to connect faith and life.

**WHY ON EARTH ARE YOU STILL A LUTHERAN?**
Memoirs of a heretic
Norm Habel
Morning Star Publishing
9780994264503
148mm x 210mm
122 pages
$22.95

Norm Habel is an Australian, an Earth child and a Lutheran who has survived accusations of heresy many times in his life. Why on Earth are you still a Lutheran? is not quite an autobiography. After all, Habel is many more things than a Lutheran – a family man, a social justice advocate, an amateur ecologist and a poet – but still a Lutheran. The scenes from his experiences are not an effort to define being a Lutheran in any official or unofficial sense. Rather, in telling his story, he searches for that elusive something that persists in his faith – the mystery behind the Lutheran jargon that has cluttered his world and battered his brain. For Norm Habel, Lutheran wisdom means reading life from a distance, reading the landscape as a sacred text, and reading the Sacred Text without biased biblical blinkers. He invites you to follow his journey, to explore anew the complex question of identity – whether you are an Australian farmer or a Brooklyn pastor, a politician from PNG or a Dalit from India.

**WHY ON EARTH DO YOU STILL WONDER ABOUT GOD?**
Dancing with Doubt
Norm Habel
Morning Star Publishing
TO BE PUBLISHED IN 2018

In the third volume of this Trilogy, Norm Habel explores the ‘God factor’ that humans on this planet have claimed to experience in a diversity of ways. He evaluates a gallery of different gods in the Scriptures, his Lutheran community, religions of the world and Aboriginal Australians. Habel goes beyond these gods, however, to recount experiences of mystery that left him mesmerised with wonder, a wonder that led to a new spiritual awakening, a cosmic consciousness.

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Where can Wisdom be found? Job 28.12. Wisdom is usually associated with profound knowledge acquired over time. In ancient times, however, wisdom was also discerned as a force or factor of nature. Wisdom was not only found in human minds but also in God’s creation. The wise of biblical times as distinct from prophets, priests and kings were tantamount to the scientists of their day. And like scientists, they had a way of discerning wisdom in creation that involved the rational steps of observation, analysis and discernment. The classic question posed by the wise was: Where can wisdom be found? Or more precisely: Where and how can wisdom be discerned in nature? Or in contemporary terms: And how might we follow the approach of ancient scientists and find innate wisdom wired in nature today?

Wilhelm Habel is my great grandfather. This is his story and my reading of his life. As I researched his journey, I began to wonder whether there was a hidden link between his spirit and mine or whether the strong connection is simply genetic. I became curious as to whether my great grandfather had an influence on my identity even before I knew his story. After considerable research, reflection and analysis of the family stories, a radical change took place in my writing. I discovered a dimension of Wilhelms history that revealed something about my own identity. Throughout my life, my parents and grandparents in Australia spoke of themselves as German Lutherans. I discovered that my Habel ancestors were not Germans at all, but Wends who lived in Silesia, a province under Prussian rule. The Wends, sometimes called Sorbs, were of Slavic origin. For centuries, groups of Wends were closely associated with the forests of Europe, where they made their living by selling whatever they could find – everything from honey and wax to furs and timber. Many of the Wends became established members of farming communities or country villages. To highlight the spirit and strength of Wilhelms story I have chosen to write a work of historical fiction… As I recount his dramatic story, especially his journey to Australia, I find myself in tune with Wendish ways of viewing the world and with the spiritual impulses that move them. So the book is my reading of Wilhelms story and how his forest wisdom guided his spirit. It is the story of a tree whisperer in tune with nature and the mysteries of creation. It is the story of my Wendish spiritual father. – Norm Habel

Reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians continues to tear at the heart of Australia, exposing our struggle for soul. In the deepest sense, this quest is not just political and social, but also spiritual and human. Reconciliation: Searching for Australia’s Soul remains timely as Norman Habel explores the significance of the continuing reconciliation process for the spiritual dimension as part of Australians identity. He writes: I am an Australian, a fifth generation Australian. For a long time, I have wondered what it means for me – for all of us – to be Australian. I have reflected on our spirit, our characters, our identity. Reconciliation: Searching for Australia’s Soul is the result; an invitation to become an advocate for reconciliation. For Norman Habel, being Australian means embracing the story and struggle of the Aboriginal peoples for justice and recognising their suffering since 1788 as integral to our spiritual heritage.
Remembering Charles Strong Pioneer Pacifist

CHRISTIANITY RE-INTERPRETED
Pioneer Progressive of the 19th Century
Charles Strong
Introduction by Norm Habel
9780648118633
Morning Star Publishing
72 Pages
$14.95

This book is a reprint of key sermons by Rev. Charles Strong who founded the Australian Church in 1885 after being accused of heresy relating to the atonement. Strong was a pioneer progressive, outlining an understanding of the Christian religion that was a hundred years ahead of the current progressive Christian movement in Australia. His goal, he said, was to ‘Re-interpret Christianity in the light of modern knowledge, the principles of development, and the spirit of religion as distinguished from the letter; to re-interpret Christianity just as Copernicus and Galileo re-interpreted astronomy.’ Strong’s focus was on knowing the Spirit as a universal all-animating Spirit, an eternal and deep dimension of reality within humans as well as nature. The Kingdom of God is really The Kingdom of Love; love is the force of God at work in humans to change society. This volume reprints five sermons published originally in 1894, sermons which reflect his progressive approach to spirituality and faith.

THE EARTH CARE CHARTER AND 95 ECO-THESSES
Foundations for earthcare planning
Norm Habel
9780648112501
www.lutheran.edu.au
60 pages
$10.00

Norm Habel’s Earthcare Charter pulsates with his love for planet Earth and his awe at the dynamic connection between mother Earth, humanity and the whole of creation. His work echoes the centuries old affirmation of faith in the creator and heaven and Earth, but locates that confession in the 21st century with respect to evolutionary theory, climate change, pollution and other environmental issues. Norm also weaves his call to care for Earth with creative and insightful reflections upon Scripture and these act as an integrating thread to the whole charter.

AN INCONVENIENT TEXT
Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?
Norm Habel
ATF Press
97819215111561
158 pages
$29.00

The Bible is an inconvenient text! There are numerous passages that are ‘grey’ rather than ‘green.’ These passages depict God or humans destroying or de-valuing parts of creation. What if we dare to read these ‘grey’ texts from the perspective of the victims--Earth and the domains of Earth? How then would we relate to these de-valued parts of creation? And, how does the Gospel contribute to resolving this dilemma?

RAINBOW SPIRIT THEOLOGY
Toward an Australian Aboriginal Theology
by Rainbow Spirit Elders
ATF Press
9781920691806
$18.95

Rainbow Spirit Theology represent a landmark in Australian theology. This text has been prepared by a group of Aboriginal Christian leaders with the aim of integrating the traditions of Aboriginal culture with the traditions of Christianity.

Authors include George Rosendale (the spiritual elder of the group), Nola Archie, Dennis Corowa, William Coolbura, Eddie Law, James Leftwich, and Jasmine Corowa (artist), representing six Aboriginal peoples and ministry in four Christian traditions. Assisting the project were Robert Bos, Norman Habel and Shirley Wurst.

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THE LAND IS MINE
Six Biblical Land Ideologies - 1995
Fortress Press
at: www.fortresspress.com

EXPLORING ECOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS (ED)
Society of Biblical Literature 2008
at: www.sbl-site.org

THE SEASON OF CREATION
A Preaching Commentary – 2011
Fortress Press
at: www.fortresspress.com

RAINBOW OF MYSTERIES
Meeting the Sacred in Nature – 2012
Woodlake Publishing
at: www.woodlakebooks.com

THE BIRTH THE CURSE AND THE GREENING OF EARTH*
An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1-11 – 2011
Bloomsbury Press
or at: www.sheffieldphoenix.com

FINDING WISDOM IN NATURE*
An Eco-Wisdom Reading of the Book of Job – 2014
Bloomsbury Press

*These 2 volumes in the Earth Bible Commentary Series, published by Sheffield Phoenix, are now available through Bloomsbury Press.