

Preface



About a decade ago, Norman C. Habel contacted me about being the U.S. point person for the new Season of Creation that he and a team of people from the Uniting Church had developed for use in Australia (www.seasonofcreation.com). I was delighted to adapt and promote the materials on our Web of Creation Web site (www.webofcreation.org). The first task was to “translate” the liturgies from Australian into North American English by changing some titles (Outback Sunday to Wilderness Sunday) and many of the specific references in the liturgies (robins for cockatoos). In this effort, I asked my good friend and theologian Paul Santmire to review the liturgies and add his suggestions. Thus began the work of this trio of collaborators.

About five years later, the three of us found ourselves having dinner together at the Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Boston. We shared the meaningful experiences that each of us had had from celebrating the Season of Creation in our respective congregations. We agreed that it would be important to find ways to promote this optional season in the church year and to provide resources to support the celebrations. So we hatched the idea of editing a commentary on the lectionary lessons for the Season of Creation. Norman had already written a theological reflection on worship and some guidelines for reading the Bible. Paul and I eventually edited and added to these materials so that they became a truly

Preface

collaborative representation of our thinking. These became the introductory materials for the volume. At that time, we also decided to ask people from around the world to do a commentary on the lessons for one of the twelve Sundays in the three-year cycle of the Season of Creation (four Sundays each year). Paul and Norman each agreed to write one of the commentaries. I agreed to contact other writers and edit their commentaries. We were absolutely delighted by the response and the reflections submitted by each contributor. Meanwhile, we secured a commitment from Fortress Press to publish the book and we were off and running. Our gratitude goes to Michael West, who guided the project at Fortress, and to David Lott, who edited it so carefully.

Norman and Paul and I believe the urgency of the environmental crises of our time and the neglect we as Christians have paid to God's relationship to the rest of nature and our relationship to the rest of nature merits a special season of worship to draw us in dramatic ways into the full orbit of God's gracious love for creation and into the fullness of our human vocation before God as brother-keepers, sister-keepers, and Earth-keepers. We hope that by means of this resource you also will find rich experiences and deeper meaning through your celebrations of the Season of Creation.