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A Letter from Author Ed Brown

Dear Church Member,

You don't think you're anyone special. Just an ordinary Joe or Jane who sits halfway back in the sanctuary on the left-hand side. You love your Bible, but you may never have opened a book on theology in your life. Your Christian life consists of being faithful in the little things. You pray for friends and relatives who are lost. You grieve when you hear about hungry people and orphans in other countries. You worry about your kids and grandkids and what kind of world is going to be left for them. But the environmental crisis seems too big. What can you do?

I encourage you to begin to make changes where you can. Little things make a big difference. Did you know, for example, that household water consumption in the United States has not increased for almost twenty years, even though our population has increased dramatically in that time? Do you want to know how? You were part of it: water-saving showerheads and low-flow toilets were mandated in many parts of the country in the late 1970s and 1980s. It doesn't seem like much, but the ten or twenty gallons saved on each shower multiplied by 300 million people is a lot of water. We saved enough collectively to accommodate millions more people with enough to go around. Few of us even noticed.

We need to do this in other areas. And we can. We don't have to wait for someone to tell us to reduce our electricity consumption by 10 percent (which is easy). Similarly we can reduce our driving. We can learn to purchase and consume less and use products that do less damage when we do use them. We can learn to walk lightly on this earth.

And we can speak up. Sometimes one voice at just the right time can make all the difference. You don't know how effective your one voice might be until you try. Let people know that you'd like to use something besides disposable dishes at church dinners. Encourage your pastor or Sunday-school leaders to teach creation care. See if your missions program is involved in an overseas creation-care project. Ask your office manager to buy recycled paper for the copier. Express your convictions about these things, and you'll find other people who feel the same way you do.

Did you know that 40 percent of the members of the Sierra Club are people of faith who attend worship services regularly? Tragically they hide their church membership while at Sierra Club meetings and their Sierra membership while at church. The result? Neither the Sierra Club nor the church reflects their views. You might be one of these. Speak up at both places, and discover how many friends you have.

Taken from Chapter 13, and finally, pages 170-2.

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