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# The Earth Story in Genesis

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## Foreword

Desmond Tutu

Planet Earth is in crisis. More and more life systems are being threatened. Scientists estimate that at least half, and perhaps as much as 80 per cent, of the world's animal and plant species, are found in the rainforests. The rainforests are the lungs of the planet producing much of the oxygen that humans and other oxygen-dependent creatures need to survive. The rainforests, alas, are still being destroyed at an alarming rate.

Resolving the ecological crisis of our planet, however, is no longer a problem we can leave to the scientists. Just as we are all part of the problem, we are also part of the solution. We all need to come to terms with the forces that have created this crisis and the resources within our traditions that can motivate us to resolve the crisis. One of those traditions is our biblical heritage.

It is significant, therefore, that the Earth Bible Project has chosen to take the Earth crisis seriously and to re-read our biblical heritage in the light of this crisis. The Earth Bible Team has listened closely to ecologists and developed a set of principles to re-read the biblical text from an ecojustice perspective. The concern of Earth Bible writers is not to defend the biblical text blindly, but to identify those passages that may have contributed to the crisis and to uncover those traditions that have valued Earth but been suppressed.

I commend the Earth Bible Team for including representative writers from around the globe, including the Southern hemisphere. I commend the team for confronting the biblical tradition honestly and openly in dialogue with ecologists. And, in particular, I commend the writers for daring to read the biblical text afresh from the perspective of Earth. Feminists have forced us to confront the patriarchal orientation of much of the biblical text. Earth Bible writers are now confronting us with the anthropocentric nature of much of the biblical text. We now ask: does the text devalue Earth by making the self-interest of humans its dominant concern?

I recommend you read the Earth Bible series with a critical but empathetic eye. As a critical reader you will want to assess whether