

Articles of Faith

Back in May, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders came together to write an “Interfaith Declaration” to President Bush and Congress, calling for immediate action on climate change and citing their shared “reverence for life.” Kudos to the trifecta for coming together in the name of Mother Nature—and that shared mission got us

thinking about whether other religious groups also have a spiritual connection to the earth. With a little digging through their sacred texts, we found that most of the world’s religions, in fact, share a deep reverence for our planet and all the creatures, from amoebas to zebras, that inhabit it. —*Tobin Hack*

RELIGION	ARTICLE OF FAITH	IN OUR WORDS
 HINDU	<p>O Mother Earth! Sacred are your hills, snowy mountains, and deep forests. Be kind to us and bestow upon us happiness. May you be fertile, arable, and sustainer of all. May you continue supporting people of all races and nations. May you protect us from your anger [i.e., natural disasters]. And may no one exploit and subjugate your children. —<i>Prithivi Sukta</i></p>	<p>Word to your Mother.</p>
 BAHA'I	<p>How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues, form, and shape enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof.... —<i>Abdu'l-Bahá, son of the founder of the Baha'i faith</i></p>	<p>Biodiversity 4 Eva! Save the polar bears!</p>
 JAINISM	<p>All breathing, existing, living, sentient beings should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away. This is the pure, unchangeable, eternal law. —<i>Acaranga Sutra</i></p>	<p>Vegans have better karma.</p>
 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS	<p>They gave the sacrifice to the East, the East said, “Give it to the West,” the West said, “Give it to God,” God said, “Give it to Earth, for Earth is senior.” —<i>Idoma Prayer</i></p>	<p>Nobody puts Earth in the corner.</p>
 NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY	<p>“All things are connected, whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth.... The Earth is precious. To harm the Earth is to heap contempt on its creator.” —<i>Chief Sealth, leader of the Suquamish tribe</i></p>	<p>Hate on Earth, hate on God.</p>
 DAOISM (OR TAOISM)	<p>18. You should not wantonly fell trees. 36. You should not throw poisonous substances into lakes, rivers, and seas. 53. You should not dry up wet marshes. 101. You should not seal off pools and wells. 109. You should not light fires in the plains. 125. You should not fabricate poisons and keep them in vessels. 132. You should not disturb birds and [other] animals. 134. You should not wantonly make lakes. —<i>180 Precepts of Lord Lao</i></p>	<p>The EPA's got nothing on Lord Lao.</p>

DILEMMA

Q: We’ve always heard that burning leaves is bad for the environment. Is that true?

A: After a good romp in a freshly raked pile of leaves, it may seem like a great idea to set them aflame and enjoy the familiar scent of autumn. But resist the temptation. “Burning leaves causes air pollution, is a fire hazard, and can pose health hazards for some individuals,” says Rosie Lerner, a horticulturalist at Purdue University. When dry leaves burn, particles that can cause nose, throat, and eye irritation float into the air. These particles can also get into your lungs, where they make you cough, wheeze, and struggle to catch your breath. Wet leaves don’t burn as fast and are more likely to emit hydrocarbons—chemicals that contain cancer-

causing compounds. Smoldering leaf bonfires can result in carbon monoxide emissions that, if inhaled, may reduce the amount of oxygen your blood cells can absorb. Children, elderly people, asthmatics, and those with chronic lung and heart disease are most vulnerable to the effects of burning leaves, but everyone can suffer. As an alternative, try composting. Or even easier: When you mow, ride right over the leaves on your lawn. You can collect the shredded leaves and put them in your garden, where they will suppress weeds, retain moisture, and insulate the ground. Or just leave them where they are—they’ll decompose on their own.





An Icelandic lighthouse doubles as a research station.

Guiding Light

The last manned lighthouse in Iceland is perched on the southernmost bluff of the Vestman Islands, the southernmost landmass in the nation. It's quite possibly the windiest point on the windiest island off the coast of the windiest country on Earth. Upon her visit to the lighthouse, American ambassador to Iceland Carol van Voorst was astonished not only by the power of the wind, which made it difficult to stand, but by the manner in which the island's third-generation lighthouse keeper, Oskar Sigurdsson, took it all in stride—literally. “He was standing there like a pillar, absolutely solid,” van Voorst said in a phone interview. “He is certainly an extraordinary human being.”

The 69-year-old Sigurdsson's entire life has been spent looking out from his windy post, and while automation has nearly eclipsed the need for keeping the light on, there are certain things machines just can't do. Research, for instance: Sigurdsson collects air samples for the Cooperative Global Air Sampling Network in Boulder, Colorado. He has provided samples every week since 1992, a remarkable effort that last summer earned him a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Environmental Hero Award.

Unlike most researchers, who spend years

Lighthouse keeper Oskar Sigurdsson has taken air samples every week since 1992.

at a university preparing for their work, Sigurdsson fell into science by chance. In 1992, NOAA research chemist Tom Conway was looking for someone to monitor atmospheric composition in Iceland, a place of particular interest to climate scientists because it is so far removed from pollution sources. “Our contacts at the Iceland Meteorological Office had worked with Oskar,” Conway remembered. “It was through them that we got in touch.”

When NOAA came calling, Sigurdsson was busy setting the world record for tagging birds, a record that continues to grow. “It wasn't until 2001, when I received a graph showing the CO₂ increase in Iceland,” Sigurdsson said, “that I felt impressed that my data was really contributing something to an important matter.”

Conway says he knew last summer that the time had come to honor the steadfast Sigurdsson for his work. “I heard that Oskar would be retiring this year,” Conway said. “I thought he needed to be recognized for the contribution that he made.”

Sigurdsson has reached Iceland's mandatory retirement age but hopes to continue his tour of duty. “For pollution research,” he said, “they need manual sampling. We are trying to reach an agreement so I can continue for as long I feel like it.” —Adam Spangler

BURNING QUESTION

Q: “GLOBAL WARMING” OR “CLIMATE CHANGE”: WHICH TERM DO YOU PREFER?

MICHAEL OPPENHEIMER

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PROFESSOR OF GEOSCIENCES



People are now sufficiently familiar with the problem that they'll recognize it regardless of the name.

They know it by its consequences, like heat waves, drought, and forest fires. It's like seeing a face on a Most Wanted poster; the name doesn't matter.

LAURIE DAVID

GLOBAL WARMING ACTIVIST
AND FOUNDER OF STOPGLOBALWARMING.ORG



There is a huge difference between the terms, which is why I always, always refer to global warming as what it is—global warm-

ing. I think we have Frank Luntz to thank for the term “climate change,” which was popularized by the current administration as being the “less scary” phrase. It always upsets me when I hear people using it because it has been successfully forced on the public to soften the sell.

STEVEN POOLE

AUTHOR OF UNSPEAK:
HOW WORDS BECAME WEAPONS



The U.S., Saudi Arabia, and other oil-producing countries lobbied the U.N. in the late 1980s to change the language of early res-

olutions from “global warming” to “climate change” because the latter is vaguer and less frightening, and also because it doesn't point the finger so directly at the burning of fossil fuels as the cause. While “climate change” is scientifically correct (because a local climate might get colder rather than hotter), it obscures the fact that such changes will be a result of the rising mean temperature of the planet—i.e., of global warming. In fact, one scientist I spoke to said that he didn't think “global warming” was a vivid or troubling enough description given the severity of the problem—he might have preferred “climate chaos” or “climate meltdown.”



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GOING PLACES: ATLANTA

Taking a Bite Out of the Big Peach

METRO ATLANTA is better known for sprawl and traffic than for eco consciousness. But Southern-fried environmentalism is sizzling across the city's rejuvenating core. Suburbanites desperate to shorten their commutes have joined hip, young creatives as they convert splotches of urban waste-

land into New Urbanist neighborhoods. Mainly because of a commitment by Emory University, Atlanta is now among the nation's leaders in LEED-certified construction. And even—gasp—streetcars are starting to creep into the dreams of residents' auto-maniac culture. —Ken Edelstein



Light scoops allow natural light to filter into the galleries of Atlanta's High Museum.

WORTH SEEING

The vision of Internet-pioneer-turned-green-developer Charles Brewer, [Glenwood Park](http://glenwoodpark.com) (glenwoodpark.com) is an eco-village-within-the-city that includes houses, apartments, shops, offices, and public spaces. The best thing about Glenwood Park is that, unlike many other developments in Atlanta, it's designed to get people out of their cars. Houses here follow "Earthcraft" principles established by the [Southface Energy Institute](http://southface.org) (southface.org), which is housed in its own green building downtown. Exhibits at the [Museum of Design Atlanta](http://museumofdesign.org) (museumofdesign.org) downtown and the Fernbank Museum of Natural History often focus on environmental issues; if your taste runs to fine art, visit the High Museum, which opened in 2005 and is lit mostly by the sun.



GET OUTSIDE

Now that so many metro-area trees have given way to development, civic boosters boast less often that Atlanta is "The City in a Forest." But nearby natural attractions still abound. Among the highlights: a float down the [Chattahoochee River](http://nps.gov/chat) (nps.gov/chat) and a hike in [Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park](http://nps.gov/kemo) (nps.gov/kemo). Two hours north, in the [Blue Ridge mountains](http://nps.gov/blu), you'll find the start of the [Appalachian Trail](http://nps.gov/trail) and whitewater rafting on the [Chattooga River](http://southeasternexpeditions.com) (southeasternexpeditions.com).

EAT UP

In addition to new farmers' markets, fine restaurants and even a microbrewery use locally grown, organic ingredients. Michael Tuohy's restaurant, [Woodfire Grill](http://woodfiregrill.com) (woodfiregrill.com), on Cheshire Bridge Road near Midtown, relies on a network of nearby organic farmers to offer a seasonal menu. Chef Linton Hopkins's [Restaurant Eugene](http://restauranteugene.com) (restauranteugene.com), in lower Buckhead, brings a Southern sensibility to the local organics movement. The [5 Seasons Brewery](http://5seasonsbrewing.com) (5seasonsbrewing.com) in Sandy Springs extends the concept to pub food and the city's finest beers and ales.



Chef David Larkworthy of 5 Seasons Brewery

SHOPPING

[Stefan's](http://stefansvintage.com) (stefansvintage.com) is just one of several vintage clothing stores in the alt-culture Little Five Points district. A goldmine of vintage, mid-century modern home furnishings can be found at [City Issue](http://cityissue.com) (cityissue.com), on Peachtree Street in Buckhead. By [Hand South](http://handandsouth.com) ([byhandsouth.com](http://handandsouth.com)) is a gallery in Decatur that features jewelry and a variety of other hand-crafted products.



GETTING AROUND

The [Marta](http://itsmarta.com) rail system (itsmarta.com) whisks visitors from the airport to downtown and up most of the famed Peachtree corridor. [Cycling enthusiasts](http://pathfoundation.org) will enjoy a network of paths ([path foundation.org](http://pathfoundation.org)) to some of the city's major sites, including the Carter Center, Little Five Points, Decatur, and Stone Mountain Park.

RING IN THE NEW

Georgia Tech architecture student Ryan Gravel conceived Atlanta's most ambitious makeover since General Sherman torched the town in 1864. Gravel noticed a loop of unused rail lines around downtown. Now the tracks and rights-of-way are being converted into the [Beltline](http://beltline.org) (beltline.org), an "emerald necklace" of new parks connected by streetcars. The ambitious scheme is projected to require about \$2.5 billion and 25 years to complete. But the city has already approved financing and has begun to buy property. Tours of the area are offered regularly.

PLENTY LABS

Squeeze Play

Recently I **grossed myself out** by reading the ingredient list on my tube of toothpaste. Mine had sodium saccharine in it, an artificial sweetener. Yuk. When I looked for an alternative, I was astounded by the number of natural toothpastes on the market today. I tested a dozen of them for my thrice-a-day brushing habit (gum just doesn't cut it after lunch). Here are my favorites. —Deborah Snoonian



J/A/S/O/N
Power Smile All Natural Whitening CoQ10 Tooth Gel
 \$5.49
 at natural food stores
 Worth trying for the name alone—I mean, really, who doesn't want a power smile? This gel with a faint amber tint had a slightly medicinal whiff, but it foamed up well and my pearly whites felt squeaky-clean afterward.



Kiss My Face
Triple Action Certified Organic Aloe Vera Toothpaste CoQ10 Tooth Gel
 \$6
 kissmyface.com
 Unlike many brands I tried, this sage-green gel left my gums feeling powerfully tingly. It does smell slightly of aloe vera, so don't mistake it for your moisturizer.



The Natural Dentist
Healthy Teeth & Gums Toothpaste, fluoride-free with Xylitol
 \$5.99
 thenaturaldentist.com
 A good choice if you're switching to a natural brand for the first time, this reassuringly familiar-looking white paste got the job done.



TheraNeem
Herbal Neem Toothpaste
 \$7.49
 organixshop.com
 Once I got past its unappetizing pinky-beige color, I liked this paste a lot. It produced a mouthful of very fine bubbles when I brushed. The company also sells a mouthwash and an herbal extract for dental health.



Weleda
Salt Toothpaste
 \$4.99
 at Whole Foods nationwide
 Who knew that good old table salt cleaned your teeth? The minty-salty taste is more refreshing than it sounds, and the slightly gritty paste was the most bracing of the bunch—an hour later my mouth still felt fresh.

THE BIG PICTURE

Batten Down the Hatches BY JESSICA HAGY



Shoppers browse at Lehman's.

BACK TO THE BUTTER CHURN

When the hardware store Lehman's opened in Kidron, Ohio, in 1955, it was rather plain. And that was the point: Most of its customers were Amish people who needed the non-electric mixers, manual mowers, and wood-burning stoves that Lehman's sold. When the '60s came around, though, back-to-the-landers took notice and found that Lehman's had all of the supplies needed for an off-the-grid homestead, from composting toilets to oil lamps. Lehman's became the store for anyone seeking "products for simple, self-sufficient living," as its slogan says.

These days, a new generation of environmentalists is discovering that there is much to be learned from the plain ways of the Amish. Many new customers are eager to trade in their exhaust-spewing lawn mower for an old-fashioned reel mower or any of the hundreds of other "original" green products the store sells. "Our environmentalist customers now aren't countercultural like the hippies were," says Glenda Lehman-Ervin, daughter of Lehman's founder Jay Lehman. "Now they're young people who are college educated and want to live in the world, be a part of the world, but lessen their impact on it."

Lehman's products aren't the only thing green about the store. An expansion of the storefront this summer incorporated green building principles into the new design. The addition was built with some salvaged materials, insulated with recycled newspapers, and is partially heated with wood cut from the lot cleared for the expansion.

Lehman's sells some of its products online (lehmans.com) using "high tech to sell low tech," says Lehman-Ervin. A customer can now sit in Starbucks and use an iPhone to order a hand wringer that dries clothes without electricity. The product is not so different from the one the pioneers used (the wringer, not the iPhone). The store's growing customer base proves there's truth in the cliché: What's old really is new again. —Ragan Sutterfield