



EARTH DAY

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Sunday, April 22, 2012

(See section VII for ways that your church can MOBILIZE its surrounding communities for Earth Day 2012.)

Ralph Wheeler, Guest Cultural Resource Commentator
Attorney, Civil Rights Activist, and Storyteller

I. Introduction

Today's lection focuses on Earth Day. The 2012 theme for Earth Day is **MOBILIZE THE EARTH**. Particular attention is paid to all of the inhabitants of God's earth, including creatures of every background and species. We humans, as earth's stewards, have unique obligations and responsibilities for the planet earth and for the other creatures that co-inhabit the earth.

Good stewardship demands that we use earth's resources responsibly—in ways that do not injure either earth or its resources, and in ways that do not injure any other inhabitants. Poor

stewardship (e.g., pollution, destruction of natural resources, unrestrained development, waste of resources, over fishing, destruction of animal food sources and animal habitats, etc.) will ultimately lead to our own demise—our quality of life.

We are all part of earth's praise that glorifies God. Injury to one is injury to all, and destruction of one may ultimately lead to destruction of all. At minimum, it diminishes the quality of the praise. Our governments, families, institutions, and individual lives should reflect these truths. Earth Day is the day to recommit ourselves to these and other principles that honor this home—EARTH—God has given us.

The Church has a significant role to play in educating the world and building respect for the earth and its inhabitants. Using various cultural resources, this can be done through activities, dance, literature, music, sermons, prayers, teachings, programs, etc. It can be done by every department of every congregation. It's past time that churches mobilize to save the earth.

II. Brief History of Earth Day and 2012 Earth Day Focus

Video [HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?v=d1yy3CfT114](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1yy3CfT114)

Earth Day was established to focus the world's attention on the earth's natural environment and the harm that was being done to it and how we could stop the harm. This year, the Earth Day celebration turns forty-two years old. Earth Day is not a religious holiday and it is not a national holiday, where businesses close, workers get the day off, or the Post Office is closed. It is intended to be a day of focused environmental teaching and action.¹

The genesis of current Earth Day celebrations grew out of a 1969 UNESCO Conference in San Francisco, California. Ultimately, the United Nations adopted a Proclamation endorsing annual observations of Earth Day.

In the United States, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson put out a clarion call for an environmental teach-in, to be held on April 22, 1970. Wisconsin Senator Nelson modeled his environmental teach-in on anti-Viet Nam war teach-ins. Students at American colleges and universities served as a natural organizing base for the environmental teach-ins.

That year (1970), approximately twenty million Americans, representing thousands of colleges, universities, primary and secondary schools, and hundreds of local communities, participated in the pro-earth and pro-environment activities. It was the start of a national movement that would later become a world-wide movement.²

Earth Day, April 22, is now celebrated each year in more than 175 countries by more than 500 million people. April 22 was designated International Mother Earth Day in 2009 by the United Nations.

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5H32zluGSU>

Earth Day 2012: MOBILIZE THE EARTH

This year, the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day, environmental organizers, planners, and organizations all over the planet are focused on one thing: **saving earth through mobilizing countries, states, cities, communities, organizations, corporations, churches and individuals.** Everyone is being asked to do their part in helping to reclaim our rivers, streams, lakes, and oceans, along with our air.³

It means advocating to make world leaders, in every sphere, take sustained, responsible actions to protect earth. It also means: (a) building a green economy to create clean jobs; (b) fighting for global policies on climate change; (c) adopting and implementing standards to ensure responsible, sustainable development; and (d) advancing a global environmental awareness.

The ultimate message is: we have one planet called earth and we must have a singular focus, if earth is to be reclaimed, restored for this and future generations. Earth Day is the day we all can refocus and recommit.



III. Early Lessons of Personal Stewardship

As a child growing up in Mississippi, I was taught numerous lessons of personal stewardship concerning the earth, its inhabitants, and resources. Those lessons were taught at home, school, and church. Those lessons were reinforced daily and ultimately led to my life's work as an environmental and land use attorney.

I grew up on a large expanse of land that was purchased for our family by my great-paternal grandparents. Some of our acreage was developed with family homes. Some of it was used for commercial agricultural purposes, and the remainder was used as open space for hunting, fishing, animal husbandry, and timber development.

Early on, my parents and grandparents taught me the importance of that land to our family—how my great-grandparents, who worked under oppressive conditions, saved what they earned so that they could purchase land for their own independence and the future of their offspring.

That land, a non-renewable resource, served, and still serves, as a source of life for members of our family. It sustained us. It was a gift from God; and, we were taught to be thankful and to treat it with care.

Harsh fertilizers were avoided to prevent poisoning the land. The vegetable crops were rotated to avoid undue loss of soil nutrients. At times, sections of the farm land were allowed to lay fallow to enable it to replenish itself. Fire breaks were created to prevent and control forest fires. Fishing and hunting on our land were done for food purposes and not for sport.

My home chores were also an important training ground for me. They taught me how to respect and care for our animals: horses, dogs, chickens, ducks, cows, goats, and hogs. They had to be fed, watered, and given restorative health care, when necessary. Some of them had to be exercised and groomed.

At school, my ninth grade Vocational Agriculture teacher took me and other students of his class on trips to colleges, universities, and other institutions to participate in agricultural meets and experiments and public speaking contests. Some of those contests had an environmental protection focus. Professor Barron possessed a deep love and respect for the earth and he generously imparted his environmental philosophy and knowledge to his students. He taught us the rudiments of responsible farming—methodologies that increased yields without damaging the land. He taught lessons of environmental stewardship.

All of this was reinforced by my Sunday school, Baptist Training Union, and Vacation Bible School lessons. There, the earth, as home, was often compared to the Garden of Eden. I was taught we are its stewards and that stewardship is an obligation, not a choice.

I still vividly recall some of the felt-board picture illustrations that were presented to us by the late Mrs. Alene Russell. We sat at rapt attention as she brought Bible lessons to life, at the Holy Ghost Missionary Baptist Church. Those early lessons still guide me in my walk.

IV. A Personal Praise of Closure

In mid-January 2010, our fifteen-year-old cat, Hezekiah, suddenly died. It was a total shock to us. We adopted Hezekiah and his sister when they were only four weeks old. For fifteen years we had been totally responsible of them. They were members of the family. We loved them and they loved us.

It occurred to us that, as with our human loved ones, Hezekiah's death did not end our care responsibilities. As his stewards, we were responsible for giving him a proper burial, notifying proper authorities; and, to assist us with our grief and closure, we needed to give notice to our friends and family.

We did what we would do for any human member of our family. Animals in our care are deserving of no less respect at their death. To that end, we praised God for the fifteen years He gave us with Hezekiah.⁴ We sent the following notice to our friends and family

HEZEKIAH'S DEPARTURE NOTICE

Sadly, we announce the death of our friend, companion and loved one. Our 15 year old male cat, Prince Hezekiah Wheeler, passed suddenly this past Friday night, January 15, 2010. We are still in shock.

Hezekiah was born in 1995; and, he and his sister, Jewel, came to live with us about four weeks later.

Many of you remember Hezekiah as a tall, long-legged, slender, jet black, yellow-eyed shy cat who did not take to new friends easily. He walked with a swagger, often preening to show off his form. He was quiet and reserved. However, once he got past his initial reservations he became a loyal, loving friend.

Hezekiah was a very independent soul and he loved any kind of sea food. In fact, he had a passion for eating. He didn't get sea food that often. For years, we held steadfast and refused to give him any food from the table (his sister Jewel never asked for any). However, in the last several months, Hezekiah sat with us for weekly Sunday dinner and munched on special dinner fixings from his "Sunday Dinner Bowl." He enjoyed every minute of it.

Hezekiah usually deferred to his sister, except at meal time. He loved her dearly. He often assisted her in her grooming, and he often gave her the best seats in the house. Most of the time, he allowed her to boss him, until he tired of her. Then, he would firmly put her in check, letting her know he was no push-over.

Hezekiah slipped quietly away; never letting on it was his time to leave. Our hearts are aching for his royal walk, independent streak, and loving spirit—the black prince of the Fruitvale District. His sister Jewel is in deep depression.

Today, we buried Hezekiah with his Sunday dinner bowl, from which he ate his Sunday table beggings. We buried him with his little ball that he often played with for long periods of time. We buried him with a little of his dried food, so he will never go hungry in the next life. We buried him with a piece of yellow ribbon, just to remind him of how much we loved the color of his eyes. We buried him wrapped in purple, acknowledging his royal line. And, we buried him wrapped in African sackcloth, reminding him that he was an African ebony prince. We also included a note, in case he loses his way.

We praise God for his life and his love.

Please keep his sister, Jewel, and us in your prayers.

V. Lessons from Rabbits



African American writings, especially black folktales, are filled with the use of animals to tell stories about how the earth should be respected and how animals should be treated by humans. Much of that literature also shows the inter-connectedness of all life on earth.

Other such stories focus on the prowess, smarts, wisdom, and shrewdness of animals. Often they outsmart the human characters in stories. Sometimes one wonders who is managing whom. Cats, dogs, buzzards, eagles, owls, hawks, turtles, snakes, monkeys, mules, rabbits, foxes, alligators, lions, tigers, elephants, and wolves are but a few of the animals that are often portrayed in black literature.

They appear in both children and adult literature. They present many different faces of the magnificence of God's creatures. They are crafty, creative, funny, helpful, intelligent, industrious, jovial, sad, sullen, magnanimous, witty, and wise. These animal characters usually lift the message of the story off the pages for the human reader.

In honor of Earth Day, the following short story uses rabbits to illustrate and impart important messages about animal abuse, animal conservation, and animal stewardship.

A FIELD OF RABBITS : A Short Story

Long ago, when rabbits still had long tails and chickens, cows, goats, sheep, birds, and other animals could talk, a call went out to all the different species of the animal world. The call was for an all-animal summit. Humans were also invited. Each species was asked to select two representatives to attend the summit.

The invitation, which was sent by the rabbits of Berryhill, Mississippi, to all of the earth's living animal species on behalf of the world's entire rabbit species, indicated that the primary purpose of the summit was to determine whether the rabbit species was worthy of special protection and consideration for national heritage status.

Although it was anyone's guess as to what the summit's outcome would produce, the mere fact that enough votes were actually obtained to hold the summit was a major rabbit accomplishment. The summit's call was supported by two-thirds of the world's animal species.

The world's rabbit species, each year, for twenty-five consecutive years, had petitioned the other world animals to hold a summit for this same purpose. However, each time the rabbits failed to obtain sufficient signatures from the other animals. So, the last time the rabbits tried and failed, they were told they could not circulate a new petition for another one hundred years.

Fearing for their very existence, the rabbits cut off their own tails, went underground and swore they would never ever live above ground again until a summit was held and they were granted special protections and national heritage status. The rabbits decided that life above ground had become too dangerous for them. They were being attacked on every front. Too many species had turned against the rabbits. And too many other animals had begun to prey on them for food, sport, and other reasons.

The rabbits were afraid they would soon become extinct. So, they reasoned that if no one else would protect them, they had to take drastic action to protect self.

Many of the other animals said the rabbits were selfish. The snakes said: "We are all here to help meet each other's needs. All of us have to give a little and take a little. Surely, the rabbits don't think they are the only ones having a few problems. They, of all the species, should understand. After all, they have one of the best abilities among all of us to replenish themselves. They have babies without end. So, what's the big deal, if we take a few hares here and there?"

The rabbits couldn't believe what they were hearing. They knew several of the other animal species were jealous of them because of their long floppy ears, their big pretty eyes, their large perfect teeth, and their graceful hopping abilities. But the rabbits had no idea that some of the other animals disliked them because they couldn't reproduce like the rabbits could reproduce. Everything began to make sense for the rabbits. Now they began to understand why their babies were attacked so often. But that was only one of the rabbits' problems.

The other animals also coveted the rabbits' lovely coats of hair. They came in several different colors—from shades of blue black to pure white, with various colors of red, brown, and grey in between. During the winter months, the rabbits' hair was very thick and warm—so thick and warm that the rabbits often didn't have to worry about the cold weather, even if it snowed.

When it was otherwise safe, the rabbits would play in the snow, and they loved to awaken early and sit in the sun on frosty mornings. This angered some of the other animal species. Some of them said the rabbits were boastful and vain.

Others used the rabbits' hair for clothing; paddings for their nests, lairs, and homes; gifts for their friends; and as decorations for their bodies.

None of them had any shame.

They paraded around the earth as if the rabbits' hair belonged to them and was created for their enjoyment. The humans had the audacity to claim God himself had ordained that the rabbit, along with all other

species, were created by God to be subject to humans' commands, needs, and whims. Thus, they argued, they were free to do whatever they wanted to do with the rabbit. He was theirs for the taking.

The rabbits were vegetarians. They ate only foods that could replenish themselves. But many other animals attacked and killed the rabbits for food. For some species, rabbit meat had become a delicacy. It was served in the best of homes, at sidewalk cafes, in five-star restaurants, on the finest dinner tables, and at any other place where carnivores gathered and food was partaken.

Smothered rabbit, stewed rabbit, French fried rabbit, rabbit meat in garlic sauce, baked rabbit, bar-b-queed rabbit, and even rabbit-tar tar were eaten from morning 'til night. All kinds of species feasted on the rabbits, especially many humans.

Others hunted and chased the rabbits just for sport. Sometimes they would hunt and chase the poor rabbits for hours upon hours, until the rabbits' little legs and hearts would simply give out, and the rabbits would die of thirst, heat strokes, exhaustion, heart attacks, or fright.

The rabbits got little rest. They had to sleep with their eyes open. They were hunted day and night—from morning to evening and from midnight to sunrise. The world's rabbit population always had to be on guard. There was no letting up for them.

So, early one morning, just before the break of day, when all the other animals were either asleep or busy with other business, rabbits all over the world sneaked away to an underground place of retreat that only rabbits and a few of their special friends knew existed.

The rabbits left no good-bye notes. And, they gave no notice of when or, for that matter, if they might ever return. Only a few of their very, very close friends—friends like the brier patch, the wild grass, certain small birds, large tree trunks, and the carrots and lettuces—had any clue as to where the rabbits had gone. Their friends were as closemouthed as snapping turtles. Of course, the rabbits had special relationships with those species.

The rabbits and their close friends created an underground railroad system. A coded message system was also used. The coded message system was based on a long-forgotten language of an extinct animal civilization that no one on earth, except a few of the rabbits, remembered or even knew existed.

The rabbits taught the ancient language and coded message system to some of their very close and trusted friends so messages could be passed back and forth between them. The mockingbird, a very close friend of the rabbits, became an expert speaker of the ancient language.

The rabbits' leadership council decided early on that, for safety reasons, only a select few would ever be given the key to the coded message system. The council chose only those rabbits and trusted friends that they knew would never ever give the code to anyone else. They all signed a secret pledge, created in the ancient coded language, vowing that they would never reveal any portion of the coded message system, even under the threat of death.

When the rabbits' enemies learned that all the rabbits had disappeared, they were furious. I mean furious. The hawks said, "The nerve of those rabbits." The owls said, "Who do they think they are? Wait until we get our claws on them." The rattlesnakes, one of the rabbits' main predators, became so upset about the rabbits' departure that they went into a shaking frenzy. They shook so hard all of their rattlers fell off. They couldn't imagine what they would do without their precious rabbit meat. They were addicted.

But they got no sympathy from any of the other carnivores. In fact, the buzzards accused the rattlesnakes of overreacting. The buzzards didn't care too much for the rattlesnakes anyway, because they seldom left anything for the buzzards to eat after they had their meals.

So the buzzards told the rattlesnakes, "You better calm down, before you become somebody's meal." The rattlesnake looked at the buzzard with slithering rage. The buzzards just looked back at the rattlesnakes and laughed. Then, they flapped their wings and flew high into the air. They kept circling the rattlesnakes as a reminder that the buzzard was a patient bird.

From their secret underground sanctuary, the rabbits began to prepare for the summit. Some of the rabbits thought the positive vote for the summit might be a hoax—a way of getting the rabbits to emerge from their secret hiding place so they could be devoured by their enemies.

The rabbits went back and forth, but they ultimately decided the vote was not a hoax—it was real. THEY DECIDED TO TAKE THE RISK. The summit vote had a major condition that had to be performed by the rabbits before the summit VOTE could TAKE PLACE.

A clever contingent of the rabbits' foes was able to convince a majority of the summit representatives to require the rabbits to perform a task that they were sure the rabbits could not perform. If the rabbits failed to perform the task, they would never again be able to totally disappear and go underground. "Then," they thought, "things could return to normal and once again there would be plenty of GOOD, FRESH rabbit meat to eat."

The rabbits' task was this: before the summit could start, the rabbits had to send an envoy of young, tender rabbits to perform an original song that had to be written by one of the rabbits. The other animals were convinced the rabbits would never be able to satisfy this condition. First, they had never heard of a rabbit being able to read or write. And, there was no rabbit on earth that could sing. They couldn't even talk. All rabbits could do was EAT AND RUN.

Exactly at twelve noon, on the day of the summit, with all of the animal representatives gathered in the one of the largest hollows in Berry Hill, twenty-five young rabbits, dressed in crisp black, red, and green robes, and followed by a battalion of strong male rabbits, emerged from the shadows of the forest surrounding the hollow. Silently, they marched into the center of the hollow. A complete hush fell over the other animals.

Immediately, the twenty-five young rabbits began to sing the following song:

YOU CAN'T HOLD US DOWN

Like a sunrise/with no place to go/like a rainbow/without a pot of gold/
Like a moonbeam/that's never ever seen/like a lonely child/we will always dream/

No, you can't hold us down/our spirit will rise again/you can't hold us down/
As long as we're alive/you can't hold us down/you'll never destroy our pride/

You can't hold us down/truth is on our side/no, you can't hold us down/
Like a baby's cry/no one ever hears/like a wounded heart/that never ever heals/
Like a darkened room/where no light appears/like seeds of hope and joy/ we
will conquer all fears/

Like a fleeting sound/that lingers past its time/like the passions of a lover/
That turn into a crime/like private memories/that hide between the lines/like
music for the soul/our story must be told/

No, you can't hold us down/no, you can't hold us down/no, you can't hold us
down/our spirit will rise again/no, you can't hold us down/

As long as we're alive/you can't hold us down/you'll never take our pride/
No, you can't hold us down/truth is on our side/ no, you can't hold us down/
No, you can't hold us down/no, you can't hold us down/you can't hold us down/⁵

When the singing stopped, the summit delegates sat spellbound—unable to believe what they had just witnessed. They were in tears. Suddenly, they all burst into wild applause.

During the applause, an old man, using a walking stick, made his way from the back of the crowd to the center of the hollow where the young rabbits stood. He opened his arms very wide and embraced as many of the young rabbits as he could. He then turned to face the delegates and spoke these words:

“My fellow delegates—my name is Shootin' George. I'm 104 years old. I have lived here in Berry Hill all my life. I know most of you by name or sight. For seventy-five years, I hunted rabbits. I killed a lot of rabbits. I ate a lot of rabbits. I even sold a lot of rabbits. I also gave a lot rabbits away to my friends and family.

But one day, I came to my senses and I put my hunting guns away, 'cause I had a dream. The Lawd showed me that I was killing too many rabbits. In that dream, I saw a little, bitty baby rabbit whose mother I had killed and eaten. The Lawd asked me: what if your mother had been taken from you, when you were only a baby. What would you have done?

I cried and asked the Lawd to forgive me and He did. He told me to stop killing rabbits. I did. He also told me to talk to you today—to tell you 'bout my dream. He told me to tell you that the next time the rabbits disappear, it will be for good. It will also be a sign that it won't be long before we all disappear. The Lawd said we are all connected. And, we are all responsible for each other. When one link in the chain is broken, it is no longer a real chain. The Lawd said this is the only warning we will get.”

At that point, the old man hobbled slowly back to his seat.

Then, the summit delegation, without further discussion, voted unanimously to approve the rabbits' petition for special protection and national heritage status. All of the rabbits came forth from their secret hiding

place. There was celebration, singing, and dancing until the late hours of the evening. All creatures were on one accord.⁶

These lessons from the rabbits should be embraced by us and taught at an early age, to our children and their offspring. Then we and they will develop a proper respect for the earth and the other co-inhabitants of this planet. What greater gift can we give to our children—an abiding respect and love for their home—EARTH.

An Earth Day Video for kids

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVdsHp8D_jM&feature=related

20 Ways Children Can Help Save the Earth

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBKWawA5WeQ&feature=related>

VI. Songs for This Moment on the Calendar

The following songs can be used in Earth Day programs and services:

This Is My Father's World

This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres. This is my Father's world!
I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees,
Of skies and seas—His hand the wonders wrought
This is my Father's world—The birds their carols
raise; The morning light, sun shining bright,
Declares its Maker's praise. This is my Father's world!
He shines in all that's fair; In the rustling grass
I hear Him pass—He speaks to me every-where.⁷

All Creatures of Our God and King

All creatures of our God and King, Lift up your voice and with us sing:
Alleluia, Alleluia! Thou burning sun with golden beam, Thou silver
Moon with softer gleam: O praise Him, O praise Him!
Alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia!
Dear mother earth, who day by day, Unclouds that sail in hea'n a-long,
O praise Him! Alleluia! The flow'rs and fruits that in thee grow, Let
Them His glory also show; O praise Him, O praise Him! Alleluia,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let all things their Creator bless, And worship Him in humbleness—
O praise Him! Alleluia! Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son, And
Praise the Spirit, Three in One: O praise Him, O praise Him! Alleluia
Alleluia! Alleluia!⁸

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely, And long for heav'n and home;
When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: his eye is
On the sparrow, And I know He watches me; His eye is on the
Sparrow, and I know He watches me. I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free; For His eye is on the sparrow, And I
Know He watches me.⁹

VII. Making Earth Day a Memorable Learning Moment

To inspire congregations to be more purposeful about their stewardship obligations for the earth, use of its resources, and the environmental inheritance they are bequeathing to future generations, Church leaders should strongly embrace Earth Day.

It is a time to educate and a time to build an environmental awareness of important local, national, and global environmental issues that affect us all. The following activities can be used to celebrate Earth Day, inspire congregations, and educate congregants:

1. **Hold an Earth Day Environmental Teach-in:** Invite environmental experts from local colleges, universities, schools, and activist organizations. Use films, music, lectures, poetry, dance, and art to educate, inform, and inspire. Make sure it involves strong audience participation. Include games, prizes, and contests and advertise through all possible means: texting, Facebook, e-mail blasts, radio, fliers, television, Twitter, and newspapers.
2. **Conduct an Earth Day essay contest:** Include prizes for different age groups. Partner with local TV, radio, and internet companies to promote and broadcast the contest.
3. **Hold an Earth Day Parade:** Invite parishioners and community members to bring their pets and have a “Blessing of the Animals” during the parade.
4. **Hold a “Save the Earth Day” Program:** Invite recycling agencies, energy companies, water companies, gas companies, garbage contractors, public officials, and other entities and have them teach participants about existing incentives and benefits of recycling, energy preservation, water conservation, etc.
5. **Organize an Animal Visitation Program** that takes animals to schools, hospitals, nursing homes, senior citizen centers, and other institutions, to visit with students, patients, and the elderly.

6. **Hold an Earth Day-themed Photography contest:** Give kids disposable cameras and have them photograph images in their community that relate to the Earth Day theme in your community. Using age- and gender-diverse judges, select winning photographs, award certificates, and publish all photographs at the church and on the church's website. Use the inside of the church as a gallery. Also, include the winning photographs in the church bulletin and send them to local newspapers.
7. **Organize a trip to the local zoo or an animal preserve for children and teens.** Afterwards, hold a teach-in about human co-existence with other animals, animal abuse, animal stewardship, and the use of animals in zoos, preserves, circuses, etc.
8. **Hold an Earth Day prayer meeting.**
9. **Conduct an Earth Day Dance and Poetry presentation.**
10. **Adopt a community park or creek and be responsible for quarterly clean-ups.** You can do this and any of the ideas above in conjunction with other churches and community groups!

Notes

1. Online location: <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/world/earth-day>
2. Online location: <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-history-movement>
3. Online location: <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2012>
4. Wheeler, Ralph. "Hezekiah's Departure Notice," part of the unpublished Wheeler family papers, January 2010.
5. Wheeler, Ralph. "You Can't Hold Us Down." INDIE: Oakland, CA, 2012.
6. Wheeler, Ralph. "A Field of Rabbits: A Short Story," 2011.
7. "This Is My Father's World." African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #149
8. "All Creatures of Our God and King." African American Heritage Hymnal. #147
9. "His Eye Is on the Sparrow." African American Heritage Hymnal. #143