

Earth Day was dreamed up in the 1960's and came to fruition in 1970 but has had seemingly minimal success over the years. A statesman may make a speech or pose for a photo, a song may be written about change, and there may be some rally or festival, but as big and important as the earth is, it's day isn't.

39.721189, -105.105975 If you enter these coordinates into Google Maps it will take you to a tree that I helped plant in 1990. While Earth Day itself landed on a Sunday that year, my fourth grade class participated on Friday afternoon with the planting of three trees on the school's grounds. Our teachers told us it was a big deal – we were planting trees, planning for the future, and making a difference. It was such a big deal that The Denver Post sent a reporter to cover the momentous occasion.

Teachers have such high aspirations for their students. Honestly, we just were excited to be outside on a sunny day and hoped to get our picture in the newspaper. While my picture never made it, my statement to the reporter was published (and attributed to Seth Larue) and a copy resides in a boxed-up scrapbook.

I don't understand why Earth Day hasn't moved from the fringes and into the mainstream. It seems to me that the Earth – the only place we have to live – would be kind of a big priority for us all. We only have one (and we're not heading to Mars anytime soon) so it's only logical that we should do our best to take care of what we have. But we don't.

Perhaps part of our problem lies in the fact that we can't think long-term. It's difficult for many of us to imagine what we'll be doing five years from now; trying to imagine what our great-great grandchildren will be doing in fifty years is nearly impossible. For us to try and think long-term about the earth is incomprehensible.

Perhaps part of our problem lies in the fact that we just don't think about the earth. Sure, it gives us water, food, and oxygen, but we don't think about those things either - we're disconnected. We turn a faucet handle and we have clean water. We go to HEB and have all the food we could ever desire. We sit in our rooms with air purifiers and conditioners in total comfort. We don't think about where these things come from (and most of the time we don't care where they come from), as long as we have them at hand.

Perhaps part of our problem lies in the fact that it's overwhelming. When we look at the facts about climate change and the ways governments are handling it, when we witness the changes within one generation and realize that no one is doing anything helpful, we toss up our hands in frustration. Why should we recycle that aluminum can or compost that napkin when my neighbor is dumping his used motor oil in the alley behind his house? If everyone else isn't going to participate, why should I?

It's my hope the church will understand that the care of the earth isn't just an ecological issue – it's a spiritual issue. God has given us this gift to care for, to live in, to enjoy, and with this gifting we are to treat it with attention and respect. We must do all we can to be good stewards in our homes, in our congregations, and in our communities. Let's work with our denominations, families, and churches to do all we can to make every day Earth Day.