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# KEYNOTE

**REPRESENTING GOD TO CREATION:  
THE *IMAGO DEI* IN ACTION**  
by Leonard Pine

## AN UNNATURAL MESS

The recent presidential campaign featured environmental concerns as a prime issue in the debates. I will not endeavor to examine or justify any of the candidates' positions on the matter; I only make the observation. Our departing President has been busy in his efforts to seal off huge chunks of American soil from productive use, and politicians all over the country are made and broken depending upon their stance on environmental policies. People are going to jail and paying huge fines when the government steps in and declares the drainage ditch in their yard a wetlands. A frequent assertion on television programs from "National Geographic Explorer" to "The Magic Schoolbus" is that if man would just quit messing around with the environment, everything would be all right.

Inconsistently, the same people who moan about man's introduction of non-native species encourage policies that demonstrably have the same destructive tendencies. In Nevada, for instance, environmentalists bewail the dramatic decline in sage grouse and deer populations, blaming hunters and farmers for the decline. But the reality is that eco-laws preventing the humane control of mountain lion and coyote populations (natural predators of deer) have led to exploding populations of these predators, with rapidly shrinking deer numbers as the "natural" result. Laws protecting the raven (these scavengers love grouse eggs) have

had similar results among sage grouse. Statistics of animals taken by hunters and farmers, on the other hand, have not significantly changed in years. This sort of thing is rampant in our country and our world. The lunacy seems not to stop, and it comes from the highest levels of government and society.

The United Nations has drawn up a program called Agenda 21, with the stated goal of achieving "sustainable development" of human population and use of the earth's resources. On March 21-23, 1996, a group of more than 100 free market conservationists — scholars, activists, and religious leaders — went to Kansas City to attend a conference exploring the subject "Global Environmentalism: Agenda 21's Impact on America." William Norman Grigg examines the UN's agenda in his excellent article "Battle for Sustainable Freedom," in *The New American*, Vol. 12, No. 09, April 29, 1996 ([www.thenewamerican.com/tna/1996/04-29-1996/vol12no09\\_sustainable\\_freedom.htm](http://www.thenewamerican.com/tna/1996/04-29-1996/vol12no09_sustainable_freedom.htm)). Mr. Grigg observes:

As Dr. Michael Coffman [of Environmental Perspectives, Inc.] warned, the premise of sustainable development is that "human society, particularly industrial society, is a cancer on the planet and must be eradicated." Panelists at the conference documented that the realization of the UN's designs would require the abolition of national sovereignty, central planning of the world economy, systematic disruption of the traditional family, a radical reduction in the human population, and the adoption of a pre-industrial standard of living for those allowed to inhabit the earth.

Grigg quotes John Davis, editor of the Wildlands Project's journal *Wild Earth*, as saying, "Everything civilized must go...." Even though President Clinton's signing of the Biodiversity Treaty, which would have implemented the forced takeover of roughly half the land area of the United States, was not ratified by the Senate, the madness goes on in the Kyoto Protocol, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the efforts of our own Department of Energy. Environmentalism will be the excuse to return the world to peasantry (the UN's words, not mine) under the control of a few, and it's happening now. For more on this, see Jennifer Gritt's article "Eco-socialist Shell Game," *The New American*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1/29, 2000 ([www.thenewamerican.com/tina/2001/01-29-2001/vol17no03\\_ecosocialist.htm](http://www.thenewamerican.com/tina/2001/01-29-2001/vol17no03_ecosocialist.htm)).

What has brought about the foolishness and perversity of the environmental agenda? Grigg has this to say in "Battle for Sustainable Freedom":

In her address to the [Kansas City] conference, Representative Helen Chenoweth pointed out that the concept of "sustainable development" is inspired by a religious worldview — "a cloudy mixture of earth worship, pagan mysticism, and folklore." That worldview was endorsed by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt during a November 21st address to the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, in which he condemned traditional Christianity and exalted pagan nature worship as the basis for a new social "covenant." Chenoweth noted that Babbitt "really believes nature and the natural landscape are literally holy and that anything we do on the landscape is sacrilegious — that we're disturbing his temple."

Babbitt is not unique in his devotion to eco-paganism. Vice President Al Gore's

oporific opus *Earth in the Balance* dismisses Christianity and other monotheistic religions as inadequate for the needs of contemporary society and urges the enshrinement of a "pan-religious perspective" as the basis of a world spiritual tradition. Furthermore, the UN Environmental Programme's Global Biodiversity Assessment (GBA), a 1,140-page document which provides the theoretical and conceptual basis for the world body's environmental agenda, maintains that sustainable development will require the abolition of biblical civilization and the adoption of the values of pre-Christian pagan societies.

#### BIBLICAL CLEANUP

Obviously, eco-paganism runs directly counter to biblical Christianity. Adam was given specific duties to fulfill as he demonstrated his faith in his Creator. First, he was responsible to "fill the earth" with offspring, as recorded in Genesis 1:28 (compare 9:1-7). "Fill" means to *fill up* or *satisfy* (compare 2:5) the earth. God's command stands in stark contrast to the world's current depopulation trends of birth control, abortion, euthanasia, genocide, and homosexuality. Instead of being "satisfied," the earth groans under man's rebellion. The Apostle Paul declares in Romans 8:19-22:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

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The problems that face our environment, in other words, are not a result of man's dominion: they are a result of man's *sinful* and *selfish* dominion. Though the ultimate redemption of the created order will not occur until our God comes again in power, creation may experience some relief now when men exercise their duty as God ordained. And chief among those duties is to fill the earth with people who will tend it and keep it. Frankly, overpopulation is nothing but an urban myth: even in China, the crowded conditions exist only in the cities. Hunger and famine are typically the result of totalitarianism and not natural causes. The technology to grow food whatever the weather is readily available to any country, if only its leaders will use it. But using food (or the lack of it) to control populations is an ancient practice of wicked men. When I was in Ukraine recently, I learned that during World War II the Nazis scraped the topsoil from Ukrainian soil by the trainloads to take back to Germany. The outrage of stealing the very land itself to impoverish a nation's inhabitants is no greater than petty tyrants the world over keeping supplies and means of production out of reach of their citizens. This is nothing more than sin.

Second, Adam and his progeny were to rule the earth as God's image. Genesis 1:26-28 reads:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the

earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

The word "image" means a *representative* or *likeness* (compare 9:6), and has nothing to do with physical appearance. Paul uses the term *ambassador* in 1 Corinthians 5 to describe the relationship between God and his minister, and the analogy is appropriate in Eden as well. Adam was to fulfill his ambassadorship in two ways: "subdue" and "till" (or, "cultivate") the earth: "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it" (Genesis 2:15, compare verse 5).

The word "subdue" (1:28; 2:19, 20) literally means to *tread upon*, but its usual connotation is to *impose rule upon*. This means that Man, as God's representative, is to know his Master's mind concerning what the flora and fauna should be producing, and take steps to ensure that the Master's will is carried out, especially by mankind. Man is to act as the divinely appointed authority in the earth, not look to nature itself to dictate a course of action. Man is to use the unorganized raw materials that God provided to create order and beauty as God's image. I am not suggesting that creation is not beautiful in its natural state, for it certainly is. Neither am I suggesting that mankind mow down whole forests to build strip malls or ski resorts. I am not in favor of hunting for hunting's sake (just so one can hang the heads of animals on the wall). I believe that God would have us creativity and responsibly use the resources available to not only sustain but enhance life on earth, and make it possible for all to enjoy the wonders of creation that God has given us to point to himself (Psalm 19:1-6).

Adam was also commanded to till or cultivate the earth. This command provides the boundaries for man's tending activities. "Cultivate" comes from the Hebrew for *serve*, which puts a check upon man's methods of subjugation. Authority does not equal license; mankind is to view himself as the servant of God and his creation, nurturing it to bring about the Master's will. The Hebrew terms for *tend* and *keep* found in Genesis 2:15 ("Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **tend** and **keep** it"), are used together in the Scriptures more than forty times. They seem to make up two parts of a whole idea. Using different English words, a priestly application is seen in Numbers 3:7, 8, "And they shall **attend** to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, **to do the work** of the tabernacle. Also they shall **attend** to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, **to do the work** of the tabernacle." The same words are used of the action of God on behalf of His children in Psalm 86:2, "**Preserve** my life; for *I am* holy: you are my God, save your **servant** who trusts in you!" Other passages chastise God's servants for not keeping the law. Whether it is the Garden of Eden, the law of God, or the priestly ministry, the idea of the two words together seems to be diligent, humble service through guarding and nurturing. Here is the foundation for biblical environmentalism!

I hope that you find this issue to be thought provoking, and that you will act upon what you learn here. Our goal in this issue is not to answer every question that could be asked, or rebut every false idea out there. (After all, environmentalists can't even agree among themselves about what the problem is or what should be

done: everyone does that which is right in his own eyes.) We do hope to provide somewhat of a foundation for understanding; a proper approach to begin the debate and sharpen our thinking on what God has to say about how man is to take care of his earth. Let us know what you think. 📖

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The earth  
is the  
LORD's,  
and all its  
fullness,  
the world  
and those  
who dwell  
therein.

*Psalm 24:1*

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# EXEGESIS

## THE THIRD COMMANDMENT AND GODLY ENVIRONMENTALISM

By John Battle

The familiar words of the third commandment have much to say about our relation to God's creation: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). At first sight, it might seem rather far-fetched to say that this commandment relates to environmentalism. But on further examination, we can see a strong connection.

First, we can discover that the "name of the Lord" includes not only his actual names in the Bible, but all the ways by which he makes himself known, including his creation. Second, to "take his name in vain" means not only using it carelessly or profanely in speech, but also misusing any of the means by which he reveals himself, including his Word and his works. This second truth directs us as we live in this world, which God has created to reveal his wisdom, power, and goodness.

### The Name of the Lord

In order to determine what the third commandment requires, we first must determine what it means when it says, "the name of the Lord thy God." Just what is meant by his "name"?

#### *Identity with God himself*

The name of God includes the many names given him in the Bible, such as "God," "the Lord," "the Almighty," "the Holy One," "Yahweh (or Jehovah),"<sup>1</sup> and

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many other names. However, the name of God means much more than these individual words. In Scripture the name of God is the equivalent of his attributes and person. To "fear his name" is just another way of saying to "fear God" himself:

"If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD." (Dt. 28:58)

Likewise, the prophet Malachi says that to insult the name of God is to insult the person of God.<sup>2</sup>

In a similar way, the "name of God" can be said to act as God himself acts: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (Ps. 20:1). When David said that the "name of God" would defend us, he meant that God himself would defend us. These illustrations show that the name of God stands for God, because it reveals to us the person of God.

#### *The varieties of God's name*

What then is the name of God? It is more than the words naming him in the Bible. It is any means by which God makes himself known to us. The Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it this way:

What is required in the third commandment? A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works. (WSC 54)

This point is particularly specified in the following question:

What is forbidden in the third commandment? A. The third commandment

forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known. (WSC 55)

By combining these two answers, we can see exactly what the Westminster divines had in mind when they spoke of the name of God. They saw it as “any thing whereby God makes himself known,” and they specified these things as his “names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.”

It is clear from Scripture that all six of these items reveal God to us. God’s names and titles in the Bible clearly show us the kind of God he is. God’s attributes, seen in his works, also are spoken of as revealing God to us:

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Rev. 15:3-4)

God’s ordinances or laws for us show us more of God. His commands reveal his moral nature, and his ceremonial laws reveal his holiness and his grace. For example, this passage in Malachi declares that the offerings God commanded the Jews in the Old Testament reveal his character to them and to the Gentiles.

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. . . . But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great

King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen. (Mal. 1:11, 14)

Of course, the Word of God reveals him to us. The Word of God has come to humans through special revelations. These were given in direct appearances, visions, dreams, prophecies, and other manners. Later, Jesus himself spoke God’s words to us.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. (Heb. 1:1-2)

This special revelation has been preserved for us in the Bible, which itself is the written Word of God. Since the Bible is the primary means by which God now makes himself known, the third commandment requires us to treat it with the same respect as we do the name of God itself, “for you have exalted above all things your name and your word” (Ps. 138:2).

The final way the Shorter Catechism defines the name of God is “his works.” As a proof text the Westminster divines listed Job 36:24, “Remember to extol his work, which men have praised in song.” This is the category that is directly related to our relation to God’s world. We are not to misuse his works, but are to treat them as revealing God.

#### *God’s works as an extension of his name*

The way that God reveals himself through his creation and his works of providence is known as general revelation. God reveals himself through his works of creation and providence. First, the creation itself declares the wisdom,

power, and goodness of God. When God created the universe, he designed it so as to demonstrate his awesome power and greatness. The sun, moon, and stars not only provide for life on the earth and measure our times and seasons, but their very magnitude and grandeur reflect the glory of God (Ps. 19:1-6). Modern scientists have become more astounded to see the precise “fine-tuning” of the physical constants of the universe. Only the slightest alteration in any of these constants would render the entire universe unfit to sustain human life anywhere.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of human beings on the earth is another manifestation of the power and glory of God. God created Adam and Eve in his own image, with rational souls. These qualities in humans reflect the rationality of God (Gen. 1:26-27). The design of many of the plants and animals, even in their most simple parts, reveals the spectacular intelligence of their Creator.<sup>4</sup> The more these are studied by scientists, the more absurd it becomes to explain them by the workings of blind chance and evolution. Enough of the existence and nature of God is shown by his creation, that he regards people’s ignorance or denial of him to be blameworthy.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Rom. 1:18-20)

Second, God’s works of providence are also means by which he makes him-

self known, and therefore are included in the third commandment. This is clearly seen in the history of Israel, as God often reminded his people of his leading of that nation.<sup>5</sup> Later, the apostle Paul reminded his readers how the history of Israel revealed God’s care for them, his punishing of their sins, and of his mercy in providing salvation.<sup>6</sup> Not only is his providence seen in the affairs of his people, but in the history of the world in general. Paul told the pagans at Lystra that God’s giving them life, rain, and plenty, revealed that he was higher than the gods they believed in. And in his speech in Athens to the Areopagus Paul declared that the history of the peoples of the world — their wars, famines, migrations, as well as their prosperity — were all ordained by God, to bring people to hope, not in themselves, but in him.<sup>7</sup>

A special work of providence is what we call miracle. A miracle can be defined as a special act of God by which he suspends the normal operations of the physical laws he has created and acts immediately in the created order. Many such acts are recorded in the Bible. They too reveal something of God, and thereby are included as a means by which he makes himself known. Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they should believe him because of the miraculous signs which he performed among them.<sup>8</sup> The book of Revelation predicts many such miraculous events to take place in the last days; that makes it all the more amazing when the people of that day continue to refuse to believe God (cf. Rev. 9:20-21).

### **Not to Take in Vain**

The third commandment says not to take the Lord’s name “in vain.” What does this mean? We can find help to answer

this question from the word's usage in the Old Testament and from the thorough definition found in the Westminster Standards.

#### *Light from the Old Testament*

The term "in vain" is from the Hebrew word *shawe*.<sup>9</sup> This term is used over fifty times in the Old Testament, and commonly is translated "vanity," or "deceit." It is not the same word that Solomon uses in Ecclesiastes for "vanity" or "meaninglessness." Rather, it carries the more negative connotation of dishonesty, the tendency to mislead. It can mean *to do something to no purpose*, with no result.<sup>10</sup> It can refer to a "vain" or non-existent god.<sup>11</sup> The name of God can be taken in vain, when people assume that his name has no power or authority.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Light from the Larger Catechism*

When the third commandment requires us not to take God's name in vain, it is forbidding us to regard his name lightly or to misuse his name. As seen in the previous section, God's name includes his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works — anything by which he makes himself known. This means that all of these manifestations of God's name are to be held in reverence. The Westminster Larger Catechism states it as follows:

What is required in the third commandment? A. The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and

the good of ourselves, and others.  
(WLC 112)

Note in this answer that the works of God, in particular, are to be "holily and reverently used" in all kinds of thoughts, words, and deeds. These deeds include a "holy profession" and an "answerable conversation," or, in other words, a "responsible way of living." This way of life is to be directed to "the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others." Thus, as we treat God's creation with respect, we are preserving it as a means by which he makes himself known, and are benefiting not only ourselves, but others. Even our everyday activities are to bless ourselves and others, and are to bring glory to God.<sup>13</sup>

In the following question the Westminster Larger Catechism lists the sins forbidden in the third commandment. Among other things, it forbids "an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using his ... works." It particularly prohibits "abusing ... the creatures, or any thing contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices."<sup>14</sup>

We are never to be like the rebellious Israelites, of whom Isaiah said, "They have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands" (Isa. 5:12). We are to treat all of God's works with appropriate reverence and respect, for the good of ourselves and others, and for the glory of God.

### **The Third Commandment and the Environment**

The person who believes and follows the Bible will view the environment in an entirely different way than other people will. Non-biblical views range all the way from total abuse and disregard

of the environment to the opposite extreme of worship of the environment. Both extremes ignore the relation the environment sustains to God and to the human race.

### *The biblical balance*

The third commandment tells us that the created world is a revelation of God, and is to be treated with the respect that that revelation deserves. Yet, while the environment reveals God's attributes, it itself is not God. God himself is the one who regulates our relation to the environment. This relation is defined in the Bible. God has placed the human race as his image-bearers over the world, to work and guard it: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen. 2:15). By naming the animals and caring for the garden, Adam took his place as a manager over the created world. When he fell into sin, God did not remove him from that position, but made his work more arduous and unrewarding.<sup>15</sup>

By making coats of skins for Adam and Eve, and then by giving specific regulations to Noah, God ordered that humans were to kill and use animals not only for sacrifice, but also for their own needs.<sup>16</sup> This killing and eating of animals continues throughout the Old and New Testaments; Jesus himself is recorded in the Gospels to have eaten the Passover lamb, and fish on several occasions, even after his resurrection.

While humans are to respect the animals, the animals are definitely not of the same importance as humans. Killing of animals is approved for self-preservation. Samson by the strength of the Spirit of the Lord killed a lion; the Lord enabled David to kill the lion and the bear when they attacked his sheep.

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Yet animals are created to reveal God's attributes; they should be respected. Living animals are to be treated kindly. Domestic livestock are to rest on the Sabbath; they are to be allowed sufficient food as they work.<sup>17</sup> "A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel" (Pro. 12:10). Cruelty to animals is disapproved by God.<sup>18</sup>

Likewise, the plants and the ground are to be preserved and used to benefit humans. At the center of Israel's relation to the promised land, was the concept that they were stewards of the land. The land actually was the Lord's. They were to be reminded of this fact by observing the Sabbath for the land every seven years, and every fiftieth year, when the land would lie fallow.<sup>19</sup> When attacking other cities, they were allowed to cut down trees for siege works, but were not to cut down fruit trees.<sup>20</sup> Yet even fruit trees do not have an inalienable right to live, as was shown when Jesus cursed the fig tree.<sup>21</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Many more examples could be added, but these should be sufficient to show that the created world is to be respected, guarded, and appreciated. It is God's work, the realm in which God reveals many of his attributes to us. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves, and thus are to treat the place where we all live so as to preserve its blessings for all. On the other hand, God has placed us in the world as his image-bearers. We are to govern and manage the earth as best we can under God. The earth's resources, both animate and inanimate, are here for the benefit and use of the human race. We are to use them wisely, giving thanks to God for these blessings.<sup>22</sup>

The third commandment provides the basis for a balanced and biblical appreciation of nature. Our environment is one of God's great gifts to us. If we abuse or misuse it, we dishonor God's name. As we use it properly for our benefit, we honor its Creator. 📖

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Jewish superstition about misusing the name of God, Yahweh, came even to forbid its being used at all. After a time it was only spoken one time a year, by the high priest in the Most Holy Place, then later it was not spoken at all (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 2:12:4; cf. the note on p. 60 of the Whiston ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Mal. 1:6-7, 11-12; 2:2.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Hugh Ross's books, published by Intervarsity Press: *The Fingerprint of God: Recent Scientific Discoveries Reveal the Unmistakeable Identity of the Creator* (1991), and *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God* (1993). Arguments are being constantly updated at his website, <http://www.reasons.org>.

<sup>4</sup> As demonstrated in the now-classic Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*.

<sup>5</sup> As in Dt. 4:32-40.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 10:1-11.

<sup>7</sup> Speech to Lystrans in Acts 14:15-17; speech to Areopagus in Acts 17:24-28.

<sup>8</sup> Jn. 5:36; cf. 20:30-31.

<sup>9</sup> שׁוּׁ.

<sup>10</sup> As in Jer. 2:30; 4:30; 6:29; 46:11.

<sup>11</sup> As in Ps. 24:4; Jer. 18:15.

<sup>12</sup> As in Ps. 139:20.

<sup>13</sup> Jer. 32:39; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 Cor. 10:31.

<sup>14</sup> WLC 113. Scripture proofs for these applications used by the Assembly include Dt. 18:10-14; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4; Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Kings 21:9-10; Jude 4.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 3:17-19.

<sup>16</sup> Gen. 3:21; 9:3.

<sup>17</sup> Dt. 5:14; 25:4.

<sup>18</sup> Pro. 26:17. Joshua's and David's hamstringing of their enemies' war-horses may seem cruel, but it was a military measure, intended to render the horses incapable of battle while still preserving their lives (Josh. 11:9; 2 Sam. 8:4). In Joshua's case, it was specifically commanded by God (Josh. 11:6).

<sup>19</sup> Lev. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Dt. 20:19-20.

<sup>21</sup> Mt. 21:19-21.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Tim. 4:3-4.

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The heaven,  
even the heav-  
ens, are the  
LORD's; but the  
earth He has  
given to the chil-  
dren of men.

*Psalm 115:16*

**GOD'S GIFT OF THE LAND:  
CREATION, JUBILEE, AND RE-  
CREATION**

by Christopher Lensch

**INTRODUCTION**

Anyone who has vacationed in Philadelphia always visits the historic city's number one tourist attraction: the Liberty Bell. Wide-eyed children crowd around this revered symbol of liberty and push forward to put their fingers in the famous crack in the bell. As they trace the crack upward, their eyes fall upon an engraved message on the bell's crown: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land, and unto the inhabitants thereof...."

"Proclaim liberty!" What a simple, yet profound, statement of the aspirations of all freedom-loving people. More than a call for political liberty, this watchword was first used in American history as a celebration of religious liberty. The colonial statehouse commissioned the bell in 1751 to commemorate 50 years of success of what Mr. Penn had called "the holy experiment" in Pennsylvania. That new world experiment was the novel idea of religious freedom and toleration.

Our forefathers understood, perhaps better than we, that personal and political freedom must begin with religious freedom, freedom of conscience to follow the commands of our Maker before the commands of men. This is why Leviticus 25:10 was inscribed on the commemorative bell. In this otherwise obscure Bible verse coalesce the great themes of life and liberty, all in the context of a 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration—an emancipation proclamation in the year of Jubilee.

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**GOD'S DESIGN FOR MANKIND**

From the very beginning of creation God's Word reveals Him preparing and filling the earth with good things. These good things are intended for the use and pleasure of God's "kingdom agents," Adam and Eve with their posterity.

The "earth" or "land" is mentioned at least 19 times in half the verses of Genesis 1. Clearly much of the creation focus is on the land. This emphasis is not for the land's sake, but is for man's sake who will inhabit the earth. God did not design mankind to live in an underwater Atlantis nor to dwell in some corner of outer space.<sup>1</sup> With the vastness of God's great universe, there might be other hospitable environments for human life. Still the earth appears to be central in the biblical account of creation. Mankind was made for this earth. To be biblically correct, the earth was made for mankind.

The language of Genesis 1 is explicit:

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ... 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

It is important to notice that mankind has not taken control of the earth through might or even squatters' rights. The habitable land was given by God with a charge to fill and subdue it. The Creator holds title to His creation while He entrusts humanity to use it and keep it "good" as seen by God in its pristine form. Ultimately, He alone is "possessor of heaven and earth."<sup>2</sup>

### PARADISE LOST

A simple Bible word search of “earth/land” (אֶרֶץ) reveals that this topic has a conspicuous place in the opening chapters of the Bible. After the creation account, the land next plays prominently in the flood narration. Instead of an earth filled with goodness and prosperity, God looks and finds it filled with violence and the wickedness of men’s hands.<sup>3</sup>

Sadly, God’s image bearers have been poor stewards of the good things of the earth. While there undoubtedly was abuse of creation (6:6,7), the Lord’s indictment of mankind is not for pillaging the earth, but for his inhumanity to other men. This is an important clarification in the Christian’s dialogue with environmentalists. The greatest of judgments fell upon the race because of man’s attack upon God and those made in His image. God puts a premium upon the sanctity of human life. This truth is against our generation’s notion that the natural world is on a par with humanity.

### STEWARDSHIP IN THE PROMISED LAND

The message of Genesis tells us we came from the hand of God. He placed mankind on the earth with a stewardship over the lower creation. Genesis also tells us that man’s rebellion brought a curse upon himself and upon the land. The curse is the reason for all of life’s hardships, oppression, and finally, death itself.

This message is an important prelude to the message of Exodus, especially to Moses’ first audience in Egypt. The book of Exodus holds forth a message of redemption for toiling slaves in Egypt who had little understanding of the meaning of life apart from lingering hints of hope passed from their forefathers.

While Genesis speaks of origins and creation, Exodus speaks of deliverance and re-creation. The Mosaic covenant details God’s provisions for returning to a land of fruitfulness and of renewing a stewardship before Him. The promised land was the offer of “paradise restored.”

An important provision for the promised land were the periodic emancipations built into the life cycle of the redeemed nation. Every seven years, the land would rest and Israelites, who may have become indentured servants through circumstances of poverty, were set free; there was to be no permanent slave caste following the redemption from Egypt. Every 50 years the entire land was to be set free: not only would the land rest, but if a family tract had been sold, ownership would revert to the original family of record. So important were these cycles of rest that when they were neglected during the monarchy, God exacted their sum during the 70 year Babylonian captivity: “...until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years” (II Chron. 36:21).

### BACKGROUNDS OF THE JUBILEE

Unlike the irregular and random land restorations of Israel’s neighbors, the Mosaic economy established a periodic release of debt and the return of property to the original owners. Hammurabi and kings of other middle eastern countries occasionally proclaimed “releases” or “clean slates” to bring a return of economic balance. Otherwise absentee creditors would have amassed large real estate holdings, wiping out the middle class.

Whereas these proclamations were random and by royal decree, the Mosaic Jubilee was by law scheduled to follow a generational pattern. This law reinforced

the idea that God Himself was Owner of the land and that His people were stewards upon it, rather than allowing the king to be the deciding agent above God's law and the land's God.<sup>4</sup>

Indentured servants were set free in the 49<sup>th</sup> year. Along with this emancipation came a year of rest for the land as well as for the community. On the heels of year 49, the 50<sup>th</sup> year of Jubilee was the seal of God's blessing as a *double portion* of rest and celebration for God's land and people.

When God brought Israel into the promised land, He apportioned the land to the 12 tribes as an inheritance. The right of family inheritance within the tribes was so critical that even female heirs with no brothers were given their due portion.<sup>5</sup> The promised land was for the nation; a portion of the land was intended for each family in each generation, for its use, and also as a test of stewardship.

Significantly, later prophetic allusions to the Jubilee speak of it as God's ultimate goal in bringing in the Messianic kingdom. Personal deliverance, freedom, prosperity, and rest flow together in the last Jubilee brought in by Christ. Confirmed by Jesus in His first publicly recorded sermon, Isaiah 61:1,2 is one of the clearest allusions:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...."

#### LESSONS FROM THE LAND OF JUBILEE

There are relevant lessons from the Jubilee for man's relation to the land.

First, key to a biblical ecology is the

fact that God does not intend arable land to lie permanently fallow, untouched by human hands as if it were sacrosanct. Radical ecologists who personify the land by speaking of "mother earth" think that the earth and nature are more important than human beings. This theology is idolatry, but the implied anthropology is not far from the truth. This less than trusting perspective tacitly and correctly belies an admission of the universal fallibility and depravity of our race: humanity is corrupt and, left unchecked, will corrupt its environment.

Like all humanistic perspectives, radical ecology has no room for redemption or the sovereign grace of God. Truth to tell, "save the earth" militants are saving the world for themselves and future generations in an attempt to save their own souls through their activism. These humanists cannot understand Christians who glory in Christ's salvation. Christians live for Him and seek to obey Him in all matters of personal and universal stewardship.

Second, while our Creator gave the land for our well-being and for opportunities of stewardship, He maintains the prerogative of regulating our use of the land. Man was not allowed to rape the land nor endlessly exact the last ounce of its yield. The land was allowed to rest. More than that, man was reminded that he must rest also—rest and rejoice in the God Who gives an abundance from the earth. The land and its sabbath were made for man, not man for the land.

Third, we all answer to God for how we use the earth's resources. God desires especially His people to be free and to have life opportunities of self-determining stewardship.<sup>6</sup> Will we use our trust wisely? Will we use it for God's service and for the good of others?

The Israelites had gone from slaves in Egypt to freemen in the land of promise. The Jubilee taught that even in tough economic times, God's chosen should never be reduced through poverty to the status of a slave. An Israelite might become an indentured servant, but this was not permanent, and he always was treated as a brother.

Fourth, the Jubilee showed humanitarian concern for future generations who might descend from such impoverished citizens. An established middle class more easily lives by a sense of stewardship and seeks opportunities of development, as opposed to the impoverished who own nothing or the affluent who tend to live lives of self-indulgence.<sup>7</sup>

Fifth, only through loyalty to God and faithful stewardship of the land could Israel as a nation ever hope to be free and independent of other masters. Missing the Sabbath years and Jubilee years was repaid during the Babylonian oppression.

Sixth, the natural corollary of the stewardship principle is the right of private property. The Bible in general and the Jubilee in particular teach the right of private property as a trust from God.

Modern environmentalists have imbibed the spirit of Jean Jacques Rousseau who taught that the first thief was the man who put up a fence and said, "This is mine." The Bible says "NO" to such humanism that would remove the ancient boundary stones by force in order to give private real estate holdings over to a collective United Nations hegemony.

#### CONCLUSION

The Jubilee points us to a future day of deliverance and fruitfulness in the kingdom. The Jubilee was a time of rest for land and for man. More than that, it was also a time of celebration, even as

modern usage of the word "Jubilee" implies.

Believers long for the day when the earth will be delivered from the curse.<sup>8</sup> That day of deliverance will balance the scales of justice, remove oppression, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Along with the blessing of rest will come celebration and fruitfulness in the climax of God's redemption.

"For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. 'Listen to Me, My people; and give ear to Me, O My nation: for law will proceed from Me, and I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands will wait upon Me, and on My arm they will trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished.'"<sup>9</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Space station astronauts face medical problems like bone loss.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 14:19

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 6:5,11

<sup>4</sup> The proclamation of liberty for people and land (Lev. 25:10) is rooted in the truth that God owns the land: "...the land is mine," says the Lord (Lev. 25:23).

<sup>5</sup> Numbers 27

<sup>6</sup> Luke 16:10-12

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 30:7-9

<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:19-21

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 51:3-6

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# *APPLICATION & PERSPECTIVE*

## **SAVIORS OF THE EARTH? THE BIBLE AND ECOLOGY IN ECCLESIOLOGY**

by Earl L. Brown, Jr.

### **The Paradox of Dominion**

Life in this twenty-first century places demands on the Christian unenvisioned by the writers of Sacred Scripture. One of these is the relationship of the Christian to his environment and his commitment to it through the church of Jesus Christ. The proliferation of the technocracy of the Western world must be filtered by the theology of the Middle-eastern mind of more than twenty centuries ago.

There is a certain paradox (a statement which may seem contradictory to common sense, yet is indeed true) when we consider rule invested with man in Genesis 1:26-28.<sup>1</sup> This paradox is that with which the Creator invested Himself. God the Creator elected to reconcile to Himself that which was foreign to His nature in Genesis 1:2. He further chose to exercise Lordship over that which was foreign to his nature instead of destroying it and beginning all over again.<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:2 provides us with the statement of how God was going to form the earth in the first three days of creation, and how God was going to fill the earth in the second three days of creation.<sup>3</sup> Mankind was entrusted with rulership over the creation. He, to a lesser degree, would rule like the Messiah (Psalm 110:2).<sup>4</sup> With the entrance of sin into the world, man's rule would be in the stark reality of a world

set in conflict with his desires (Gen. 3:15-19). He, with his sinful desires, would also not always seek the creation's benefit, but submitted it to a curse from God because of his disobedience.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Parameters of Dominion**

Mankind's dominion would be circumscribed by God's punishment of his sin and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. His existence was no longer in humble dependence upon God. His existence would no longer be in a garden that was toil free.<sup>6</sup> The creation itself would suffer, be in subjection to vanity, and be in bondage to corruption.<sup>7</sup> Nature would identify with the curse of the woman, and woman-kind in turn would be so much more in tune with nature than the male of the species.<sup>8</sup> Harmony with God and nature was history. The God who was above nature was still the Lord, and man still his calculating servant,<sup>9</sup> with the earth and its fulness a cautious servant.

### **The Praxis of Dominion**

Mankind's first test in saving the planet was God's commission to Noah to preserve life.<sup>10</sup> The model for the practice of ecology and the Christian is found not in Israel of old, or the New Testament Church, but in the family unit.<sup>11</sup> Noah saved the known world of his day, through simple obedience to God's command. What follows in the plan of Redemption is God's working with the Old Testament theocracy, and then the New

Testament Church.<sup>12</sup> Of the 613 commands in the Mosaic Law few could be clearly discerned to be ecological or environmental in nature and none directly stipulated to be practiced to the extent of the moral Law of God.<sup>13</sup> There is not a clear mandate given to the Christian Church to practice ecology.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it would appear that on the surface, the Biblical model established with Noah would be that of the practice of ecological concerns within the context of the family. If this was clearly intended to be a mandate for the nations by human government, it is curiously absent from the re-affirmation of the *Imago Dei* in Genesis 9:6, concerning capital punishment.<sup>15</sup>

### The Practice of Dominion

The primary task of the nation of Israel was to practice being a people belonging to the Lord, Ex. 19:5. This in the message of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, is repeated to the New Testament Church as found in 1 Peter 2:9-10; Titus 2:14.<sup>16</sup> The people of God are exhorted not to be like the surrounding nations.<sup>17</sup> Both Old and New Testament peoples of God were to be a witness to the surrounding nations drawing attention to the great covenant of the Redeemer.<sup>18</sup>

Ultimate dominion by man under the Messiah awaits the time of the regeneration (Matt. 19:28), which is understood by some to be a futuristic millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.<sup>19</sup> There is a further renewal of the Heavens and the Earth when the institution of the New Heavens and Earth is consummated after the millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.<sup>20</sup>

Although some may argue that since this world will be renovated once and purged by fire, there is no need to address ecological concerns, such an argument is

both fallacious and specious. It is fallacious because by the same reasoning people have argued against witnessing, because Christ is coming back anyway. It is specious because it is reminiscent of the logic used by the Pharisees with the Lord Jesus for the *Corban*.<sup>21</sup>

### The Promise of Dominion in Stewardship

Rule entrusted to mankind includes but is not exhausted by merely ecological concerns. The paradigm for Christian ecology is found in the humble example of Noah and also that of the benevolent disposition of God in His common grace towards his marred creation since the Fall.<sup>22</sup> Rule is invested in the proper concern of the Christian in his personal stewardship of what God has given to him in his surrounding environment.<sup>23</sup> An individual who takes care of his family is seen as a faithful steward of God. Taking care of our own neighborhood where we live in the global community can become a good testimony, if one recycles in the name of Christ.<sup>24</sup> 📖

### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Michael A. Bullmore, "The Four Most Important Biblical Passages for A Biblical Environmentalism," *TRINJ* 19:2 NS (Fall, 1998): 139-162. The passages which he discusses in depth are: Psm. 104:1-35; Gen. 1-2; Gen. 9:8-17; and Romans 8:18-23. In my treatment of the subject I defer treatment of Psalm 104 to him and may refer to his treatment of the other three passages. Another treatment of David G. Barker, "The Waters of The Earth: An Exegetical Study of Psalm 104:1-9," *GTJ* 7:1 NS (Spring, 1986): 57-80. takes the position that Psm. 104:6-9 is addressing the Noahic Flood rather than the Creation. The subject of Environmentalism with a recent history has been surveyed in Raymond Grizzle, Paul E. Rothrock, and Christopher B. Barrett,

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‘Evangelicals and The Environment: Past, Present, and Future,’ *TRINJ* 19:1 NS (Spring, 1998): 3-27. Psalm 8:1-9 is expanded commentary on Gen. 1-2. and will not be treated due to space and time limitations.

The following lengthy note illustrates the complexity of using a translation for which subtle nuances of meaning have changed or have been lost in the English language since 1611 A.D. For the sake of convention, the common *dominion* will be used instead of the word *rule*. *Dominion* meant in the time of the Great Bible *domination* according to OED. This word had a more limited semantic domain meaning basically the exercise of sovereignty with the implication of land title. *Rule* has a much wider semantic domain to include: *to control, to moderate, to administer, to exercise sovereign power, to hold supreme command, to arrange or set in order, to lay down authoritatively, even used of leading a choir,* according to OED. The Hebrew word רדה is found 23x in the O.T. The Greek word ἀρχω is its equivalent in the LXX. The Latin word is the one from which the English translation *dominion* is derived in the Vulgate. It is translated *dominion* in the following versions: Tyndale, Great Bible, Bishop’s Bible, KJV, Darby, ERV, ASV, JPS 1917, Goodspeed, RSV, NRSB, REB, NAB, NKJV. It is translated *rule* in these translations: Geneva Bible, Rheims-Douay, Young’s, Bible In Basic English, Berkley and New Berkley *bear rule*, NASB, NIV, NEB, JPS 1985, New Century Version, *rule*. The New Jerusalem translates: *be masters* as does the New Living Translation. It is translated *master* in Moffat’s translation. Furthermore, it is translated as *take command* in Knox. This word is not the word occurring in Gen. 1:18, or 3:16 where the word *rule* appears, which is ממשל occurring 83x. The Greek equivalent in the LXX is ἀρχω and the Latin in the Vulgate is the word to rule. Although in Gen. 1:18 and 3:16 these translations render ממשל as *rule*: Geneva Bible, Young’s, New Century Bible, Rheims-Douay translates Gen. 1:18 as *rule*, and Gen. 3:16 as *have dominion*. Other translations adopt other renderings including: The Bible In Basic English, *rule* (1:18) and *be your* *The WRS Journal, 8:1, February-March, 2001*

*master* (3:16), NASB, *govern* (1:18) and *rule* (3:16), as also, the NIV, the NEB, *govern* (1:18), *master* (3:16), JPS 1985, *dominate* (1:28) and *rule* in (3:16). In Psm. 8:6[H.7]. It is used instead of רדה but this does not automatically mean that the terms are synonymous. Although ממשל can be used of oppression, Isa, 19:4, it is used of God’s providence in rule Psm. 89:10 [H.9]. Robert Duncan Culver in *TWOT* correctly observes: “There is no specific theology to be drawn from the word.... Man has no authority at all as man but simply as God’s viceregent.” William White in *TWOT* correctly observes: “... רדה does not occur in proximity to the more frequent verb, ממשל.” The Qal participle is used in Zech. 9:10 in the sense of geographical area of rule beyond mere authority or sovereignty. Since it is not used in that sense in Dan. 11:4 but sovereignty in general, a blanket uniform projection can not be made concerning the verb in all its occurrences. BDB defines ממשל *to rule, to have dominion, to reign,* and רדה as: *to rule, to have dominion, to dominate.* **The tradition before the KJV was not uniform in rendering רדה. The word dominion had the nuance of land rule in 1611. It does not in common speech today.** For an enlightening discussion on the image of God in man see: Meredith G. Kline, “Creation In The Image of The Glory Spirit,” *WTJ* 39:2 (Spring, 1977):250-272; “Investiture With The Image of God,” *WTJ* 40:1 (Fall, 1977) :39-62.

Also consider these discussions with note 15. See Allan A. MacRae, *Biblical Christianity*, Letter #89, 1968, (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1994), p. 229. “The Cultural Mandate.” for a short synopsis of the alleged cultural mandate. See note 23 below with this discussion in mind.

<sup>2</sup> Space does not permit a refutation of the Gap - Restitution Theory. For the most prolific refutation see: Weston Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled*, (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978). William Henry Green, “Primeval Chronology” *BS* 47(1890): 285-303; Benjamin B. Warfield, “On The Antiquity and The Unity of The Human Race,” *PTR* 9 (January, 1911):1-25; on the age of man and for an

Old Earth Creationist view: Davis A. Young, *Christianity and The Age of The Earth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982; Davis A. Young, *Creation and The Flood: An Alternative to Flood Geology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974. A Consultation of these articles are a worthy perusal and the writer is indebted to them in the research for this article: Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Gen. 1:1-3." In *Five Parts. BS* 132:526 (Jan-March, 1975): 25-36; 132:527 (April-June, 1975): 136-144; 132:528 (July-September, 1975): 216-228; 132:529 (October-December, 1975): 327-342; 133:530 (January - March, 1976): 28-41. Gary C. Cohen, "Hermeneutical Principles and Creation Theories." *GS* 5:3 (Fall, 1964): 17-29. Jack P. Lewis, "The Days of Creation: A Historical Survey of Interpretation." *JETS* 32:4 (December, 1989): 433-455. Thomas J. Finley, "Dimensions of The Hebrew Word for 'Create', ברא, *BS* 148:592 (October - December, 1991): 409-423. H. Wayne House, "Creation and Redemption: A Study of Kingdom Interplay." *JETS* 35:1 (March, 1992): 3-17. D. B. Garlington, "Romans 7:14-25 and The Creation Theology of Paul." *TrinJ* 11:2 (Fall, 1990): 197-235. T. Robert Ingram, "The Grace of Creation". *WTJ* 37:2 (Winter, 1975): 206-217. Meredith G. Kline, "Creation in The Image of The Glory -Spirit." *WTJ* 39:2 (Spring, 1977): 250-272. Howard Griffith, "Eschatology Begins With Creation." *WTJ* 49:2 (Fall, 1987): 387-396. Gale Z. Heide, "What is New about The New Heaven and The New Earth? A Theology of Creation from Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3," *JETS* 40:1 (March, 1997): 37-56. Robert Letham, "In The Space of Six Days,": The Days of Creation from Origen to The Westminster Assembly." *WTJ* 61:2 (Fall, 1999): 149-174. and *The Report on Creation to the 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PCA, 2000*, 384pp. Allan A. MacRae, "The Principles of Interpreting Genesis 1 & 2," *BETS* 2:4 (Fall, 1959): 1-2, and *Biblical Christianity*, Letter # 31, 1967, 'The Creation Six 24-Hour Days or Six Day-Ages?' pp. 80-84. Stephen M. Reynolds, "Genesis 1-11 Part 1." *RefRev* 21:1 (October, 1973): 25-33. He discusses framework on p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> See: Waltke, "The Creation Account in Gen. 1:1-3." *BS* 132:527 (April-June, 1975): 136-144; 132:528 (July-September, 1975): 216-228; 132:529 (October-December, 1975): 327-342; 133:530 (January- March, 1976): 28-41. Noting this concept does not mean that one adopts the framework hypothesis regarding the composition of the Genesis One narrative. See: Allan A. MacRae, *Biblical Christianity*, Letter # 34, 1948, 'Did God Make or Merely Reveal His Creation in Six Days?' pp. 88-89. John Sailhamer, 'Exegetical Notes: Gen. 1:1-2:4a.' *TRINJ* 5:1 NS (Spring, 1984): 73-82. I would in addition note that the condition in Genesis 1:2 sets the stage for the covenantal relationship between God and man. *Unformed* describes the state prior to the Covenant of Works (Restitution). *Unfilled* describes the state prior to the Covenant of Grace (Redeemer). See note 18 for an explanation of the nomenclature for these covenants. See: O. Palmer Robertson, "Current Reformed Thinking On The Nature of The Divine Covenants," *WTJ* 40:1 (Fall, 1977): 63-76; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of The Covenants*, Phillipsburg, N.J., Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980. See my delineation of Covenant Theology with dispensational sub-divisions note 18.

<sup>4</sup> The point of man's rule being contrasted to that of the Messiah is in Psalm 8, where Christ is the Son of Man in verses four through six, cf. Hebrews 2:6-8. See end of note nine. Of the 23x the word רדה occurs it is used once in Joel 4:13 meaning *to tread*. The remaining 22x *to rule*. It is used of the Messiah in Psm. 110:2. The world is in conflict with Adam's seed: pain in childbirth and a desire to dominate the male, v. 16, for the male, toil, v. 17. sweat, v. 19, and dust, v. 19, the latter like the judgment on the serpent, cf. 3:14. See for the desire of the woman: Susan T. Foe, 'What is The Desire of The Woman?' *WTJ* 37:3 (Spring, 1975): 373-384; and Susan T. Foe, *Woman and The Word of God*, Phillipsburg, N.J.; Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977. Michael F. Sitzinger, "Genesis 1-3 and The Male/Female Role Relationship," *GTJ* 2:1 NS (Spring, 1981): 23-44. had interacted with her material but his final objections to her view

are not that compelling. Irwin A. Busenitz, "Woman's Desire For Man: Gen. 3:16 Reconsidered," *GTJ* 7:2 NS (Fall, 1986): 203-212. contends that the desire is the female desire for intimacy in the place of sexual desire. He rules out the immediate context of Gen. 4:7 in favor of Song of Solomon 7:10. Despite his contentions, it is best to view the desire in the context of Genesis with linguistic parallelism instead of using analogy of faith and remote genre questions, ignoring genre within a close proximity of immediate context.

<sup>5</sup> As Satan submitted the serpent to the curse of God, in v. 14., so also Man submitted the whole of creation on the earth to God's curse, vv. 16-19, and thus also the Seed of the Woman, the Messiah, to having to bear the curse of the broken covenant, cf. Rom 8:18-22, note 7, and Gal 3:13 concerning the curse of the broken Mosaic law: Ardell Caneday, "Redeemed From The Curse of The Law: The Use of Dt 21:22-23 in Gal. 3:13," *TRINJ* 10:2 NS (Fall, 1989): 185-209. Wayne G. Strickland, "Preunderstanding and Daniel Fuller's Law - Gospel Continuum," *BS* 144:547 (April-June, 1987):181-193. Joseph P. Braswell, "The Blessing of Abraham" Versus 'The Curse of The Law: Another Look At Gal. 3:10-13.'" *WTJ* 53:1 (Spring, 1991): 73-92.

There are at least 50 Hebrew words in the semantic domain of the concept of the wrath of God in the Old Testament. The word אָרַר occurs in Gen. 3:14-17 "to curse with a binding oath" Victor P. Hamilton in *TWOT* notes: 'On the basis of Akkadian *arau* 'to snare, bind,' and the noun *irritu* 'noose, sling' Brichto following Speiser, advocates the interpretation that Hebrew 'arar means 'to bind (with a spell), hem in with obstacles, render powerless to resist.' Thus the original curse in Gen. 3:14, 17, 'cursed are you above all cattle' and cursed is the ground for your sake' means 'you are banned/anethmetized from all the other animals' and condemned by the soil (i.e. fertility to man is banned) on your account.' Similarly, God's word to Cain, 'you are cursed from the earth' means Cain is banned from the soil, or more specifically, he is banned from enjoying its productivity...'

<sup>6</sup> The word אָרַר defined in *TWOT* is derived from the verb *to sorrow and to labor*. In the Niphal stem seven times and usually mental and spiritual anguish. e.g. Gen. 45:5. In the Piel it is used of the Holy Spirit in Isa. 63:10, cf. Eph. 4:30. It is used of God in Gen. 6:6. In the Qal it is used of a wife grieved in spirit Isa. 54:6. For the far reaching ramifications of the curse in the Fall, see: Geerhards Vos, *Biblical Theology*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1959), pp. 37-51; John Barton Payne, *The Theology of The Older Testament*, (Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1962), pp. 218-220. Walter Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), pp. 149-151. W. Harold Mare, "The Work Ethic of The Gospels and Acts," pp. 155-168 in *Interpretation and History: Essays in Honor of Allan A. MacRae*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Swee-Hwa Quek, and J. Robert Vannoy, (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> Michael A. Bullmore, "The Four Most Important Biblical Passages for A Biblical Environmentalism," *TRINJ* 19:2 NS (Fall, 1998):159-161. For contextual overview see: D.B. Garlington. "Romans 7:14-25 And The Creation Theology of Paul," *TRINJ* 11:2 NS (Fall, 1990): 197-235; paying particular attention to 202-206. The creation was to pay the price also, temporarily for Adam's sin in Gen. 3:17. Creation was subjected to frustration. Rom. 8:20. Creation was in bondage to decay. Rom. 8:21. Creation is in child-labor in pain waiting to be delivered. Rom. 8:22. [*Holman Christian Standard Bible* New Testament, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000). Note: 'futility' in verse twenty, and The ESV of 2001. insert mine.] Hope that the creation will be set free in verse twenty-one.

Finally, applying constructive application to this situation we find human existence in the midst of corruption and curse since the fall of mankind, see: Kenneth O. Gangel, "Leadership Coping With Cultural Corruption," *BS* 144:576 (October-December, 1987): 450-460.

<sup>8</sup> See note four and note that both creation and women's liberation in its most radical form

tend to be at odds with the creation order of man subduing the earth. See; Karen H. Jobs, "Sophia: Christology: The Way of Wisdom?" pp. 226-250 in J.I. Packer, Sven K. Soderlund, eds. *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Man vacillates on his exercise of his dominion. Part of God's ongoing judgment of man's lack of exercising his judgment is the occasional sending of signs e.g. Tremper Longman III. "1 Samuel 12:16-18: Divine Omnipotence or Covenant Curse?" *WTJ* 45:1 (Spring, 1994):168-171. as a part of covenant curse. cf. Jno. 3:36; 1 Cor. 14:20-22. For God's restoration of Man's original dominion see Psalm 8. In the eschaton see: Dan G. McCartney, "Ecce Homo: The Coming of The Kingdom As The Restoration of Human Vice Regency." *WTJ* 56:1 (Spring, 1994): 1-20.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 6:8,13-ff.; 2 Pet. 2:5; Hebrews 11:7. Noah's faith condemned the then known world, but also ironically and paradoxically preserved or saved his family and two of every kind from perishing.

<sup>11</sup> It is by a family unit that the world is plunged into the curse. It is by the family unit that the world is initially preserved from destruction by water. It is by the reversal of the Messiah in the family of mankind (Gen. 3:15) that Satan will shortly be crushed (Rom. 16:20,25-26). Here the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly, as per, physical and spiritual birth in John 3:5-12.

<sup>12</sup> We believe in the unity of God's elect as one household of God. This is as per WCF Chapter 25:1. Martin H. Woudstra, 'Israel and The Church: A Case for Continuity,' pp. 221-238 in John H. Feinberg, ed. *Continuity and Discontinuity: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988). At the same time differing family members develop unique characteristics to and of themselves. This is as per WCF Chapter 25:2. Robert L. Saucy, 'Israel and The Church: A Case For Dis-continuity,' pp. 239-59 in Feinberg, ed. *Continuity and Discontinuity*. See how MacRae simply addresses the issue

in *Biblical Christianity*, Letter #74, 1976, pp. 180-181. We believe in the diversity of expression between the Old Testament Assembly and the New Testament Church. A modern dispensationalism which despairingly stresses mere discontinuity is to be as much disdained as a modern covenantal theology which deprecates any future for national Israel and the land promises to it which are yet to be fulfilled in the millennium and the eternal state. The literature on this debated issue is voluminous. I would refer the reader to John Feinberg ed. *Continuity and Discontinuity*, and also to further illustrate: Harold O. J. Brown, *TNJ* NS 2:1 (Spring, 1981):69-70. See: Wilbur B. Wallis, "The Pauline Conception of The Old Covenant," *Pres* 4:1 (Fall, 1978): 71-82, outworking Dr. Buswell's suggestion that *old covenant* being a "legalistic, self-righteous attitude." See: James Oliver Buswell Jr., *A Systematic Theology of The Christian Religion*, two volumes in one, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 1:307-308, and note his charge of dispensationalism in Hodge and Calvin, 1:316-319.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert S. Goldstein, *Between The Lines of The Bible: A Modern Commentary on The 613 Commandments*, (New York; Crown Publisher, 1959). After perusal of this weighty volume, although one may apply some of the commands to ecological concerns, few if any can be seriously maintained to have a primary ecological *telos* in view.

<sup>14</sup> The Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 is not in conflict with the Creation Mandate, and nor should we juxtapose them as none should radically juxtapose law and grace in Scripture. We take issue with the Cultural Mandate doctrine which in reality is not a command from the Creator but an ultimatum from some of the Creator's servants. For a Reformed exposition of Covenantal Theology, see: Mark W. Karlberg, *Covenant Theology in Reformed Perspective*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000). This writer would only take exception to Karlberg's assessments of premillennialism, and certain remarks of his concerning Modern Dispensationalism.

<sup>15</sup> This is in contrast to the same data being used by Michael A. Bullmore, "The Four Most Important Biblical Passages for A Biblical Environmentalism," *TRINJ* 19:2 NS (Fall, 1998): 157-59. who concludes: "Clearly God is communicating through the covenant that all creation matters to him and that it is his determination to promote it without diminution. And as the covenant speaks of God's solemn intention to preserve creation, it also begins to communicate, in an anticipatory way, his intention to redeem creation. Here someone may protest and accuse me of over-interpretation. After all, the covenant merely promises that there will never again be destruction by flood. Further extrapolation is unwarranted. But the covenant does speak beyond its own explicit promise. At minimum it says that God sees bird and beast as worthy of covenantal protection. He is not reluctant to group them with humans under one covenant. This itself speaks more broadly than the limits of the specific promise might at first suggest. But, more than that, it can be legitimately inferred that this covenant is representative of God's long-term intention ultimately and finally to redeem all of creation. This is an 'everlasting covenant' (ברית לנצח) — like the ones made with Abraham and with Israel — a 'covenant for all generations to come.' It would seem strange for God to make such a covenant to preserve creatures from destruction by water and to express that covenant so poignantly, only to let them be destroyed by some other means. If it tells us anything, Gen. 9:8-17 tells us that in God's covenantal economy, the destiny of every living creature is somehow linked with ours. ..." pp. 158-159. The obvious implication omitted by Bullmore is that when the institution of Capital Punishment occurs there is not simultaneously given a command to subdue the environment as per Gen. 1:26-28. Imageo Dei is discussed in the population debate in C. Calvin Beisner, "Imageo Dei in the Population Debate," *TRINJ* 18:2 NS (Fall, 1997): 173-197. He argues from the Cultural Mandate position. This writer concurs with his conclusions but not with the method whereby he achieves his con-

clusions in the whole concept of the Cultural Mandate. Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology*, Downer's Grove, Illinois, Inter Varsity Press, 1998, pp. 60-61 on the interpretations of *imageo dei*. See: Payne, pp. 226-228; Buswell, 1:231-254; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), pp. 442-450; Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of The Christian Faith*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998), pp. 425-429; and Robert Chapman Newman, "Some Perspectives on the Image of God in Man from Biblical Theology," *IBRI Research Report #21*, (Hatfield, Pa., 1984), pp. 20.

<sup>16</sup> The KJV uses the term *peculiar* seven times. Five times in the Old Testament the Hebrew כְּנִיָּא is rendered by the Latin Vulgate *peculium*. Four of these occasions that are germane to our discussion are: Ex. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; 26:18; Psm. 135:4. In addition כְּנִיָּא is found 1 Chron. 29:3 and Mal. 3:17, KJV translates the former as *proper good* and the latter as *jewels*. *TWOT* defines כְּנִיָּא as *property or possession*. The two occurrences in the New Testament of Titus 2:14 and 1 Peter 2:9. The Greek περιουσιον occurs in 1 Thes. 5:9; 2 Thes. 2:14; Heb. 10:29; and 1 Pet. 2:9. Louw-Nida lexicon defines περιουσιον as either: *possession* for 1 Pet. 2:9 and 1 Thes. 5:9; or as *experience* in 1 Thes. 5:9. The Greek periousion is found in Titus 2:14. This is the term translating hlgs in the LXX in Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:28, where in the English text the KJV renders *special*. Note: Melvin E. Elliot, *The Language of The King James Bible*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967, p. 139. defines *peculiar* as "owned, belonging exclusively", but does not carry an entry for *special* on p. 183. Ronald A. Bridges and Luther A. Weigle, eds., *The King James Bible: Word Book*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1960, 1994), pp.254-255. *Peculiar* is cross-referenced to *special* on p. 317. Carefully note how this reference work pushes the RSV because Luther A. Weigle was the head of its translation committee.

<sup>17</sup> God is unique. Isa. 40:18,25; 46:5. From the previous note His people are unique. It is

because of God's zeal for His house that He requires separation from the world, cf. Ex. 34:6-14. God's zeal is categorically stated by  $\text{אָקַן}$  in Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; by  $\text{סָטְהוּלְהוּ}$  in Ex. 20:5; Deut. 5:9; 6:15; and in Ex. 34:14 and Deut. 4:24. *TWOT* defines  $\text{אָקַן}$  as: *be jealous*. God is depicted as a jealous husband. The root appears 87 times in the Piel and the Hiphil only. Liddell and Scott define  $\text{סָטְהוּלְהוּ}$  as: a zealous admirer. For an elaborate discussion of God as husband see: *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), p. 414. God is the lover, Ezek. 16:8; the jilted husband, idolatry is depicted as adultery, Ex. 34:15-16, Lev. 17:7, etc., and the faithful restoring husband, Isa. 54:6-7. The New Testament is Christocentric, Ephesians 5:21-32; Rev. 19:7-9; and 21:2.

<sup>18</sup> Israel was to be a witness, Isa. 43:10. The Church is a witness, Acts 1:8. I believe that a Christocentric approach to Redemptive History solves the problem of the one and many. The Covenants of Redemption, and then Restitution (Works), and finally the Redeemer (Grace). The Covenant of the Redeemer is then subdivided into the following:

- a. Covenant of The Seed. Gen. 3:15-ff. Messiah's War with The Serpent.
- b. Covenant of The Sovereign. Gen. 9:8-ff. Messiah's Rule with Government.
- c. Covenant of The Sphere. Gen. 12:1-ff. Messiah's Rule Seed in the land.
- d. Covenant of The Schoolmaster. Ex. 19:5-ff. Messiah's Theocratic Torah.
- e. Covenant of The Scion of David. 2 Sam. 7:14-ff. Psm. 89. Messiah's Torah for Israel and the Nations.
- f. Covenant of The Renewal. Isa. 42, 49, and all other O.T. and NT passages on The New Covenant. The problem is that not one single New Covenant passage presents all of its provisions. The parties include: Israel, the nations, and a people in contrast to Israel 'yet to be born' ie. the New Testament Church. This writer does not regard the Scofield "Pal-estinian Covenant" to be a separately warranted covenant apart from the Mosaic Cov-

enant. The same is true by this writer concerning J. Barton Payne's "Covenant of Peace" with regard to the New Covenant, cf. Payne, *Theology of The Older Testament*, p. 95-ff.

This is a revision of what I had originally presented in Earl L. Brown Jr., "The Hermeneutics of Premillennialism: Help or Hinderance?" A paper delivered at the Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Moody Bible Institute, 12/12/84, pp. 30. Note: pp.22-22a.

<sup>19</sup>  $\text{παλιγγενεσις}$  occurs twice in the Greek New Testament, here and Titus 3:5. I take this to mean the millennium in a premillennial construct and the phrase of  $\text{χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων}$  in Acts 3:21 as a reference to the eternal state. The order in 1 Cor. 15:28:  $\text{ὅταν δὲ ὑποταγῇ αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τότε [καὶ] αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὑποταγήσεται τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς [τὰ] πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. (NAU)}$  "When aall things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that bGod may be all in all." Christ does reign from Jerusalem during the millennium, but could not this be as a reign above the earth like a suspended chandelier from the New Jerusalem? If the promises to David's seed have been inaugurated with the present session of Christ on His heavenly throne, how much more when he reigns from the heavenly city suspended above Jerusalem during the millennium, and his final descent to the renewed earth after the millennium? Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, paper, 2000), pp 175-87. See: James Oliver Buswell Jr., *A Systematic Theology of The Christian Religion*, two volumes in one, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), p. 2:409, for his "cosmic lens perspective" on biblical prophecy.

<sup>20</sup> There is much debate as to the meaning of 2 Peter 3:10 because of the textual reading. Those who are predisposed to view eternity as timelessness almost uniformly hold to an obliteration position. Those who view eternity as infinite time favor renovation. e.g.

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Buswell, 2:532; and compare 1:42-47. Traditionally, most Lutheran scholars have understood the text to mean a complete obliteration of the Old Heavens and Earth. Most Reformed scholars have understood the text to mean a purging of the Old Heavens and Earth. Although most Dispensational teachers would also see an obliteration, there are probably exceptions to the rule. Note: Gale Z. Heide, "What is New About The New Heaven and The New Earth? A Theology of Creation from Rev. 21 and 2 Peter 3." *JETS* 40:1 (March, 1997): 37-56. See: Al Wolters, "World View and Text Criticism of 2 Peter 3:10," *WTJ* 49:2 (Fall, 1987): 405-413. The difference is between the reading of κατακρησται in the Textus Receptus and that of ευρεθησεται in both UBS third and fourth editions. Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 705-706; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), pp. 636-637; both give this textual problem a [D] rating. Wolters notes that with the discovery of Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (both fourth century uncials since the time of Tischendorf, 1871), all the critical Greek texts read ευρεθησεται. (For the fascinating story behind the discoveries of these two documents see: Bruce Manning Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, Second Edition, (New York; Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 42-48.) [Two recent exceptions are the Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad, Majority Text Greek NT, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson), and the Robinson-Pierpoint Majority Text GNT 1995 in Hermeneuticka: Bible Works 4.0.] These discoveries did not settle the issue with the proliferation of Bible translations since the 1870's. ERV 1881, ASV 1901, NASB, 1971, 1977, 1995, text *burnt up*, note *discovered*. NKJV, *burned up*, note *will be discovered*. The following read *burnt up* without footnote: Montgomery, 1924, Williams, 1937, Hooke, 1941, RSV various editions, Amplified Bible, and its revision, Beckley, and New Beckley, J. B. Phillips, Jerusalem Bible, Taylor, 1971. Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and Metzger, believe that the text was corrupted very early, cf. Wolters, *The WRS Journal*, 8:1, February-March, 2001

p., 406. Metzger notes a variety of proposals, pp. 636-37. Space does not permit Wolters full elaboration. We believe his solution to the problem poses fewer contextual and semantic problems. Very simply, taking the synonyms for burning in the context of 2 Peter 3:3-10, and noting that there are three phases to the same world rather than two distinct worlds in view, that the use of *eureqhsetai* has a close parallel to the Hebrew *נִמְצָא* which came to mean 'to come out of a smelting process' with the translation in English found in the sense of smelting. cf. R. C. Van Leeuwen, "A Technical Metallurgical Use of [רע]," *ZAW* 98 (1986): 113. cited in Wolters, p. 412. Wolters notes that in British English there is an idiom: 'to show one's metal' which accurately paraphrases what is found in 2 Peter 3:10. With this understanding in mind, renderings: *will be found* are understood not in a mere search but in a metallurgist's refinement of the earth by fire. NAB, REB *brought into judgment* note, lit. *it will be found*, New Century Version, note, *disclosed* is a paraphrase trying to retain a more neutral finding of fact., cf. NRSB., and *New Holman Christian Standard New Testament*, 2000. Beck , 1964, *it will be shown*. CEV reads: "will be seen for what they are." NEB, NIV *laid bare* as does NKJV note in Precise Parallel NT. A paraphrase of a paraphrase is found in The Message, "exposed to the scrutiny of judgment."

<sup>21</sup> *Corban* was a Hebrew and Aramaic word meaning 'offering'. The note on the NIV Study Bible is enlightening: '... By using this word in a religious vow an irresponsible Jewish son could formally declare to God (i.e. to the temple) his earnings that would otherwise would have gone for the support of his parents. The money, however, did not necessarily have to go for religious purposes. The *Corban* formula was simply a means of circumventing the clear responsibility of children toward their parents as prescribed in the law...' so also: NSCRB, Ryrie Study Bible, and Geneva Bible as found in the notes on Mark 7:11.

<sup>22</sup> Review note 15 carefully and compare this with the beginning of note one. Jesus in the

Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:26-30 affirms God's providential care in common grace for his creatures. WCF 1:1 states: "Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable...." (Rom. 2:14,15; Rom. 1;19;20; Psm. 19;1,2,3; Rom. 1;32). The Fifth Chapter "On The Providence of God" should be read in conjunction with this discussion.

<sup>23</sup> C. Calvin Beisner, "Imageo Dei in The Population Debate," *TRINJ* 18:2 NS (Fall, 1997): 183-185. He speaks of Christian Stewardship as the Cultural Mandate. Four areas include: fellowship, fruitfulness, faithful subjugation and maximizing God's earthly franchise (alliteration mine). If the terminology of Creation Mandate is utilized I concur. This writer disagrees that the derived concept of Cultural Mandate as an application of the text is the primary meaning of the text.

<sup>24</sup> This writer wholeheartedly concurs with C. Calvin Beisner's comment: 'Far from justifying a careless attitude toward creation, the vision I have sketched calls precisely for the pursuit of ever-improving care of creation — care, however, that differs significantly from the subservience to nature that characterizes much of the environmental movement. We are not the earth's servants, but God's, and he has called us to serve him, insofar as our relationship with the earth is concerned, by wise and righteous and creative dominion. This entails our fulfilling his command to multiply and fill up the earth, to subdue and rule (Gen. 1:28), and to cultivate and guard it (Gen. 2:15).' C. Calvin Beisner, "Imageo Dei in The Population Debate," *TRINJ* 18:2 NS (Fall,1997):190. Francis August Schaeffer, *Pollution and The Death of Man*, (Downer's Grove, Illinois: The Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), makes certain applications for the Christian and his practicing ecology in today's world. Francis Schaeffer has received unjust criticism by Mark Edwards, "How Shall We Then Think?: A Study of Francis Schaeffer's Lordship Principle," *WTJ* 60:2 (Fall, 1998):193-223.

## ENVIRONMENTALISM & THE WORSHIP OF "MOTHER EARTH"

by Jim Huff

With the feminization of our culture (including the church) and with the rising paganism of our society, we see that an unbiblical view of environmentalism is prevalent in our nation. As to the feminization issue and the environmental movement, we see this in terms "mother earth" and "Gaia" (the Greek goddess of the earth) which have become a part of the actual foundation of the movement, thus demonstrating also the paganism rampant throughout environmentalism. Rather than "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1), we read, "'God is going to change, We women...will change the world so much that He won't fit anymore.' Naomi Goldenberg in *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions*<sup>1</sup> writes, "...Not more than a few thousand years ago, the concept of a remote master God (the Judeo-Christian God), an overseer of Gaia, took root... [as these people moved west], they brought a sky god, a warrior cult, and a patriarchal social order...the evolution of these [people] to the modern men who ride their infinitely more powerful machines of destruction over the habitats of our partners in Gaia, seems only a small step."<sup>2</sup>

Lovelock said that he could not relate to a "remote, all-powerful, all-seeing male Yahweh, but he can relate to the femininity in Mary: 'Mary is close and can be talked to. She is believable and manageable. It could be that the importance of the Virgin Mary in faith is something of this kind, but there may be more to it. What if Mary is another name for Gaia? Then

her capacity for Virgin Birth is no miracle...it is a role of Gaia since life began.... She is of this Universe and, conceivably, a part of God. On Earth she is the source of life everlasting and is alive now; she gave birth to humankind and we are a part of her.”<sup>3</sup>

Taking the terms “mother earth” and “Gaia”, this feminism/paganism has invaded the public schools. In a newsletter distributed in an Indianapolis high school, students were told, “It will take time, it will challenge the boundaries of your soul, to work with diligence and persistence to save our environment, our lives, our future, our mother earth.... We are the only one who can control our rate of self-destruction. We are our only saviours.”<sup>4</sup>

Evidence of this paganism within much of the environmental movement is also noted in Al Gore’s book, *Earth in the Balance*, where he points favorably to the pantheism of pagan religions. “The richness and diversity of our religious traditions throughout history is a spiritual resource long ignored by people of faith, who are often afraid to open their minds to teachings first offered outside their own system of belief. But the emergence of a civilization in which knowledge moves freely and almost instantaneously throughout the world has...spurred a renewed investigation of the wisdom distilled by all faiths. This panreligious perspective may prove especially important where our global civilization’s responsibility for earth is concerned.”<sup>5</sup>

To the extent that the environmental movement looks at mankind as the only “savior” of the earth, this is idolatry. To the extent that the environmental movement advocates preserving the earth from humanity and not for humanity, it violates the Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> To the extent that it promotes mother earth and Gaia worship

and pantheism, it violates the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

The influences of our compromising culture often creep into the evangelical churches. This is true with the environmental influence. E. Calvin Beisner has especially addressed this in response to the declarations on Christian concern for the environment written by the Evangelical Environmental Network in association with Evangelicals for Social Action. In *World* magazine (November 1993), Beisner wrote an editorial entitled “Are God’s Resources Finite?” It was critical of the declaration in its claims concerning environmental degradation. Beisner “then charges that the document is weak theologically and reflects a faulty view of resources and human relationship with the natural world.”<sup>7</sup> Richard Cartwright Austin, a former Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor at Earth Care ‘96, the Christian Environmental Stewardship Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee, said, “‘Christ is fully God and fully Earth. He came to save the world.’ And saving the Earth is our job, too, he added. Said Mr. Austin, ‘I hear the Bible calling us to redeem from destruction the Creation.’”<sup>8</sup>

Mother Earth, Gaia, new age mysticism, pantheism are all elements that have come into the environmental movement. Christians must guard against being “conformed to the world” (Romans 12:2). 

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Berit Kjos, “From Father God to Mother Earth” in *A Twist of Faith*.

<sup>2</sup> James Lovelock, *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth*, p. 208, quoted in *Saviors of the Earth?*, p. 147, by Michael S. Coffman.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> William Norman Grigg, "Advance of the Gaia Gestapo", *The New American*, August 8, 1994, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance*, pp. 258 – 259, quoted in "Al Gore's Vision of Global Salvation" by Berit Kjos.

<sup>6</sup> Lisa Tanner, "A Look at the New Green Religion", *Chalcedon Report*, September 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Richard T. Wright, "Tearing Down the Green Environmental Backlash in the Evangelical Subculture", p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Roy Maynard, "It Isn't Easy Being Green", *World*, May 11/18, 1996.

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### THE BIBLE AND AGRARIANISM

by Paul Armes

As a suburban grown Christian I always wondered if I was missing something in my Christian experience. So much of the imagery in the Bible is filled with nature and farm animals and farm life and so I thought that my knowledge would be greatly enhanced if I were to experience that kind of life. But providence did not open up the opportunity until many years later when the Lord led me and my young family to live on an Amish farm. We really went from one extreme to another. We were living in the concrete jungle of the inner city of Philadelphia. We then found ourselves in the bucolic setting of a dairy farm with horses plowing the fields, cows on the other side of our fence, electricity powered by a gas generator, fresh milk right from the vat, and a coal stove for heating our house.

Some Scriptures did come alive as I saw the fields plowed, planted, and harvested. The rains came down and watered the fields. The corn grew. The manure fertilized the field (oh, what a smell!). The farmer rose up early and milked the cows.

The whole family worked hard to make their living. Prayer was made to the Lord through threat of drought or through the experience of too much rain. The hills surrounding the farm were beautiful, especially after a snow or during a beautiful sunset. So the Scriptures opened up to me in these wonderful ways. But if they taught that all believers should live in the country and farm, then it would have been made quite clear, but they do not. We see believers living in the cities and in the country, in the house of Caesar and in deserts. They live in cities and they live in rural areas. We find no commandment requiring to have a farm, raise livestock, or till a garden. But the agrarian lifestyle has some very important lessons to teach which the Scriptures truly want us to know and believe.

First of all, we recognize that there are agrarian movements. The Anabaptist community is filled with such expressions. Their "order" or way of life is based on their theology of separating from the world. This means living a life of simplicity, which includes farming, the trades, and manual labor. It has become their way of life and it is their order or law. By their way of thinking, a person who adopts their lifestyle is living the proper Christian life. If one farms, or works a certain craft, and lives the simple life according to their particular laws, then they are living a life pleasing to God. But it is obvious that these forms are just that — forms. External forms are not the fruit of a renewed heart. Therefore this is not an acceptable way of life in honor of Christ.

There is also an agrarian type movement where people "get back to nature." Its philosophy consists of casting off certain modern conveniences and living a simple kind of lifestyle. It does not have the Christian background of the

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Anabaptists but rather has a humanistic, naturalistic one. It was very visible in the sixties and seventies and still has a following. But since it is not based on the Scriptures it cannot be called a Christian movement.

So then what, if any, aspects of agrarianism are worthwhile? Let me give some practical examples. When I was living in Lancaster County, Pa., I worked for an Amish paint company for a while. We went throughout the county painting farms. The foreman on the job was the son of the owner. At the ripe old age of twenty he was the best skilled and most knowledgeable man on the job. He also helped his father do the estimates. He also helped with certain other chores on their dairy farm. I was about thirty-five and I thought to myself that when I was his age my skills were not that advanced. I knew a lot about sports but not half as much about the trades or a comparable occupation. This was my first lesson.

Secondly, we had a coal stove as our source of heat for the home. It was sure different having to get it working. I had to go out in the woods to get some wood to start a fire and then throw the coals on it once it got good and hot. But the heat that it threw out was wonderful and made the downstairs quite cozy while the upstairs was a little cool but gave one a nice sleep at night. It was also different having the source of our electricity be a gas generator. Our lights would flicker every once in a while; we were without power only a time or two over the space of a couple of years. On the other hand, if there was a blackout in our area (which did happen), the farm ran on as usual, being not dependent on outside sources of energy.

Thirdly, we have never forgotten the wonderful food that we had in that county.

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How we miss the farm fresh milk straight from the milk vat! We miss the fresh apple cider (without preservatives) and we really miss the fresh vegetables from the local stands and from our own garden. My wife learned to can and we never had any better cucumber pickles, or spaghetti sauce, or pumpkin pie, or green beans, or whatever! Home grown and home canned are out of this world.

These examples help to express three very important aspects of the agrarian lifestyle. First of all it helps to produce a skilled work force. Young people growing up on a farm have the opportunity to do plenty of worthwhile work. They can help their parents with the general farm work and they can also get involved in starting up their own kind of ventures in such things as animal husbandry or machine operation and repair or gardening or sewing and quilting. Many families ran their little business ventures right out of their farm buildings. Secondly, the agrarian lifestyle helps one to develop an alternative source of power for the business. It is extremely helpful to have an alternative energy source on a farm because certain functions just have to go on, like milking the cows. If electricity is lost then one might as well throw the milk down the drain. So in order to avoid that possibility a gas generator should be on hand. Thirdly, the agrarian lifestyle generates a tasty and highly nutritious food source that is little affected by inflation.

All of these points add up to make one very big point; and that point is that the agrarian lifestyle helps to eliminate a dependent lifestyle in many ways. The lifestyle eliminates dependency upon other labor sources as it trains up the farmer's family. It eliminates dependence upon other sources of labor by requiring the learning of many skills rather than just

one or two. A farmer has to be multi-talented for he has to be a gardener, mechanic, and animal husbandman all in one. Living in the country often necessitates fixing it yourself or paying a handsome sum otherwise. Agrarian living also eliminates dependence upon one source of power. A farm must have an alternative source. Finally, it eliminates dependence upon the grocery store in that many of their own vegetables are grown on the farm and many animals are raised and slaughtered right there.

This independent, self-sufficient lifestyle had come under attack in the past history of our country. The most notable example is that found in the War Between the States. The North had an industrial, centralized, manufacturing economy with a dependent labor force. The South had an agrarian, decentralized economy with a labor force having a greater amount of diversity in its skill level allowing for more independency. The North scoffed at the South, looking to its own large cities and mills and swaggering with its belly full of power. The North did not realize that the small Southern entrepreneur had a different kind of steel forged from the fires of responsible small business practice tempered with the resiliency of a diversified labor force which had managed to produce a very strong economy. Like Goliath laughing at David's five small stones, the North would soon learn how difficult it would be to fight this David.

A centralized system of labor with its large factories and assembly line production specializes labor into many particular tasks which are simple and repetitive. The laborer's skill development is minimal thus limiting his general usefulness. With only a couple of these specialized skills he becomes dependent on his particular task; and if that that particular

function is eliminated, his marketability to find comparable paying work is extremely diminished. An employer would find this kind of situation advantageous and can easily exploit the weakness of the laborer, virtually putting him in a place of slavery.

The centralization of utility companies has allowed them to grow to tremendous proportions and their real and political power has become great. Many customers are required by law to subscribe to their services, and the law frequently forbids many alternative sources of power generation by private citizens. The State of California is now reeling under such circumstances. Many are suffering under the power shortage and have no alternatives.

Food production has also become centralized. The small one hundred-acre "Ma and Pa" farm has been replaced many times over by the large corporate farm. The effect has been the elimination of the local grocery store and the advancement of the super-supermarket. Produce from the corporate fields flow into the central processing plant and it goes from there to the gigantic superstore. But in the meantime the freshness is often lost while the preservatives are added. All of this is done in the name of shelf life and to the glory of the big enterprise. Unfortunately the "progress" is at the expense of the health of the people, economically and physically.

These centralized operations generate gigantic revenues that frequently are used to influence government policies. Taxes, permits, and licenses are levied with a purpose to destroy the competition. "Ma and Pa" businesses have been taxed, regulated, and undersold practically out of existence. Consequently, their vote and voice is hardly heard.

Those who seek power and control have mounted such attacks against those who seek to live responsibly with a reasonable amount of independence. Financial and governmental pressures certainly overwhelm in a physical way. Greater damage occurs through the socialist philosophy that pressures all to conform to the ways of this system. Non-conformity then becomes a sin. At the root of it all is a spirit of covetousness and greediness. Along with this is an envy which disdains and seeks to eliminate all who do not comply.

This kind of centralized system is hardly a panacea. A prime example is the nation of Zambia where the ambassador to the US told a group of men that his country could not afford “free” education and “free” medicine. The socialist ideal ran out of money. The pork barrel split and the economy spilled out onto the floor. The masses of dependent people now had to go out and find work. Untrained, unskilled, the whole nation went through some growing pains as it worked to get back on its feet. Could this be America’s future?

If this could be America’s future, what was America’s past? In its recent past many families had businesses. Children could even have lemonade stands. Youthful enterprise was encouraged. Invention was nurtured and alternative sources of power were developed in their own small ways. Food tasted better and had fewer additives and people were healthier. What has happened? The answer is that our liberties have come under attack and are diminishing with each passing year. Labor regulations, food regulations, power restrictions, permits here, licenses there, here a “crat”, there a “crat”, everywhere a bureaucrat. And yet our children (as a whole throughout the

nation) are not as healthy or intelligent or skilled as they were in times past. Added to these problems are fewer raw materials with which to experiment and invent and growing inflation that robs us of our ability or incentive to create and advance in culture. Though many feel that things are fine, in reality we and our children are facing struggles like never before. Sin, greed, and covetousness are abounding in our land and are robbing us all. Those who practice such wickedness have gained office in our land, helping to create our present state of affairs.

Do the Scriptures teach agrarianism? The answer is no. Certain aspects of agrarianism, however, are quite biblical. A biblical agrarianism involves a lifestyle of personal responsibility, hard work, independence, and reliance upon God rather than government. It involves family enterprise and unity as they work together to succeed in this world. This is a spirit the Church needs to encourage. Our country may be headed for a recession. If a recession comes the Church needs to be ready. Whether it comes or not, we know that our Lord will be return! We need to be ready by being found faithful and busy concerning His work. If we are, then we will again take our place in history, as the Church has in the past, of being the preservative of culture while the world rots and decays around us. “What is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” 

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**Command those who are rich in this present age not ... to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.** *1 Timothy 6:17*

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## THE SCRIPTURES ALONE

## NOTES

At WRS we require our students to take many credit hours in biblical languages and in biblical studies.

Some would like us to cut down on these hours, so there would be more time for other courses. The temptation is there; many seminaries already have cut back on languages and other Bible classes. There is more emphasis on practical training and “mentoring.”

Yet we are a “Reformed” seminary, following the Protestant Reformation. The first ideal was *Sola Scriptura*, the Scriptures Alone. The new Roman Catholic catechism, published just this year, reaffirms their belief in the authority of Scripture plus tradition. This error has led to many false doctrines and practices. The principle of Scriptures Alone demands that we learn, study, and preach the Bible — with care, precision, and fidelity. The Bible training at WRS is the most important aspect of our preparing leaders for our churches. Pray for us, that we will hold the Bible high.