

WILLIAM CAREY
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The Christian's Responsibility to the Environment

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WILLIAM BJORAKER

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A Note from the Editor

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it (Psalm 24:1).

Environmental issues are among the most heated topics today, in the news, in conferences, in educational institutions, and even in workplaces or cafes between peers and friends. It is an unavoidable topic, because it pertains to every one of us in an intimate way. We see the change in the environment. We feel it. We experience it. And we are affected by it.

What do we do, then? How we reflect on and respond to the environmental issues is important. The Psalm writer presents to us a theological assertion that God created the earth and everything in it (Psalm 24:1). Our reflection, then, will inevitably go beyond just the environment to include our relationship with the Creator. To this end, William Carey International University sponsored a Winter Institute of International Development in February 2012, a conference focusing on “The Christian’s Responsibility to the Environment,” seeking to explore together a biblical perspective on the environment and human responsibilities. Some of the papers shared at the conference are selected for publication in this issue, i.e. “Image, Creation and Family in Genesis” by Joel Hamme and a Review of Richard Bauckham’s *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* by Dr. Bill Bjoraker.

We have also invited other known scholars and practitioners to write articles especially for this issue. A special thanks to Dr. Howard A. Snyder for allowing us to use an excerpt from his article, and thanks to Andy Bathje and James Mason for contributing to the journal per our request.

Yalin Xin is Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies at William Carey International University, Research Fellow with the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements and Senior Editor for William Carey International Development Journal.

Divine Nature

ANDREW BATHJE

“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.”
Romans 1:20

A friend once summarized the three responsibilities of a Christian like this: “Look up to God, out to others and down for trash.” The phrase was catchy, especially from a guy that was always picking up litter, but I was not sure how Biblical it was. The first two responsibilities, “look up to God” and “out to others,” are clearly reflected in Christ’s teaching: ‘Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:36-40).

But the third, “looking down for trash,” seems like a trendy add-on, not really connected to the Christian faith. Sure, it is good to pick up trash and

keep places clean, but is it a Christian responsibility? The earth is simply the place where we live out “loving God and others,” a temporary place that is ours to do with as we see fit . . . Right? What is the role of nature within the Christian faith?

After the epic global flood that prompted endless Sunday school stories of Noah and a big ark, God made a covenant to protect and provide (Genesis 9). Before you read further, do you remember who the covenant was made with?

This promise was made between God, Noah *and the animals*. With a beautiful rainbow spanning the sky, God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature.” This covenant is three-way, between God, People and Creation. Scripture suggests that there is a divine relationship between God, People and Creation. Understanding this will help us “know our place” and “value our places.”

Andy Bathje is the Executive Director of Confrontation Point Ministries, a missions organization that integrates service with adventure. Service activities include home repair work, volunteering in urban service agencies and environmental conservation initiatives. Andy holds a Masters in Clinical Psychology from Wheaton College. He lives in Wilmore, Kentucky with his wife and two daughters

I call this relationship the “Covenant Triangle” and when drawn, it flows two directions with God at the pinnacle. First, God created and sustains Creation to provide for People, who then praise God. Second, God calls People to enjoy and care for Creation that it may glorify God. [1]

So, what do you think, is looking “down for trash” Biblical? How would you describe the role of nature is in the Christian faith?

Three Environmental Themes in the Book of Matthew

If you read Scripture closely, you will notice countless references to the natural world. A few years ago, I chose the book of Matthew and marked every passage with an “E” that made a reference to the environment. I found over 60 references! It seemed that three themes presented themselves. I’ve noticed these three themes throughout the Bible and maybe you have too.

1) God Has Power Over Creation

God has the power to intervene into the natural world and change the course of events for God’s purpose and message. For example, God steered the star to guide the wise men, Jesus calmed the waves when the disciples were frightened, the Spirit ascended as a dove to affirm that Jesus was the Son of God. God even caused a fish to swallow a coin so Peter could catch the fish and give the coin to the tax collectors.

Instances like this are throughout the Bible. Chances are, you have a few of your own favorite Bible stories that show God intervening in the natural world. These examples are fun to recount because they are extraordinary. You can imagine how amazing things like a burning bush or a plague of frogs would have been to see. God clearly acted! Those things that happened were not “normal”! God showed ultimate power by changing the most powerful force we know — nature itself. What a relief to know God has power over all things in this natural world.

2) Creation reflects God’s Kingdom

Throughout the Gospels Jesus tells parables — stories that have a lesson. In Mark 4:14–20, Jesus reveals the lesson when He says that the “seed” is actually the “word” or what we would call the Gospel. The different places that the seed falls represent the various ways that people react to the “word.” Some people lose interest immediately; others change their minds over time; while others receive it and produce an abundance of “fruit.” This isn’t an instructional about farming, Jesus is teaching the mysteries of His Kingdom.

This second theme is that creation reveals lessons about the Kingdom of God. They include passages that describe the growth of our faith like a seed, or the behaviors of people as sheep being watched by a shepherd, or the Spirit of God as the wind, or the compassion of God by comparing us to beautiful lilies growing in a field or the lack of fruit on a fig tree to a Christian with faith but no action.

To understand the ways of creation—how a seed grows, how a tree produces fruit, how an animal responds to its master, how the wind comes invisibly without warning, how a sparrow lives off the land—is to know more fully how God works.

Here’s a wild thought. Remember how Genesis tells us that we are made in the image of God? What if creation is made in the image of God’s Kingdom?

3) God’s Messengers Spent Time in Creation

Reflect on Romans 1:20 for a moment. Have you ever looked up at the stars or out across a beautiful overlook and thought, “Wow, there has got to be a God!” Or maybe you spent time with someone who cared deeply for you and as a result you became a better person. That person is one of God’s creations and they are evidence of the Creator. Everything in God’s creation gives witness to God. Is it possible that spending time in and with creation is necessary for spiritual development?

In the book of Matthew, we find Jesus walking beside the Sea of Galilee, gathering people to

a hillside, preaching from a boat and going to a mountainside to pray. You may be able to remember some other times He was in the “outdoors” — like when He cooked up a breakfast of fish over a campfire on the beach for the disciples (John 21). Why do you think He was outside so often? Why did Jesus choose to wander around out-of-doors rather than spend more time in public squares, synagogues, homes, etc.?

Why did Jesus turn a grassy hillside into an outdoor stadium that could seat & feed 5,000 people? Why did Jesus leave the crowds and climb a mountain to quietly talk to God? Why did He go out and walk along the Sea of Galilee early in the morning, gather some sticks, start a fire and cook a meal for His followers? Was it simply a convenient place or was creation the best “classroom” and “sanctuary” for Jesus’ actions?

Can you think of any other characters in the Bible (old and new testaments) that spent time in the natural world? How does this make you think differently about your own time outside?

Look up to God, out to others and down for trash. Or maybe better said: Trust God, Serve Others and Care for Creation. The words, “Care for”, in this saying has multiple meanings. First, it refers to our role as stewards of the earth. It also refers to “an appreciation of” the natural world as it was meant to be enjoyed and benefited from. As we relate to the creation, we are able to gain a clearer understanding of God.

Creation is God’s first gift to mankind and caring for creation was our first command (Genesis 2:15). If we don’t integrate the natural world within our spiritual framework, we are missing something essential in our relationship with the Creator.

Endnotes

1. This concept is taken from Howard Snyder’s book *Salvation Means Creation Healed* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), chapter 8.

Image, Creation and Family in Genesis

JOEL HAMME

Abstract: While many of the world's mythologies provide stories of creation, Greco-Roman mythology was singularly incoherent in this respect. Like Aristotle, the intellectuals of the ancient West denied that the visible world had a beginning. Indeed, the idea of a beginning was impossible in the framework of their cyclical notion of time. In sharp contrast, Christianity inherited from Judaism not only a concept of time as non-repetitive and linear but also a striking story of creation. By gradual stages a loving and all-powerful God had created light and darkness, the heavenly bodies, the earth and all its plants, animals, birds and fishes. Finally, God had created Adam and, as an afterthought, Eve to keep man from being lonely. Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes. And, although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image.¹

With this statement and others like it, Lynn White, in 1967 laid the responsibility for the current ecological crisis at the feet of Western Christianity. It is without a doubt that Judeo-Christian ideas concerning the rationality of God and progress spurred on the technological and industrial advance that made the ecological crisis possible, and thus is in a sense behind the crisis. The question is, however, does the Genesis text, when read responsibly and in its Biblical and cultural context, really say what Lynn White would have us believe it says? One can forgive his harmonization of Genesis 1 and 2, but does his reading of the Genesis text do justice to it? Besides making the human "simply not part of nature" what does God's making the human in God's image do to the human? What does it mean to be made in the image of God and what does that have to do with

creation care?

The following is an examination of Genesis 1:26-28 in the narrative context of Genesis. Genesis 1:26-28 is the passage in which God makes the human, both male and female, in God's image, blesses them and gives them dominion over non-human creation. God also tells the human to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. I argue that the passage is a re-articulation of Ancient Near Eastern royal ideology in which instead of the king being the image of the deity and placed over humans, the human is made in the image of God and placed over non-human creation.² The function of the human as the image of God most relevant to environmental concerns is to provide a place on earth for human life to thrive. This image has a relational aspect that is carried out primarily through the extended family.

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This paper concentrates on the narrative of Genesis, especially chapters 1-2, and to a certain extent, the early portions of the Abraham narrative (12-19). It takes a canonical approach,³ in which the passages are in dialogue with each other and help to paint a picture of what the image of God is, and what it means to live effectively as God's image. Rather than examining prescriptive statements in legal sections of Torah or aphorisms in Wisdom literature, the paper will examine the plot of a constructed narrative to see what moral vision emerges from it. Barton comments that narratives can elucidate moral issues in a way that is not possible in other genres.⁴ It is also just a simple fact that the primeval history in Genesis is the only part of the Hebrew Bible that affirms that the human is made in the image of God.

The paper concludes with a short reflection concerning how the idea of the image of God in the human can be applied to the contemporary ecological crisis, and discusses hermeneutical issues in applying this Ancient Near Eastern Iron Age text to contemporary ecological concerns.

The Image of God in Genesis 1-11

Three times in the primordial history, at Genesis 1:26-28, 5:1 and 9:6, Genesis affirms that humans are made in the image and/or likeness of God. The first occurrence is in the creation account of Genesis 1;1-2:4, the second is an affirmation that Seth was made in the likeness of God (5:1), and the third is in God's saying that a human's blood should be shed when that human sheds another's blood, as the human is in the image of God (9:6).

Genesis 1-11 divides into four rough sections: Genesis 1-2: creation and the human's existence in paradise, Genesis 3-6: the human's sin, expulsion from paradise and slide into violence, 7-9: the flood, and 10-11, the creation of nations. After the creation account in Genesis 1, in which the human was said to be created in God's image as God's likeness, human society has difficulty living as God's image, and human society down to its most basic unit, the family, is wracked with violence and

transgression of the natural order established in God's commanding the human to rule and subdue nature, and to keep and work the garden.

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."⁵

Much ink has been spilled over the meaning of this passage. Some scholars have taken a word-study approach, and have concentrated on *btsalmenu* "in our image" and *kidmutenu* "after our likeness." This is not the path that this paper will take, as both *tselem* and *demut* occur infrequently in the Hebrew Bible and the contexts within which they do occur are varied. The results of a word study of these two Hebrew words "yield notoriously inconclusive results."⁶

Middleton submits that one must move from studying isolated words to studying the larger verbal units in which one finds the words. Such an investigation yields three observations that warrant further study. First, the image is associated in 1:26 with God speaking in the first-person plural, which God does nowhere else in Genesis 1. Second, the image is associated in 1:26 and 1:28 with the exercise of power over the natural world. Third, the image is associated in 1:27 with the creation of the human as male and female.⁷ This paper will discuss briefly Middleton's second and third observations.

Volumes have been written on what it means for humans to have dominion over the earth and

subdue it. Some scholars take great pains to mitigate the apparent violent nature of “having dominion” and “subduing,” often in reference to the contemporary ecological crisis, which has at times been blamed upon the Judeo-Christian use of Genesis 1:26-28 as justification to run rough-shod over the environment. Both Middleton and Wright assert that although the verbs *rādâ* and *kābaš* may refer to violent exploitation and domination, the words do not necessarily do so, and it is quite recent to consider that they do in the context of Genesis 1:26-28.⁸ Middleton asserts that *kābaš* represents the bringing of something under one’s control through the exercise of power and *rādâ* represents royal dominion, and is a term taken from the political sphere that is applied in Genesis 1:26-28 to the relationship between humans and animals.

Neumann-Gorsolke goes further in his attempt at mitigating the apparent violence that may be found in the rule and dominion language in Genesis 1:26-28. He does a relatively exhaustive word-study of *rādâ*. The verb is used for the operating of a winepress and treading on objects, either literally or metaphorically, and for rule. The verb is used three times in Judahite royal theology, in Psa 110:2, 1Kgs 5:4 and Psa 72:8. In Psa 110:2, the king rules over his enemies. In 1 Kgs 5:4 and Psa 72:8, the king rules over the people of Israel in a way that promotes a state of peace and well-being. He draws upon the occurrence of the root *rādâ* in the context of shepherd and writes that the conception of the good king is of one that works righteousness and does not oppress. The good king is the good shepherd. He applies this understanding of the shepherd-ruler to Genesis 1:26-28.⁹

Wright, as well, draws upon the common ANE language of the king being a shepherd in his discussion of human dominion over non-human creation. The king exists to care for the people, not to exploit them. He writes concerning the mutual relationship of servanthood between king and people,

Mutual servanthood was the ideal. Yes, it was the duty of the people to serve and obey the king, but his primary duty of kingship

was to serve them, to care for their needs, provide justice and protection, and avoid oppression, violence and exploitation. A king exists for the benefit of his people, not vice versa. The metaphor that expressed this, and which was common throughout the ancient Near East and not just in Israel as a metaphor for kingly rule, was that of the shepherd. Kings were shepherds of their people. Sheep need to follow their shepherd, but the primary responsibility of shepherds is to care for the sheep, not to exploit or abuse them. The very word ‘shepherd’ speaks of responsibility, more than of rights and powers.¹⁰

Along with the concept of the human being a benevolent shepherd-king over the rest of creation, Old Testament ethicists stress that God has entrusted the human with non-human creation as stewards, a trust that carries with it responsibility and accountability. It is this function of the human as a responsible steward over creation that separates the human from the rest of creation.¹¹ Neumann-Gorsolke especially stresses that the human participates in God’s divine might and responsibility by God’s command. The human is not autonomous, but is in a responsible relationship with God as God’s representative, having a lordship over the earth similar to God’s lordship over the rest of the cosmos.¹² Humanity is a steward of creation at the command of God and as such is responsible for its treatment of the environment.¹³

One approach to the mitigation of the violence that may be present in the human’s call to have dominion and subdue creation is to read the primeval history canonically. Thus, I read God’s commissioning of the human to rule over creation in Genesis 1 in the light of God’s putting Adam to the task of keeping and working the garden in Genesis 2:15. The verse reads, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to till it and keep it (*leābdāh ulešāmrāh*).” Whereas Genesis 1 uses language that denotes rulership and control over the creation, Genesis 2 uses terms of service and protection.

In both Genesis 1 and 2, the human is an integral part of creation. In chapter 1, the human is made on the 6th day along with the land animals, albeit with much more divine attention and deliberation. In chapter 2, it seems as if one cannot have plant and animal life without a caretaker and guardian, so God fashions the human to work the soil before the first plant sprung forth from the ground. Although made prior to the animals and animated by the very breath of God, the human being is still very much part of the created world, and both the human and the animals are *nepes̄ chayyâ* (2:7; 2:27).

What separates the human from the animals is the position in which God has placed the human. As the human is very much intertwined with creation,¹⁴ God creates the human in a way that does not place the human at a distance from creation, but puts the human at the apex of creation. The respective narratives in Genesis 1 and 2 merely express this theo-anthropological assertion in two different ways.

In Genesis 1:26-28, the human is made in God's image and receives a divine commission to have dominion and subdue the earth. We also learn that the human is created male and female. God blesses bi-gendered humanity and tells them to be fruitful and multiply, to have dominion over and to fill the earth.

In Genesis 2, apart from a prohibition not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God does not speak to the man,¹⁵ but fashions him from the earth, breathes the divine breath into him and places him in the garden with the task to work and guard/keep it (2:7, 15). Curiously, God makes the animals from the ground only after God decides that it is not good for the man to live alone, and that it would be nice for the man to have a helper suitable to him (2:18-19).

It is clear from Genesis 2 that both animals and the man come from the same source, from the earth (*min-hāadāmā* in both 2:7 and 19). Humans and animals are more alike than most humans would like to admit. We come from the same place,

the earth. The only thing different in God's creating the man in comparison with the animals is that God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and no such statement is made concerning the animals. Whatever the process of creation concerning humans and animals, both are called "living beings (*nepes̄ chayyâ*)."¹⁶ The differentiation between humans and animals is that God has given the humans authority over animals. God forms the animals and brings them to the man to be named, the man then names them and so exercises power over them (2:19). In chapter 1 of Genesis this authority flows from the human being made in the image of God. Humans and animals, although quite alike, are not equal in the created order.¹⁶

It is at the point of recognizing that God put humans at the apex of creation as its ruler that we can briefly discuss Genesis 1:26-28's relationship with Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology. Old Testament scholarship has largely reached a consensus that Genesis one draws upon Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology, either Mesopotamian or Egyptian, in its portrayal of God as creating humans in the image and according to the likeness of God. The human is God's regent on earth. Middleton calls this the royal-functional interpretation of the image of God.¹⁷

Old Testament scholars have demonstrated that we find in Genesis 1:26-28 a modification of ANE kingship ideology in which the king as the god's image ruling over people is changed to humans as a whole in God's image ruling over creation. There are three main points in Genesis 1:26-28. 1) Humanity as a whole is in God's image. This can be viewed as either a democratization of God's image to all humanity,¹⁸ or as a royalization of the human. It makes little difference which for the argumentation of this paper, but Neumann-Gorsolke makes a good argument when he submits that the OT royalizes the human, as it applies royal terminology to humans as a whole.¹⁹ 2) Humanity is told to have dominion over animals and subdue the earth. 3) Humanity is created male and female and is told to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth.

Middleton submits that rulership is the purpose for which humans were made in the image of God, not merely a consequence of being made in such a fashion.²⁰ This is somewhat contrary to the position of Wright, who does not see the idea of the human as being created in the image of God as exclusively tied to the human's dominion over nature. The *Imago Dei* is certainly manifested in the human's ruling over the rest of creation but is not totally subsumed in rulership. Wright comments,

It is going too far to identify the two completely; that is, to argue that our dominion over nature is exclusively what actually constitutes the image of God in humanity. For human beings are, and do, very much more than all that is involved in mastering their environment.²¹

Wright continues in a line similar to Westermann in submitting that the image of God in the human is not something that humans possess, such as rationality, moral consciousness, and the like, but is a result of how God made us. The image of God is what the human is, not something the human possesses. Since humans are in the image of God, God instructs them to rule over creation.²²

Wright makes two points that move beyond reducing the image of God in humans from a merely functional category to both an ontological and functional one.²³ This is important, because if one cannot fulfill the function for which one is made, how does one remain the image of God? If the image of God is somehow ontological, then whether or not a human can fulfill his or her function does not compromise that image. 1) He recognizes that humans do much more than master the environment. Humans think, love and have relationships that order their lives and the lives of others, and so forth. 2) The image of God is not merely rule, but enables it.

Image and Family

It seems counter-intuitive that humans being made in the image of God does not have a relational

aspect to it, as the narratives in Genesis that submit that humans are in the image and/or likeness of God have humans relating to God and to each other quite often, but not always positively. God creates male and female in the divine image and blesses them, commanding them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to rule over all earth creatures. Some scholars argue that the fact that Genesis 1:27 uses the gendered terms for male and female rather than the social terms for man and woman militate against a relational interpretation of the *Imago Dei*.²⁴ This seems to be equivocating, splitting hairs. Why would the writer make pains to introduce the topic of sexuality into the passage if it was not some how significant to the humans being in God's image? And how more relational could one get than telling a male and a female human to fill the earth with their offspring? As if the biblical writer did not know that filling the world with offspring would mean having sex. It seems that there is a relational aspect to humans being, and functioning, in the image of God that goes beyond the human being God's counterpart on Earth as Westermann²⁵ submits or as God's dialog partner, as Hans Christoph Schmitt submits.²⁶

It is my submission that Genesis 1:26-28 depicts the Image of God in the human as relational in a specific way. The bi-gendered human race is to rule over the earth through being fruitful and multiplying and subduing the earth through the efforts of the extended family practicing agriculture and animal husbandry, at least in its Ancient Israelite manifestation. This is evident through clues in the narrative that follows Genesis 1:26-28. Chapters 1-11 depict all of the ins and outs of family life, including the violence, strife and jealousy which threaten it and humanity in general.²⁷ From the primeval history in 1-11, 12-50 carries out the same theme of the extended family struggling to carve out a space in the world in which human life can thrive.

The depiction of the male and female ruling over creation through subduing the earth and being fruitful and multiplying is a re-articulation of the Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology that

was discussed earlier in the paper. What does this dominion over animals and subdual of the earth entail? Middleton writes,

In 1:26-28, that task is understood as the exercise of significant power over the earth and its non-human creatures (likely including the agricultural cultivation of land and the domestication of animals—which together constitute the minimal historical requirements for organized human society or culture).

Imaging God thus involves representing and perhaps extending in some way God's rule on earth through the ordinary communal practices of human sociocultural life.²⁸

Middleton's observation makes sense in the canonical context in which one finds 1:26-28. It precedes a story of the first gardener and master of animals, which quickly turns into the story of the first family, as God fashions a woman for the man, and despite some major setbacks, start a family, the most basic of Israelite social units. The rest of the primeval history is filled with the begetting of children and the death of children, and with familial turmoil. Things get so bad that God changes God's mind concerning creating the human and decides to start over with one extended family; a man and a wife, their sons and their sons' wives (Genesis 6-9).

It is important to remember that the idea that the image of God was destroyed in the human is a creation of Christian theology that has no grounding in the biblical text, either Old or New Testament. Despite the downward slide into sin for which the ground is cursed and strains familial relationships to murderous extent, the biblical writer still affirms that the human is made in God's likeness (5:1), and that Seth is in the likeness and image of his father, Adam (5:3). Even after the earth is so filled with violence and the created order becomes skewed that God floods the earth and starts over with Noah and his family, God still affirms that the human is created in God's image (9:6).²⁹

Along with sin, however, comes an increased lack of facility for living up to the calling that

humans have as being made in the image of God. Relationships between family members, between animals and humans, and relationships between God and humans become increasingly difficult due to human sin throughout Genesis 1-11. Humans decide to create the tower of Babel, which Middleton interprets to be the attempt to establish the first world empire—a move from a diverse world based on kinship to an enforced uniform language and culture in which the masses serve the elite.³⁰

It should not be surprising that the extended family is the vehicle through which God chose the divine image to be fully lived out, as family is very important to Old Testament ethics. Waldemar Janzen has placed family as central to Old Testament ethics, making it his central paradigm among four other paradigms that support it. By paradigm, he means, “. . . a personally and holistically image of a model (e.g., a wise person, good king) that imprints itself immediately and non-conceptually on the characters and actions of those who hold it.”³¹

According to Janzen's model, through being exposed to numerous stories concerning the ideal Israelite family, the ancient Israelite developed a certain image of what family should look like. The family paradigm has three elements to it. 1) Life—The preservation and continuance of life conceived both individually and life through a family line. 2) Land—it takes land for an individual and family line to live. This land is a gift of God's hospitality. 3) Hospitality—in time of need, people do not only live off of their own resources, but off of the provision of others. The element of hospitality keeps a kinship group from becoming too close-knit and rejecting of the needs of others.

An example from Genesis that Janzen uses to illustrate the familial paradigm is Abraham's preserving family peace by parting ways with Lot in Genesis 13. In this story, Abraham sacrifices better pasture land to remain in peace with his nephew Lot. In doing so, Abraham upholds the will of God, as God has willed that Abraham bless all of the families of the Earth (12:3).³²

One does not need to stop at Abraham's sacri-

vice of land for the sake of family peace. In chapter 14, when Lot is captured in war, Abraham forms an ad hoc army and rescues Lot. When God is on the way to destroy Sodom, Abraham intercedes on the behalf of the righteous that are in Sodom, and is given opportunity to rescue Lot from destruction. An interesting element of the narratives dealing with Abraham and Lot is how his advocacy and intercession on the behalf of Lot is met with God's blessing and promise. After Abraham's parting from Lot and giving up the best pasture land, God promises Abraham that all of the land that he sees will be for him and his descendents forever (13:14-18). After Abraham rescues Lot from capture Melchizedek blesses him (14). The promise that within a year's time Sarah will have a son by Abraham precedes his intercession for the righteous of Sodom (18). The combination of acts for the benefit of others, both relative and stranger and the blessing and promise of God highlights the value placed upon the care for families and strangers in the narrative of Genesis.

In the Abrahamic narrative, the author of Genesis tells us of a man and his family that makes a place in the world for humans to thrive in a new land, and the people surrounding that family are generally better off (blessed) by their interactions with this family. This man and his family have a blessing and calling not unlike Genesis 1:26-28, in which the man and woman are blessed to be fruitful and multiply, to have dominion over non-human creatures, and subdue the earth. In Abraham, we see an example of a man and his family making a place in the world for human life to thrive. It is probably no accident that the whole narrative of Genesis 12-50 covers four generations, from Abraham to the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel, and at the end of Genesis, Joseph saves Egypt and the Levant from famine. Indeed, in the narrative structure of Genesis the family of Abraham does bless the nations.³³

But what makes the story of Abraham so real is that his shining moments of benevolence and brotherly love are punctuated with narratives

in which Abraham fails morally. He seems more than capable of exposing his wife to danger, which not only seems self-serving and cowardly, but also threatens to put God's purpose of descendents and blessing of the families of the earth in jeopardy. He goes along with Sarah's plan to produce an heir with Sarah's maidservant Hagar, which produced strife that threatened to destroy family peace. Abraham is lifted up as a moral exemplar, but whose weakness at times causes us to realize that his true standing before God rests in God's election of him to be a blessing through his descendents. Genesis 12:1-3 reads,

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.

With Abraham, Genesis starts a new chapter that moves from humanity in general that tries to establish security based upon a temple-state system, which God thwarts, to a carrying out of God's purposes through a family line.³⁴

Janzen is not the only Old Testament ethicist that considers the family central to Old Testament ethics. In Wright's explication of ethics along three angles, the theological, the social and the economic, embodied in God, Israel and the Land, he puts the family, the household-land unit, in the center of all three as having central importance. Family in this sense has vertical and lateral dimensions—one had an obligation to one's kin of the same generation, but also to one's ancestors and descendents. This obligation to family was connected to land as the place where one was buried and the basis for economic survival for the family.³⁵

Whether or not family is central to Old Testament ethics is not as important as the organizing principle it applies to the Old Testament. New

issues are addressed that remain submerged if holiness, for example, is treated as the center of Old Testament ethics. The Old Testament is diverse, and addresses a number of issues that cannot all be captured by one organizing theme.³⁶

Implications for Christian Creation Care

If the proposal of this paper is correct, that the OT portrays the Image of God in the human as being lived out through the extended family, in both its relational and rulership aspect, what are the implications for Christian creation care?

One implication is that to live obediently as God's image is to be a responsible steward of the Earth and the creatures living on it, as they are entrusted to humans by God. Genesis 1:26-28 uses the rulership terms *rādā* and *kābas* in relating God's command to the human regarding exercising authority over nature. These may be violent terms, but are not necessarily so. Read in relationship with Genesis 2:15, in which Adam's stewardship of the garden is described in terms related to service, *leābdāh ulešāmrāh*, the violent potential in the rulership language of Genesis 1:26-28 is largely removed.

A number of Old Testament scholars connect Genesis 1:26-28 to the modern ecological crisis. Cyril Rodd is dubious concerning the idea that the Old Testament authors were that concerned about the environment from an ecological stewardship standpoint, and critiques the idea that the OT speaks of the human as a shepherd king who is responsible for the environment and submits that modern ethicists start with the ecological crisis in mind, not from the Old Testament. His critique is grounded in the idea that the ancient Israelite farmer would have been in constant struggle with animals and other parts of the environment to produce a crop, and would have wished that his dominion over the environment was more complete.³⁷ Cyril Rodd is correct. Iron Age Israelites were not environmentalists in the modern sense, and due to the minimal potential that they had to drastically change their environment, they need not be.³⁸

In the light of Rodd's obvious critique of the use of Genesis 1:26-28 in the modern ecological crisis, one observation is in order. The ancient Israelite farmer did not have as many efficient methods to manipulate the environment as modern society has. Ancient Israelite activities that entail carving out a space for human life to thrive, which is what I take the mandate to have dominion and subdue means is much different than what it means today, especially in industrialized society.

In industrialized society, in which we have eviscerated the environment to such an extent that the world's ability to sustain life is being increasingly compromised, we need to be reminded that the humans are called to rule and have dominion over the planet in a responsible way. We are not only called to have dominion and subdue (1:26-28), but also to keep and to work/serve (2:15) Whereas the Ancient Israelite family struggled to wrest a space for life from the environment, modern society can easily oppress the environment to the point that it no longer sustains life, and humans will be on the list of endangered and extinct species.

The difference in the historical and cultural circumstance of modern industrial society in comparison with Iron Age Israel creates a different hermeneutical circumstance in which to apply Genesis 1:26-28 to Christian creation care. Although Goldingay writes concerning Old Testament theology, and not ethics as such, he provides a methodology for addressing Rodd's critique concerning the (mis)-use of Genesis 1:26-28 in the debate concerning modern ecological concerns. Goldingay asks whether some historical contexts may be more illuminating than others when forming theology. He writes that one must understand both the historical context of the text and the contemporary situation in which the church confronts the text.³⁹

Using Goldingay's methodology concerning a stress on the message of the text in its contemporary historical context, which I take to be that humans are to create a place in the world in which

human life can thrive, it makes great sense to apply this general message to the concrete situation today concerning the ecology. Today, in industrialized society, to create a space for human life, and all life, for that matter, calls forth a concept of dominion over nature that must stress benevolent care of the creation if life is going to survive on the planet.

How, then, can the concept of Christian creation care that our current ecological crisis draws forth from the Genesis text be taught and actualized in the lives of contemporary Christ following communities? Hans Walter Wolff hints that Christ's authority in all of heaven and earth, and the call to make disciples that issue from that authority can give us a proper understanding of humans living in the image of God as stewards of the earth.⁴⁰ These Christ following communities can become a spiritual extended family, just as real as Abraham's, working to provide a space for human life to thrive for themselves and for those around them. They can teach others what it means to live as the image of God in relation to the environment, and model that for those other communities around them.

Although Hans Walter Wolff basically equates the image of God in the human with establishing civilization and the individual human's coming to terms with life's problems, a basic meaning that this paper does not share, he makes some observations that help keep the human's rule over creation in perspective. The human's domination over creation threatens to escape, because the human misunderstands the task as ruler. Related to this, Wolff makes two points. 1) The human's rule should not bring humanity to the brink of destruction by destroying the environment. Above this, Wolff writes that human domination of other humans falsifies the image of God. 2) The subjection of the world should not in turn lead the human to being dominated by a myth of technology in which a thing is done simply because it is possible, and therefore the human is ruled by economic and technological forces.⁴¹

Finally, Wolff grounds the authority of the human over creation in the fact that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus Christ, and the call to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-19). He eloquently writes, "We ought to consider how, through the mode of sovereignty of the One who was crucified, mankind's stewardship over the world is snatched back from self-destruction, and the image of God once more emerges in all its freedom."⁴² In the final analysis, then, Christian creation care is grounded in the authority of Christ, who has created a spiritual extended family, who through discipleship and witness, blesses those other communities around it, and creates a space for human life to thrive.

Endnotes

1. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," in David and Eileen Spring, eds., *Ecology and Religion in History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) 6.
2. What is meant by re-articulation is that the Biblical text takes an understood idea from the larger culture, in this case, the king being the image of the deity and representative between the deity and humans, and uses that idea in a new fashion, applying it to all of humanity as the apex of God's creation as God's representative in creation. For a good discussion of this idea, see Middleton, J. Richard. *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005.
3. A canonical approach to the Scriptures reads a particular Biblical text in the context of the Scripture around it, and can be expanded, although it is not here, into the whole Bible. This is an especially valuable approach to the issue of humans being made in the image of God, because the text does not define what is meant by this in any depth. This paper defines the image of God in the human by reading it in the context of Genesis.
4. John Barton, *Understanding Old Testament Ethics: Approaches and Explorations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003) 4-5.
5. This quotation, and all other quotations from the Bible in this paper, is from the RSV.
6. J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005) 45.

7. Ibid., 49.
8. Ibid., 50-52; Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 2004).
9. Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen in den Grenzen der Schöpfung* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2004) 200-224. See pages 10-14 for a simpler statement of the human ruling over nature as a shepherd.
10. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 122.
11. Ibid., 123; Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down*, 87-90; Waldemar Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 178-79 n. 1; John Rogerson and Daniel M. Carroll R., ed., *Theory and Practice in Old Testament Ethics* (JSOTSS 405; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2004) 42.
12. Neumann-Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 314.
13. See also Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Margaret Kohl, Trans.; London/Philadelphia: SCM/Fortress, 1974) 159-164.
14. Contrary to Walter Eichrodt, who sees God's addressing the human as separating the human from nature (*Man in the Old Testament* [K. and R. Gregor Smith, trans.; London: SCM, 1951] 30). It is interesting that Eichrodt overlooks the fact that God speaks to the sea creatures, birds and creeping things in Genesis 1:22.
15. This is the gendered term for male human, not generic "man."
16. Stephen A. Reed, "Human Dominion Over Animals," in Wonil Kim, et al, eds., *Reading the Bible for a New Millennium*, vol. 1: Theological and Hermeneutical Studies (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000) 335.
17. Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 53. Westermann disagrees with this interpretation, and views the human as created to be the relational counterpart to God (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11. A Commentary* [John J. Scullion, S. J., trans.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984] 158). Westermann seems to be moving in the direction of an ontological interpretation of the image, which will be valuable later in our discussion.
18. Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 227-28.
19. Gorsolke, *Herrschen*, 202-203.
20. Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 53.
21. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 119.
22. Ibid., 119.
23. See also Phyllis Bird, "Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image in the Genesis Creation Texts," in Kari Elisabeth Børresen ed., *The Image of God: Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 10-11. Bird states clearly that Genesis 1:26-28 depicts the image of God as both ontological and functional.
24. Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 50; Bird, "Sexual Differentiation," 13. In the flood story, the animals are described with gendered language in the so-called Priestly source and social language in the so-called Yahwist source.
25. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 158.
26. Frank Crüsemann, Walter Dietrich and Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Gerechtigkeit-Gewalt-Leben. Was leistet eine Ethik des Alten Testaments?" in Bernard M. Levinson, Eckart Otto, eds., *Recht und Ethik im Alten Testament* (ATM 13; Münster: LIT, 2004) 162.
27. Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics*, 45.
28. Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 60.
29. W. Sibley Towner, "Clones of God," *Genesis 1:26-28 and the Image of God in the Hebrew Bible*, *Interpretation* 59.4 (October 2005) 351-352.
30. Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 221-228.
31. Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics*, 27-28. Although I find it unlikely that the ancient Israelite had a vast enough repertoire of tales from the Hebrew Bible to develop extensive ethical paradigms, or even that those paradigms actually exist in the text so clearly, Janzen's approach is valuable in that his questions highlight important aspects of the Biblical text, one of them being the importance of family.
32. Ibid. 32.
33. It must be mentioned, however, that Joseph ends up reducing the Levant and Egypt to servitude, so Genesis does not end on an entirely positive note.
34. Ibid., 45.
35. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 357-58. Family in this context means "extended family, a household incorporating several generations vertically and several nuclear families horizontally, plus slaves and resident employees."
36. Birch, *Let Justice*, 37. See for example, Walter Kaiser, who uses holiness as a central theme for Old Testament ethics (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old*

Testament Ethics [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983]).

37. Cyril S. Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001) 237-238.

38. This is not to say that the Israelites ignored or were not awestruck by God's creativity shown in the natural world, and Psalms such as Psalm 104 attest to this.

39. John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 37.

40. This is indeed merely hinted at in Wolff's work. It is by no means fleshed out, and concrete ways concerning how this would be carried out are not discussed.

41. Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Margaret Kohl, trans.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 163-64.

42. *Ibid.*, 165.

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A Biblical Ethic for Environment Care

JAMES MASON

Ecological issues and the state of the environment are big news right now. It's fair to say that most natural scientists, including Christians, agree that the earth's global environmental problems are real and must be addressed immediately. This list includes:

- Pollution of the air, the sea, rivers, lakes and aquifers.
- Destruction of the rainforests and other critical habitats.
- Desertification and soil loss.
- The loss of species — plants, animals, insects, birds, etc.
- The depletion of the ozone layer.
- The increase of “greenhouse gases” and the consequent harmful warming of the planet.¹

In and of themselves, these and many other interrelated environmental issues are a bugle call for rationally minded people to rise to a new standard

of care, concern, and activism for the planet we call home. However, my goal here is not to convince anyone of the reality of these problems or that we are facing a crisis (though I believe in many respects we are). For this you can simply Google the words “environmental problems” and read some of the 200 million entries found there. Instead, my task is to briefly explore the idea that the Bible carries a distinctive teaching on creation and our responsibility to care for it.

Often the ideology of caring for the environment and teachings of biblical faith are not perceived to be compatible. This perception may come from those both in and outside of Christianity. After all, so the argument goes, Christians and the Christian scriptures have more to do with the “life to come,” than the current world in which we live. But is this really true? Is it true that biblical teaching, theology, and doctrine are against, or somehow

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run counter to, an ideology of responsible care for the environment?

I hope to demonstrate that biblical teaching provides a solid, if not the best, intellectual, moral, and spiritual resource for the passionate care of creation and the environment. To do this, I'll explore five major principles along with some key implications. Since others have gone before me in this thinking, I drew heavily from two excellent writers on this topic: Ed Brown in his *Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation* and Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (from the chapter titled "Mission and God's Earth"). I have also drawn from an excellent sermon by Tim Keller called "Can Faith Be Green?"²

Where else to start than at the beginning?

Some of the clearest teaching in the Bible and an excellent launching point for our thinking is found in the account of creation in Genesis where we discover God's original creative intention for the environment.

Specifically, let's look at Genesis 1:26-31.

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast

of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:26-31 ESV)

From this passage several key principles emerge.

Principle number 1: Creation belongs to God and was created for God.

One of the most important themes in the biblical scriptures is that God owns everything. If you read carefully the entire account of creation in chapter one of Genesis you see that God is the creator of everything. There is nothing that exists in the entire cosmos that did not come from the creative work of God. Out of nothing, God brought forth everything that exists. The very act of creation implies ownership. Not only did he create everything but he gave everything its own proper place, order, and designation — and he called it good. A key point in all of this is that only an owner of creation can command the created order by an act of his will.

The repeated statement "and God saw that it was good" shows us there was a sense of pleasure that God derived from his own created world. This doesn't mean that God is *discovering* that it was good — he is actually *enjoying* the creation. It has an aesthetic quality. It is beautiful and worthwhile. Goodness means that it is well suited for the purpose for which it was made. And it was made to give glory to God.

In verse 31 we read, "And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." Notice here that this is the sixth time in this chapter that God called his creation good. And in this instance, he calls it "very good." It is important to remember that God applied the term "very good" to all of creation together, not just to single parts. Everything together — everything in its interrelatedness —

has value. The entire system of creation is valuable. We should be careful not to damage that delicate balance which God so carefully crafted together.

So God created everything and he created everything for his good pleasure. Now we can add that he did this in order to give glory to himself. Psalm 148 declares,

“Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. He set them in place forever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maiden, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.” Psalm 148:3-13 (NIV)

Creation belongs to God and is here to give him glory! How contrary this is to our distorted notions that the earth belongs to humanity and is here first and foremost to give us what we want. The one who destroys the earth and abuses it destroys and spoils the reflection of the one who made it. Our treatment of the earth reflects our attitude toward its maker.

My wife owns a vase that her grandmother made. I don't find it an especially attractive piece of art but it has tremendous value to my wife. This is not because she finds it so amazing in and of itself; the value of the vase is derived from the worth of the relationship. My wife values the vase because of the person who made it.

Author Ed Brown is the head of a Christian environmental organization called Care of Creation and author of the book *Our Father's World*.

He writes,

My biggest reason for caring for God's creation has nothing to do with the extent or the severity of the crisis, the number of people affected or even the ultimate future of the human race. It has to do with one simple fact: I know the God who made it all. And I love him. If I can place a high price on things that have little or no intrinsic value simply because they were made by one of my children, how much more ought I to value and care for this amazing world God made, this world is precious because he made it and that represents an excellence and beauty far beyond anything that any of could begin to comprehend, let alone make on our own.³

Principle number 2: The good creation has its own intrinsic value⁴

Let's look more in depth at this idea of the “goodness of creation.” Six times in the creation narrative we see that God declares his work to be “good.”

Notice that he calls it good before humans are around. It isn't good simply because it's beneficial to us or because we can admire it. In other words, the creation has an *intrinsic* goodness. This means that it is valued by God, who is the source of all value. God values the earth because he made it and owns it. We can't just say that the earth is valuable *to us*. In fact we can almost say the opposite - we have value because we are part of the creation that God already values and calls good.

The importance of this is that it takes away our arrogant assumption that the earth exists solely for our use and enjoyment. We protect and steward the earth not because of the need-supplying value that the earth is to us but because of the glory-giving value of the earth to God.

Read through Psalm 104:10-30 to see that God makes trees for birds and he makes birds for trees. He makes mountains that are largely inac-

cessible for humans for wild goats to run and jump upon. He makes rocks for badgers to live in and he created badgers for rocks.

Walter Harrelson says of this Psalm, “God has interest in badgers and wild goats and storks for their own sakes. He has interest in trees and mountains and rock-cairns that simply serve non-human purposes...Man’s work, is significant, but so is a lion’s work. Ships doing commerce on the high seas are doing significant work, but so also is Leviathan, trailing behind the ships, blowing and cavorting.”⁵

The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge. Psalm 19:1-2 (NIV)

Just like the work of an artist reflects something of the inner being of the artist, creation reflects and praises God. Creation shows us something of the grandeur of God. It is not something to be consumed or used, it is there in and of itself to give glory to God.

Principle number 3: Creation is sacred

The Bible makes a clear distinction between God the creator and all the things that have been created. Nothing in creation itself is divine. If everything belongs to God and God is the Creator, then the creation itself is *not God*. There are people (some in the environmental movement) who believe that creation itself is divine. This pantheism (the belief that everything is god), is clearly not what we see in the creation account. In Genesis we see that creation is separate from the Creator. The Creator existed before the creation. The first sentence in the Bible says, “In the beginning, God...”

Since the creation is not the same as the Creator, we are not permitted to act as though “Mother Nature” is a living and divine personality. This means that we do not have the freedom to make the earth our master or our Lord. That position is to be taken only by the Creator God.

Through the years Christians have really worked hard to hammer this point home — we are not to worship creation. We are not to substitute the creation for the Creator. This is all true. However, one problem is that we’ve lost a sense of the sacredness of the created order. Christians, in emphasizing that the earth is not divine, have often then regarded the earth as something only to be harnessed for human benefit. Christians have taken this teaching, about the non-divine nature of creation, and claimed that there is a biblical warrant for a purely scientific, technological, and instrumental attitude to the non-human creation as a whole. However, there is a fundamental difference between treating creation as divine, and treating it as sacred. For example, we speak of the sanctity of human life but we don’t regard humans as divine. Something is sacred or has sanctity because of its relatedness to God. So, the earth itself is sacred. We don’t worship it but we should honor it as sacred.

The implications of this are obvious — the way we treat the earth is reflective of our own relationship with God. Is the earth sacred to you? Or is it just another retail store for you to have your consumptive needs met? Do you love the earth? A better question is do you love God? If you do, then you must also treat with respect, honor, and care that which God loves.

Principle number 4: We are called to *stewardship* of creation not *exploitation*.

One of the most common phrases used today to talk about caring for the earth is “environmental stewardship,” This is a good phrase particularly because of the word steward. A steward is someone who takes care of something on behalf of someone else.

My wife and I once lived in a tri-plex owned by my aunt who lived in another state. It was our job to manage her property. We had to care for the yard, the buildings, and collect the rent from the other tenants. Our job was to understand what the owner wanted to do with her property and to man-

age it accordingly. We had the freedom to make a lot of decisions on a day to day basis. We had the freedom to repair things that broke, to mow the grass when it needed it, and to protect the property when others sought to misuse or abuse it. We were stewards.

In like fashion, we are stewards of God's earth. We need to see ourselves as taking care of God's property on his behalf. He didn't make the world for us, he made it for himself. But he put us here to take care of it.

Looking back to our Genesis passage we see that God said, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (verse 28).

Much of our confusion over our role in the environment comes from a misapplication of this verse. Critics of Christianity say that the Christian system is hostile to the environment because Christians are taught in this verse to dominate and subdue the earth. In other words, we are given here the free license to do whatever we want to the earth. It exists for humanity to exploit for our own good and for our own use. Sadly, many Christians through the years have not proved them wrong by the way we have selfishly used and exploited the earth's resources.

But this notion is a serious misunderstanding of what is being taught here. This verse stems from a description of humans as being made in the image of God (see verse 26). That image is expressed in our being good representatives of God who is the ultimate King or Ruler of his creation. To "rule over the earth" or to have "dominion," as the King James translation says, means to be responsible stewards. God is one who brings order out of chaos, and is also the preserver and sustainer of his world. When we rule or subdue the earth we are sharing in all these Godly tasks, which ultimately belong to God. In a sense, God is saying "Go on multiply, take part in all that I have done. I have now made humanity! I bless you and want you to

participate in my ongoing creativity, in my work of sustaining and managing what I have made. Being a steward of the earth is a wonderful consequence of being made in the *Creator's* image.

Chris Wright writes that,

"...kings and emperors, in ancient times... would set up an image of themselves in far-flung corners of their domains to signify their sovereignty over that territory and its people. The image represented the authority of the true king. Similarly, God installs the human species as the image, within creation, of the authority that finally belongs to God, Creator and Owner of the earth... So the natural assumption is that a creature made in the image of God will reflect godly qualities in carrying out the mandate of delegated dominion... So, then, human dominion over the rest of creation is to be an exercise of kingship that reflects God's own kingship."⁶

Being made in the image of God separates us from the rest of creation and it also gives us a responsibility to be a caretaker of the rest of the created order. God told Adam and Eve to cultivate and keep the garden and we read that he has given us everything we need for our basic provision. We do have the freedom to use nature for our benefit, but we may only use it as God intends. Dr Ray Bohlin writes that "an effective steward understands that which he or she oversees, and science can help us discover the intricacies of nature. Technology puts the creation to our use, but unnecessary waste and pollution degrades it and spoils the creation's ability to give glory to its creator."⁷

So we are given the blessing and the responsibility of wise stewardship or management of the environment, but not permission to exploit it for our own selfish use.

Principle number 5: The earth will not be utterly destroyed but cleansed.

So far I've laid out some of the foundational ideas of the earth and its relationship to God.

Clearly, the Bible's doctrine of creation is quite important in our thinking about the earth and its care. But there is another point of biblical teaching that we need to understand as well.

We need to also remember that the earth is in *decay* and was marred by the fall of humanity into sin (see Genesis chapter 3). One consequence of the fall is that the earth will now only provide food through toil and sweat. After the fall, the vitality, order, beauty, and our management of the earth have all been marred with struggle, pain and disorder. Even worse, the fall brought death. And death means physical decay and alienation from God. All of creation became a part of God's curse on sin.

But, in making this point, it's important to note that just as the earth is a part of the curse, it is also part of God's plan in salvation. Jesus' message was not just a message of personal or individual salvation. His message was one of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God means all of God's rulership and lordship over all of creation.

One of the most amazing, but misunderstood teachings in the Bible is that the redemption of the earth is part of God's redemptive plan. Isaiah 11, Isaiah 35, and Isaiah 65 all speak of and anticipate the arrival and rule of the messianic king that will result in harmony and peace with the created order. Isaiah portrays God's new creation as a place that will be free from grief and tears. It will be free from curses and frustrated labor. It will be environmentally safe. This vision is the foundation for the New Testament hope. The New Testament, by the way, doesn't teach that God will ultimately reject or deny the earth. Instead it talks about a redeemed creation in which righteousness will dwell because God himself will dwell with his people. The earth will not be utterly destroyed in the end, but will be remade to be a "home of righteousness" where Jesus the divine savior himself will dwell with his followers.

This means that our ethic or our behavior regarding the earth is to be one that lines up with God's program of redemption. We are stewards of the earth not just because we are to take care of the

earth that God has left in our care. We preserve and enhance the created order so that we can point to the coming rule of Jesus himself. We are to be a picture of what God is ultimately planning to complete. We are signposts pointing to a great God with a great redemptive plan for his creation. We steward the earth not just as a resource but as a mission which will ultimately be completed by God himself. We aren't just trying to build some utopia so we can all have a smooth existence, but we are agents of a king who has his own agenda. Our job is to participate in that agenda and make the King look good.

The New Testament book of Romans provides a message of hope:

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Romans 8:18-21 (ESV)

Here we see that things are not hopeless. One day God will renew his creation. God has a plan that he is going to complete. Our final hope is always in God and his plan of salvation. Someday, Jesus will return to set the earth free from its bondage. And while he is at it, he will recreate those who have placed their total trust in Jesus the King of creation.

Finally, Jesus Christ Himself stands as the Lord over all of creation. The Bible says that by him, all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by him and for him...And God was pleased through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (see Colossians 1:15-20). In Jesus we have hope for the forgiveness of our sins, for our salvation, and even for the salvation of God's creation.

Endnotes

1. From Christopher Wright and his chapter “Mission and God’s Earth” in *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*. p413

2. Keller’s sermon can be found at <http://sermons2.redeemer.com/>.

3. Quote from *Our Father’s World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation* by Ed Brown. IVP Books, 2008, p43.

4. For this point am almost completely indebted to the thinking of Christopher Wright in *The Mission of God*. Much of the ideas and verbage from this principle come from this source.

5. Quoted in Christophers Wright’s book *The Mission of God* p399.

6. *ibid*, pp426-427

7. http://www.forerunner.com/ccbc/X0004_Christian_View_of_th.html

Salvation Means Creation Healed: Creation, Cross, Kingdom and Mission

HOWARD A. SNYDER

Misunderstanding Creation

Biblical teaching on creation is clear enough. Yet, because of the distortions of sin which have worked their way into all human cultures, humanity persistently misunderstands creation.

This is true even in the church. Biblical teachings get distorted by philosophies, ideologies, and economic and political realities to the point that Christians miss the import of fundamental biblical teaching concerning creation. This makes it difficult for Jesus followers to grasp the biblical meaning of creation—and therefore of creation healed.

“Nature”: Four Distorted Views

The biblical view of “Nature”—that is, the created order—often suffers distortion in four ways:

1. Romanticism. Prominent in Western culture especially since the nineteenth century, Romanticism views nature as the primary source of beauty and truth. In our creative, imaginative engagement with nature we find meaning, truth, even transcendence. Nature lifts our thoughts and feelings to the sublime. Christianity has not been unaffected by this; many Christians have a more romantic than a biblical view of the created order.

Romanticism embodies both truth and error. Since all creation in some sense “images” God’s beauty and creativity, we do resonate with the beauty of nature. We revel in the colors of flowers and sunsets; we marvel at the intricacy and complexity of life forms and the vast structure of the universe. We hear “the music of the spheres.”

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But this is only half the story. Nature is “red in tooth and claw,” as Tennyson wrote. The animal kingdom is full of violence, predation, death—billions of creatures great and small devouring and being devoured. Scripture is frank about this. The biblical worldview is not romantic; it recognizes the fallenness and transitoriness of nature. “The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isa. 40:8).

Yes, the created order is a source of beauty and of truth—the beauty that comes from God’s profuse creativity and the truth of creation’s beauty and sublimity—and also the truth of its violence, fallenness, and bondage to death. We can enjoy and glory in the beauties of nature and yet see that something is deeply wrong in the created order—a creation-wide disease only God can heal.

2. Commodification. In contemporary Western culture, the romantic view of nature is largely overshadowed by another view: commodification. If poets are romantics, capitalists are commodifiers. Nature means “natural resources”; the created order is mere raw material for profit-making.

As with romanticism, the view of nature as commodity, as “raw material” and natural resource, contains both truth and error. Yes, the earth is rich and bountiful, though not limitless, in resources to sustain human life. God has set this good earth under our dominion and it is proper to use it prudently. But the earth belongs to God, not to humans. It does not belong to private individuals, to nations, or to corporations, whether local or transnational. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1 KJV). Dominion means that the earth is to be held in trust for all humanity, including unborn generations. Nowhere does Scripture grant the absolute right to exploit creation for profit; to turn the whole earth into a commodity. Since the universe belongs to God, all humans are responsible to God for their use and abuse of the earth (and all planets) and all humanity must be held accountable to the common good. In fact God holds us *all* accountable for our responsible, sustainable stewardship of the created order. Commodification is not the biblical worldview; it is an exploitive distortion and a dangerous delusion.

3. Worship. Some people worship nature. The created order is divinized; becomes a god. The Apostle Paul pronounces God’s judgment on those who have “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!” (Rom. 1:25).

This ancient view—nature and its forces as god, or gods—is still common today. We find it in New Age mysticism and in various forms of pantheism—even in some strains of Christian theology. The key biblical distinction between Creator and creation gets lost or blurred; nature, God, and ourselves become pretty much the same thing.

There is, of course, a grain of truth here. Nature is sublime in the sense that it can open our minds and spirits to the spiritual, the transcendent, as romanticism teaches. But nature is not God. We face the constant temptation of idolatry here. Idolatry can take the form of out and-out nature worship, but it can take subtler forms of our worship of ourselves, another person, our cars or houses or books, our culture, our music, our land, our “right” to use and abuse the earth solely for our own purposes. Worship is a matter of one’s ultimate, dominating concern. If our dominant concern is with our own rights, our own stuff, our own land—even our own culture or nation—we are worshiping the creation rather than the Creator.

What do we worship? What are our idolatries? Do we worship God alone, and treat his good creation as gift through which we can worship and serve him more fully?

4. Spiritualizing. Christians can fall prey to any of these distorted views of the created order. But perhaps the greatest temptation is an unbiblical *spiritualizing* of the material world.

Spiritualizing is the view that creation has no value in itself, but only as it points us to spiritual realities. When we spiritualize that which is physical and material, we veer from the biblical understanding and actually open ourselves up to the distortions of romanticism and commodification. Romanticism: We enjoy nature, but only because it “lifts” us to “higher, loftier,” spiritual truths. And thus commodification: Since the material world has no value intrinsically, we can do with it what we will, using

and abusing it for our purposes without regard to its own integrity and well-being.

Spiritualizing the material world has become the dominant worldview of popular American Evangelicalism. Matter has value only to the degree that it (1) sustains our physical and economic life and (2) teaches us spiritual lessons, reminding us of what is *really* important.

But this is not the biblical view. God did not degrade himself in creating material things; rather God honored and dignified matter by bringing it into existence through his own power—and supremely by incarnating his own Son within the material creation.

So there is truth and error in spiritualization. The truth, biblically speaking, is that all creation is shot through with spirit, spiritual reality, spiritual significance. This is inevitable because its very existence comes from God's energy. This is why biblical figures and metaphors and Jesus' parables work. Material things do teach us spiritual lessons.

But this is only half the biblical teaching. The other half is that the created order has its own reality, its own integrity, its own purpose, dignity, destiny, and "right to exist" because it comes from God's hand and is sustained by God. Jesus Christ "sustains all things by his powerful word" (Heb. 1:3).

Jesus-followers should renounce unbiblical distortions and see the created order as Scripture presents it. We must inhabit it as it truly is, viewed from the standpoint of God's creation of, continuing involvement with, and ultimate plans for the universe. We will not romanticize nature, but recognize its beauty and its violence. We will not simply commodify the material world, exploiting it with disregard to God's ownership and the common good. We will not worship nature, obscuring the line between Creator and creature. And we will not spiritualize the material world, forgetting that the earth in its materiality and physicality is good and integral to God's whole plan of salvation—the healing of creation.

The Hole in the Evangelical Worldview

Reflecting on these four distortions helps us identify a major problem with popular Christianity today. Why don't Evangelicals, in particular, take

stewardship and creation care more seriously? Why are efforts to confront climate change, species depletion, and the protection of lakes, forests, and rivers often viewed as politically misguided or even ethically wrong? Concern about environmental stewardship is viewed as representing a subversive political agenda that is anti-God and probably anti-free enterprise.

This is a puzzle. Evangelicals claim to believe in the full authority of the Bible. Yet in the United States especially, Evangelicals for the most part read the Bible in such a way as either to positively exclude creation care, or to relegate it to such a low priority that it gets lost among other concerns. My impression from living most of my life in the Evangelical community is that most American Evangelicals simply *do not believe* that the Bible teaches creation care as an *essential* part of the Good News of Jesus Christ, or that it must be an indispensable part of faithful Christian witness.

This aversion to creation-care concern is caused by a gaping hole in the Evangelical theological ozone layer. Sub-biblical views of the environment rush in and the biblical perspective gets filtered out.

This hole in the Evangelical worldview comes into clear view when we trace the path Western Christianity has traveled. We can spot seven historical developments that have tended to distort contemporary Evangelical (and to a lesser extent Wesleyan) Christian worldviews. Together these seven developments largely explain the four distortions noted above.

The key elements in this sevenfold barrier are: (1) the theological inheritance from Greek philosophy, (2) the impact of the Enlightenment, (3) *laissez-faire* capitalism, (4) American individualism, (5) uncritical patriotism, (6) a general neglect of the biblical doctrine of creation, and (7) premillennial dispensationalism. Let's examine each briefly.

1. The inheritance from Greek philosophy. In the second and third centuries, the Christian Church had to come to terms with the Greek philosophical tradition which was intellectually dominant in the Roman Empire. Early Christian apologists did a masterful job of showing the coherence of the Christian Faith even when understood through Greek philosophical categories. The fruit of this interaction

included such breakthroughs as the Nicene and other early creeds which established an essential theological consensus on Christology and the Trinity.

A price was paid, however, for these achievements. In a step away from biblical teachings, Christian theology came to view the material world as separate from and strictly inferior to the spirit world. Since it participates in change and decay, matter was seen as imperfect, tainted, and therefore something to be escaped. Human changeability, including physical passions, was to be overcome or transcended. In what became classic Christian theism, God, as pure spirit, was seen as unchangeable and impassive. The Christian ideal was to deny or escape from the material world into the world of the pure spiritual contemplation of God.

In Western theology, this unbiblical “spirit is perfect, matter is imperfect” view became deeply imbedded through the writings of Augustine of Hippo (354–430), whose theology was strongly shaped by neo-Platonic thought. Augustine so emphasized original sin as to in a measure eclipse the original goodness of creation—the affirmation of the image of God in humankind and the secondary imaging of God’s glory in nature. Though Augustine did see creation as displaying God’s glory, he did not seem to value the very materiality of creation as God’s good gift.

The ideal Christian life in medieval Christendom—though it was not the actual *lived* life of the great majority of Christians—was escape from the world with its changeability and its passions. The natural world was a mere symbol, a metaphor pointing towards a higher eternal spiritual reality. It had little value in itself. For many the ideal, even if unattainable by most, was the saint who left the world and all material possessions and lived in the contemplation of God.

This tradition offers much that is good and true. It produced great devotional writings that still nurture us. But it upset the biblical balance, with disastrous consequences for the environment. The holistic biblical understanding was replaced by a split-level and hierarchical worldview in which pure, immaterial spirit was at the top and changeable, decaying matter was at the bottom. Spiritual growth was therefore, self-evidently, a journey of ascent from the material to the spiritual.

Much of this inheritance is still with us, especially in our hymns and devotional writing. But this split-level view is fundamentally unbiblical.

2. Enlightenment rationalism. Orthodox Christian theology rejected many of the central claims of the Enlightenment, with its over-reliance on reason. But Christian thinking has been leavened by it, all the same. In endorsing science and the scientific method, Protestant Christians largely accepted the subject-object split. Human beings were subjects examining “objective” nature. The natural world was increasingly objectified—something to be studied, subjected to technique, and used for human purposes.

This legacy has been positive in manifold ways. It has yielded the scientific, technological, and material advances that we enjoy today. But again, a price was paid theologically. Since the material world was already viewed as secondary and transitory, there was no ethical problem in dominating and using it—exploiting it—for human purposes. Nature was “here” objectively to serve us. It was the God-given natural resource for human higher purposes, with virtually no ethical limitations on the human manipulation of the earth. Air and water pollution created by industrialization, which disproportionately poisons the poor, were minor annoyances compared with the benefits of new technologies and inventions. Environmental issues were not moral questions unless they directly threatened human health. Rather they were merely technological challenges to be conquered. The legacy of this view is both an overconfidence in reason and technology and an undervaluing of the earth.

3. Laissez-faire Capitalism. Capitalism is also part of our inheritance from European history. As an economic system, its roots go back before the Enlightenment. It grew out of the rise of cities in late-medieval Europe (also the lucrative trade in Crusades-acquired Christian relics and heirlooms!) and later was greatly fueled by the rise of the Industrial Revolution in England in the eighteenth century. Adam Smith published his *Wealth of Nations*, the Bible (almost literally) of capitalism, in 1776.

Capitalism has been the main engine of economic growth and prosperity in the Western world. It has brought tremendous material, economic, and

in some cases political benefits. Combined with science, technology, and industrialization, it led to today's globalized economy. It is a key reason for the high standard of living in so-called "advanced" societies.

But here again, a price was paid. From the beginning, critics of capitalism warned of two major negatives: Its power to enslave and exploit the poor (especially laborers) who had no capital and therefore little economic power, and the power of wealth to enslave the wealthy. Although historically speaking the most revolutionary critique of capitalism was

Marxism, many Christian voices have been raised over the centuries in criticism of the moral dangers of capitalism. In our day one of the most prophetic voices has been Pope John Paul II.

From a biblical standpoint, the primary critique of capitalism should be obvious. Human beings are corrupted by sin and will therefore use the freedom and power they possess to selfish ends and to exploit others. Capitalism is an effective way to "store up treasures on earth"—the very thing Jesus warned against. Yet Jesus' warnings and prohibitions regarding wealth are seldom heard in our churches. Preachers denounce sins of personal and sexual behavior but often ignore greed and laying up earthly wealth.

Surprising numbers of Christians have bought the central myth of capitalism: that the self-centered pursuit of profit inexorably works for the common good. It is very difficult to defend this biblically. Most Christian critique of capitalism has argued that this myth is true *only* if there are effective mechanisms, through government and/or the church, to limit the subversiveness of greed and the worst effects of capitalism.

Partly because of the factors mentioned above (Greek philosophy, Enlightenment rationalism), Evangelicals have tended to view economics as a realm unto itself, operating with its own morality, walled off from and independent of normal considerations of Christian ethics. Economic growth is by definition good, and the pursuit of wealth can never be questioned, for it is the engine that drives the economy. The "invisible hand" of the marketplace is viewed practically as sacred, not to be slapped or fettered.

This is not *biblical* morality. It contradicts Jesus' teachings and does violence to the biblical worldview. Biblically speaking, *nothing* operates outside God's sovereignty or the ethics of God's moral law and the Sermon on the Mount. All economic systems, capitalism as well as communism and socialism, must be subject to thoroughgoing Christian critique. As with the prophets of old, Christians should be particularly outspoken in exposing the forms of exploitation that are most dominant in our age.

This is a key issue for environmental stewardship for a very basic reason. Capitalism depends upon the exploitation of natural resources. This was true of early industrialism, which relied heavily on coal and steel, but it is just as true today. All the key ingredients of the information age—plastics, silicon, copper, uranium, petroleum—come from the earth. Here most North Americans apply a simple moral equation. Since economic growth is by definition good, the exploitation of natural resources is morally necessary and not fundamentally to be questioned. This moral equation is compounded by the fact that most corporations simply do not take into account the depletion of natural resources as a real economic cost, even though in fact it is. Quite the opposite: in the United States the tax system works such that many industries are actually given tax credits for the depletion of natural resources rather than being expected to pay for the depletion.

Many Evangelicals thus oppose the protection of the environment because they see environmental regulations as an unfair burden on economic growth. And since spiritual, not material, things are what really matter; and since the material world has no real value in itself (points one and two, above) there is no theological principle to be invoked here in defense of the earth.

Biblically speaking, something is wrong with this picture. Responsible, humane capitalism can be a great blessing, but unfettered capitalism becomes inhumane and can destroy us and destroy the earth. North American society has long recognized this in some areas, protecting the public through interstate commerce regulations, pure food and drug laws, limitations on the exploitation of labor (especially child labor), and some minimal regulation of air and water

pollution. Exploitation of God's good earth, however, has been largely overlooked (Snyder and Runyon 2002:143–46, 175–78).

4. American individualism. This also contributes to Evangelical dis-ease with environmental issues. The “rugged individualism” of North American culture tends to work against a sense of mutual responsibility and interdependence with the common good and for earth stewardship. Nature is something to be conquered, subdued, fought against, overcome, not something to be nurtured or cared for.

Here also there is a positive and a negative pole. The strength of American society traces in large measure to the freedom for individual initiative. U.S. society provides space for the entrepreneur, the innovator, the “self-made man.” But as many studies have shown—more recently, Robert Bellah, et al., in *Habits of the Heart* (1985) and Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000)—the downside to such individualism is the lack of a sense of social solidarity and mutual responsibility. Anyone who has spent much time in Europe must be struck with the fact that American society is considerably more individualistic even than is European society.

Today individualism is further compounded by consumerism and materialism. Much of society is dedicated to the promotion, purchase, and then speedy replacement of brand name products whose prices bear little relationship to the actual cost of manufacture. We live in a branded society that in multiple ways daily contradicts Jesus words that a person's life “does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Lk. 12:15).

Individualism compounded by consumerism undermines creation care in several ways. Although the heritage of American individualism often celebrates the values of living simply with nature (Thoreau, for example), in its contemporary form it insulates human experience from the natural environment so that people have little feel for our *actual* dependence on the welfare of the environment. And since material prosperity in its present form depends on the unfettered production of goods, Evangelicals like other Americans resist any environmental restrictions that would (hypothetically) put a brake on or add cost to

such production. This is a myth, of course; more and more businesses are discovering that environmental stewardship results in cost savings.

A biblical theology of creation and the environment must address squarely the problem of individualism if it is to be persuasive. The Bible teaches the mutual interdependence of the human family and its dependence on the well-being of the earth.

5. Uncritical patriotism. A fifth ingredient in the mix that undermines a sense of environmental stewardship is unreflective patriotism. Nationalistic patriotism leading to arrogance, empire-building, and an exploitive attitude toward other nations and peoples seems to be a constant of history. When nations become enamored of their own greatness, however, they lose sight of God's concern for all earth's peoples and the welfare of creation and fall under God's judgment (Ezek. 31).

Understandably, the United States has seen a great upsurge in patriotic fervor since September 11, 2001. But unreflective patriotism is a long-standing dynamic in American history—as well as elsewhere in the world.

Love of country is good and proper, but when it leads to disregard for the well-being of other lands and peoples, it becomes a plague. When patriotism or nationalism turns into ideology, and when criticism of one's government becomes unpatriotic, we are in grave danger. Nationalism can be idolatry.

Christians should see uncritical patriotism as a theological problem. The Bible teaches that Christians are part of a new humanity, citizens of a new nation: the kingdom of God. The New Testament is very explicit about this. Christians are “citizens” and “members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pt. 2:9). Christian identity thus transcends national or political identity. Biblical Christians understand that they are first of all citizens and patriots of the kingdom of God. Allegiance to one's own nation is necessarily secondary to kingdom allegiance. True Jesus-followers understand that Christians in other lands—including Iraqis, Iranians, and North Koreans—are

their own brothers and sisters in Christ, nearer and dearer to them than their fellow Americans who do not acknowledge Jesus. They are therefore as concerned for the welfare of people in these lands as they are for the welfare of the United States. Naturally, therefore, Christians will see creation care in global, not just national, perspective.

6. Neglect of the biblical doctrine of creation.

In their understandable focus on personal new creation—salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ—Evangelicals often neglect the prior biblical doctrine of creation itself. Yet any doctrine of redemption will be deficient if it is not based on what the Bible teaches about God’s acts in creating the world.

Evangelical theology often lacks a robust biblical theology of creation. Evangelicals have rightly emphasized God as the source of the created order but have not reflected deeply on the *nature* of the created order and the mutual interdependence it implies between humanity and the physical environment. Nor have they reflected deeply enough on what creation tells us about new creation—God’s plan of redemption. Biblically speaking, the doctrine of new creation depends upon a right understanding of the original creation.

In practice, Evangelical theology often begins with Genesis 3 rather than Genesis 1. All are sinners in need of God’s saving grace. But biblical theology does not begin with sin; it begins with creation. Human beings—man and woman together—are created in the image of God and placed in a garden which also reflects God’s nature. If man and woman embody the image of God in a primary sense, the created order images God in a secondary sense. The beauty, order, coherence, and intricate design of the universe reveal something true and essential about God’s himself (Rom. 1:20).

Scripture consistently grounds God’s glorious work through Jesus Christ by the Spirit in both creation and redemption. Jesus Christ is both “the firstborn of all creation” and “the firstborn from the dead”—affirmations that unite creation and redemption (Col. 1:15, 1:18). In the Book of Revelation, God is praised in hymns celebrating both creation (Rev. 4:11) and redemption through the blood of Christ (Rev. 5:9). In the Old Testament, the Sabbath, so full of eschatological portent, is grounded both

in creation (Ex. 20:11) and redemption from Egyptian slavery (Deut. 5:15). It is remarkable the way Scripture consistently holds together the themes of creation and redemption. The biblical doctrine of redemption through the cross presupposes the doctrine of creation, and redemption can never be understood in a fully biblical way unless the full story of creation, and not just human creation, is kept in view.

7. Premillennial Dispensationalism. In the 1800s a new theory arrived on the scene: Premillennial dispensationalism. This innovation, despite little biblical or historical basis, has become immensely influential in popular American Christianity, in part through such books as *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Peretti’s *This Present Darkness*, and the “Left Behind” series. Ironically, many American Evangelicals today believe that premillennial dispensationalism is what the Bible teaches!

Premillennial dispensationalism undermines creation care by locating the renewal of creation exclusively after the return of Jesus Christ. The present world is headed for inevitable destruction and any concern with saving it is a distraction from rescuing souls before Jesus returns. A striking example of this view is Frank Peretti’s novel *This Present Darkness*, where it turns out that anyone concerned with social justice or creation care is in league with the devil.

With premillennial dispensationalism, the belief that the earth and all the material creation is going to be destroyed has come into vogue. If destruction is sure and imminent, it is pointless to be concerned about creation care. This view is based on the King James Version of 2 Peter 3:10: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” The NRSV translates, “the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.”

Interpreting this passage in the context of the whole of Scripture, we should understand the heat and fire here in terms of refining, revealing, and cleansing, not of destruction or annihilation. “Creation will be cleansed and transformed, yet this

new creation will stand in continuity with the old” (Field:6). Calvin commented, “[H]eaven and earth will be cleansed by fire so that they may be fit for the kingdom of Christ” (Commentary on 1 Pt. 3:10). Wesley wrote, “Destruction is not deliverance; . . . whatsoever is destroyed, or ceases to be, is not delivered at all,” and in fact no “part of the creation” will be destroyed (Wesley, *ENNT*, on Rom. 8:21). God is not in the destroying business; he is in the refining, recycling, and recreating business.

The pattern here is Jesus’ own death and resurrection. As Jesus died, the created order will be judged and refined. As Jesus rose again, the created order will be transformed through the power of Jesus’ resurrection by the Spirit. We don’t understand the mystery (1 Cor. 15:50–51), but we trust in new creation after the pattern of what happened to Jesus.

Many contemporary Christians fail to see 2 Peter 3:10 in light of the broader sweep of

Scripture and so misunderstand both the meaning of new creation and its present ethical and missional implications.

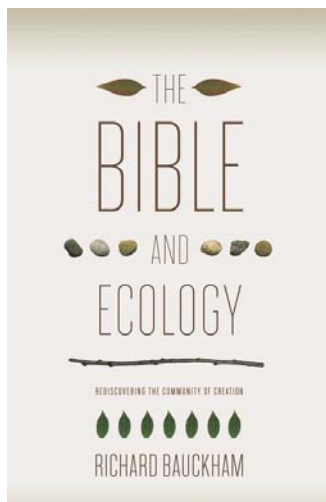
In sum, these seven factors combine to undermine Evangelical concern for the environment. They make it difficult for Christians to understand and *feel* their responsibility for creation care. Combined, these developments have produced a narrowing of the full biblical meaning of salvation and of the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross has come to mean individual salvation to eternal life in the next world rather than the restoring of a fallen creation. The theological agenda for creation care certainly must include affirming the biblical doctrine of creation and exploring the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection for the healing and restoration of God’s own created order.

The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation

An Extended Book Review with Six Supplemental Excursuses

WILLIAM BJORAKER

Also available on www.wciujournal.org is an extended book review by William BJORAKER, PhD, of *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* by Richard Bauckham (2010). BJORAKER summarizes and outlines the whole book, so the reader can absorb a synopsis of the book from this review. BJORAKER writes six excursuses on environmental themes, ecology and creation care to address issues he deems to be inadequately addressed by the author, vis-a-vis contemporary contra-biblical philosophies regarding nature and the environment. The excursus topics are:



1. Biblical Creation Care? Or Post-Christian Environmentalism?
2. Humans as “Imago Dei” are Different in Kind, not Just Degree
3. On Climate Change & Anthropogenic Global Warming
4. The Nature of Nature: Enchantment, Disenchantment and Re-enchantment
5. Animal Rights Movements
6. Intelligent Evil in Nature Before the Creation of Humans: The Problem of Animal vs. Animal Violence, Suffering & Death

How does the Bible speak into our contemporary ecological awareness, views and controversies? This book answers this question by offering the thesis that a Biblical perspective of ecology or a theology of creation (an eco-theology), must move from a “dominion mandate” paradigm (based on Genesis 1:26 and 28) to a community of creation paradigm.

Bauckham's book is significant in that it is a worthy attempt at presenting a Biblical theology of nature (the non-human creation), or a Biblical ecology of nature, that takes into consideration the whole range of Scripture on the topic, from Genesis to Revelation. This is timely and relevant, as Bauckham convincingly argues, because of the ecological crises we face today. He is keenly aware of the abuses of nature by the modern scientific-technological project and charges by modern secular environmentalist and "green" movements to the effect that Christianity and the Bible are to blame for this abuse, due to the de-divinizing nature, and the "dominion mandate" and thus exposing it "to the ruthless exploitation that has brought us to the brink of ecological disaster."

Western civilization and Christianity are conflated in the perception of most people in the majority world. Thus, indeed, we in the Bible-believing tradition have work to do to de-couple modern

Western culture (guilty as charged) from what the Bible actually teaches about God's Creation and about responsible creation care. Bauckham's study provides a commendable resource for doing just that. Bauckham's call for new "community of creation" paradigm is a worthy proposal to replace the assumptions of modern political liberalism (of both the "Left" and the "Right"). Other Bible scholars, writers and practitioners working in this field will need to consult his work. With some caveats, and critique, it can function as a basis for developing a new Biblical Creation Care paradigm (as an alternative to post-Christian environmentalism), from which applications can be drawn for advocacy and policy-making in the public sphere.

To view Bjoraker's full book review, visit: <http://www.wciujournal.org/journal/article/the-bible-and-ecology-rediscovering-the-community-of-creation>

**“The Bible and Ecology:
Rediscovering the Community of Creation”**

By Richard Bauckham

Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010 (203 pages)

An Extended Book Review with Six Supplemental Excursuses

By William Bjoraker, PhD.

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I. Information on the Author and Reviewer

Richard Bauckham (b. 1946) is a British Biblical scholar and theologian and was, until 2007, Professor of New Testament Studies in the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and is now Professor Emeritus at St Andrews. "Bauckham is perhaps best known for his studies of the book of Revelation and for his commentaries on Jude and 2 Peter. ... In his book *God Crucified* (1999), Bauckham displays the craft of both a careful exegete and a deft theologian as he explores the riddle of how the radically monotheistic Jews who composed the earliest church could have come to call Jesus 'Lord'." (http://www.theopedia.com/Richard_Bauckham). His book *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* won the 2007 Book Award in Biblical Studies from *Christianity Today* and was awarded the Michael Ramsey prize in 2009. In 2010, he was given the Franz-Delitzsch-Award his volume of collected essays, *The Jewish World Around the New Testament*. His personal web site is here: <http://richardbauckham.co.uk/>

William D. (Bill) Bjoraker (b. 1952) is Associate Professor of Judeo-Christian Studies and Contemporary Western Culture at William Carey International University, Pasadena, CA. He holds a PhD from the School of Intercultural Studies of Fuller Theological Seminary. His dissertation title is "Faith, Freedom and Radical Individualism in Late Modern America: A Missiological Evaluation" (2007). He is a specialist in Jewish Studies and served with his wife Diana in pastoral and teaching roles in Tel Aviv, Israel throughout the 1980s. He also is director of Ezekiel Network, an outreach to Jewish people in Los Angeles.

II. Thesis of the Book

How does the Bible speak into our contemporary ecological awareness, views and controversies? This book answers this question by offering the thesis that a Biblical perspective of ecology or a theology of creation (an eco-theology), must move *from* a dominion mandate paradigm *to* a community of creation paradigm. Modernity, especially the modern technological project of mastering nature has inculcated ways of thinking and acting that have proved disastrous to the natural environment. There is a crisis in the relationship of humans to the rest of creation that must be addressed through correcting the widely overemphasized and misinterpreted application of the Genesis 1:26 and 28 mandate of human "dominion," common in much of Christian tradition, and has been viewed as justifying an exploitation of nature for primarily human consumption and use. A Biblically-grounded ecology requires a study of the whole range of Scripture's teaching on nature and the non-human creation. Such a broader biblical grounding should shift us toward the understanding of a "community of creation" paradigm, wherein humans are viewed as within and a part of creation and exercising caring responsibility for the rest of creation that is within the human sphere of influence.

III. Major Sections of the Book Summarized; Followed by Excursuses by Bjoraker

- All references to pages in Bauckham appear thus (p.__).
- The six excursions by the reviewer address issues deemed to be inadequately addressed by the author, vis-a vis contemporary contra-biblical philosophies and issues in the field of ecology, environmental issues and creation care.

The first four chapters of the book focus almost exclusively on the Old Testament, with a few excursions into the New Testament at points where the New Testament picks up a theme from the Old. This is because the Bible's theology of creation is developed in the Old Testament and then presupposed in the New. (p. 141)

Chapter 1- Stewardship in Question

How does the Bible construe for us the relationship of humans to the rest of creation? The most popular current answer is the notion of stewardship. This notion is part of the Biblical teaching, but inadequate for a comprehensive biblical view of ecology. Limitations and criticism of stewardship as it is generally understood include:

- A. *Stewardship as Hubris*
- B. *Stewardship Excludes God's Activity in the World*
- C. *Stewardship Lacks Specific Content*
- D. *Stewardship Sets Humans Over Creation, Not Within It.*
- E. *Stewardship Tends to Isolate One Scriptural Test*

In modernity at least, Christians have tended to over-emphasize a single scriptural passage in reference to human relation to nature— Genesis 1:26 and 28 (the “dominion” mandate). However, an accurate understanding Genesis 1 and 2 yields several themes. Bauckham offers a detailed exegesis and analysis of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 from an ecological perspective, discussing: *The Six Days of Creation, the Human Place in Creation, Human Solidarity with the Rest of Creation, Caring for the Land, Humans and Other Animals*. He offers a diagram of Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 (p. 13), explicating the most important elements in the Six-Day structure. I reproduce his chart, in somewhat adapted form, in **Figure 1**:

Environments & Names (formed)	Inhabitants & Tasks (filled)
Day 1 Light "good"	Day 4 Task- to Separate Day/Night "good"
Day 2 Separates Waters Sky	Day 5 Task- Be Fruitful & Multiply Water produces water creatures "good"
Day 3 Land & Sea "good"	Day 6 Task- Humans- "Be fruitful and subdue" "good"

Figure 1- Six Days of Creation Literary Structure

Much of the meaning of the Creation account is embodied in the structure of the Six Days narrative; the form carries meaning. Note:

1. *An Interdependent Ecology*— The environment needs inhabitants, and the inhabitants need the environment to fulfill their purpose, and for the continuance of the created order. There is a forming-filling dynamic where the environment created on Day 1 is filled on Day 4; that created on Day 2 is filled on Day 4. This is an interconnecting, symbiotic ecology in God’s design. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
2. *All Created Beings Have Intrinsic (Not Merely Instrumental) Value* - “Good” is pronounced on each day’s work, except Day 2 (I follow Jewish commentator Rashi’s view here as to why the pronouncement “good” is not given on Day 2, but is given twice on Day 3: the work associated with separating the waters was begun on Day 2 but not completed until Day 3. Anything not completed is not yet “good.” But “good” is then pronounced twice on Day 3). Each

created being has its own value, good in itself, for its own sake. Is not dependent on other beings for its value. It's not merely stuff to be consumed or used by other beings. Though all creatures of Day 5 and 6 are to live from the vegetation of Day 3, food is not their only purpose; they have intrinsic value, not merely instrumental value.

3. *Humans Belong Integrally to that Interdependent Whole* – They are embedded in and part of the whole of creation, not alien lords over it.
4. *No Ascending or Evolutionary Progression in the Species* - Bauckham states – “So this scheme has nothing in common with that progressivist reading of evolution that envisages a process of increasing complexity and increasing intelligence that culminates in human beings” (p. 14). Not all creation is for the sake of humans, or merely for human use, under human “dominion.”
Bjorker Comment: This is the first of Bauckham’s tendency throughout his book to minimize the uniqueness of humans as different in kind (ontologically), not merely in degree, from all the non-human creation (see **Figure 3** below). There is likely a message from the writer of Genesis in the fact that humans are created last in the six-day sequence and then follows the Sabbath – The number seven is the number of completion and perfection. God crowned His creation with the only being made in His image and likeness (See Psalm 8). God rested after He created humans.

Bauckham then offers a synthesis of his points, discussing each of the themes below (pp.27-34):

1. *There is Human Solidarity with the Rest of Creation:* As humans we are *within* creation, not “demi-gods” lording over creation.
2. *Humans are Called to Responsible Use of the Earth’s Resources.*
3. *Humans are in the Image of God:* Part of what the *Imago Dei* means is that we “rule *on behalf* of God, not *instead* of God.”
4. *Humans are to Rule Like God.*
5. *Humans are Ruling Fellow-Creatures:* Hierarchy is Qualified by Community.
6. *Humans are Ruling Within the Order of Creation:* Sharing the Earth, Interconnected and Interdependent.
7. *Preserving Creation:* The archetypal Story of Noah and the Flood gives Biblical warrant for saving species from extinction. Securing a human future is inseparable from securing a future for all living things.

Bauckham deals with this next topic separately, because it arises less out of exegesis than out of the contemporary issues discussed in this chapter.

8. *Productive Enhancement of Creation by Humans is a God-given Role, but so also is Wisely Letting it Be.*

Bjoraker's Excursus 1 - Biblical Creation Care? Or Post-Christian Environmentalism?

It was in Christian-influenced Western civilization, in the early modern period that modern science arose. Francis Bacon (1561–1626), British natural philosopher, wrote,

"Man by the fall fell at the same time from his state of innocence and from his dominion over nature. Both of these losses, however, even in this life, can in some part be repaired; the former by religion and faith, the latter by the arts and sciences." (Bacon, *Novum Organum Scientiarum*)

Bacon expressed the optimism of early modern science that humankind can gain dominion over nature by our force of technology. But the force of this optimism becomes an expression of abusive force when Bacon said that we must "torture nature in order to force her to reveal her secrets." It is this attitude, when applied by a growing industrial and technological civilization to attain mastery over nature, and exploit it for all its worth, that has evoked charges of immoral misuse of nature by the "Christian" West, and many actually charge Christianity and the Bible itself as the source of the abuse of nature due the so called "dominion mandate" of Genesis 1: 26 and 28. Bauckham is addressing this charge throughout his book, arguing that the "dominion mandate" has been misapplied and that the Bible teaches responsible creation care.

As the negative effects on the environment of the industrial revolution became more apparent, sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) lamented the "disenchantment of nature." He wrote,

"The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the "disenchantment of the world'." ("Science as a Vocation")

He used the term "disenchantment" to describe the culture of rational and commercial calculation of extraction from nature as mere stuff to be exploited. There was a devaluation of nature—its traditional mystic and mystery—by bureaucratic, secularized Western society, where scientific analysis and dissection is more highly valued than belief.

The political left and the counterculture movement of the 1960s rightly criticized modern abuses of nature.

I offer below in **Figure 2** a continuum illustrating the range of views on stewardship:

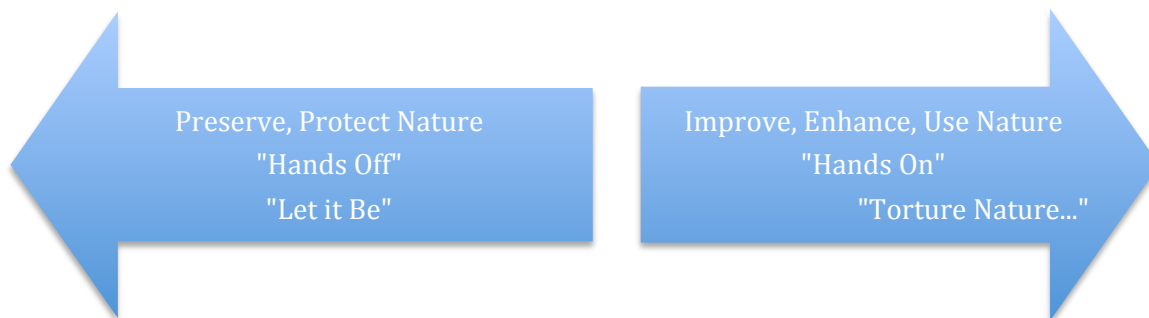


Figure 2 – Views of Stewardship: A Continuum

In reference to the continuum above,

Abuses on the Right - Often these positions are taken by the contemporary political “right,” so the analogy to the political right is suggestive of that fact, but by “right” here I mean primarily the rightward positions on the **Figure 2** diagram. These move toward the exploitation and instrumentalization of nature, reducing nature to raw materials for human consumption and affluence. The abuses of the Industrial Revolution are case in point. The English West Midlands were known as the “black country” in the 19th century when coal mines, coal coking operations, the iron foundries and steel mills that used the local coal to fire their furnaces, produced a level of air pollution that had few equals anywhere in the world. Child labor was abusively exploited during this period (and became a theme in several Charles Dickens’ novels).

Probably the most salient 20th century example is the Former Soviet Union’s abuse of the environment. Georgetown University produced a report called “Ecocide: A Soviet Legacy.” Hosted by Peter Krogh (who memorably said, “Mother Russia has been poisoned by her offspring”), the study,

“Examines ecocide and environmental degradation in the former U.S.S.R., as well as the role of environmental resources in international security. Description: One of the most harmful and potentially long-lasting legacies of communism in the former Soviet bloc is that of ecocide -- widespread pollution, over-consumption of resources, and general destruction of the environment. In a system where the state was the manufacturer and production quotas were paramount, environmental concerns were

consistently subordinated to industrial goals. Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union did the true scale of this environmental crisis become apparent. In St. Petersburg, waste from more than 500 factories contaminated the harbor and rendered the city's water supply undrinkable. The Aral Sea, once the fourth largest body of freshwater in the world, was shrunk to one-third of its original size and permanently polluted as the result of years of over-draining to irrigate crops. Perhaps most menacingly, the former U.S.S.R. suffered widespread radiation pollution caused by Chernobyl and other nuclear accidents." ("Ecocide: A Soviet Legacy", 1994).

Abuses on the Left - Often these positions are taken by the contemporary political "left," so the analogy to the political left is suggestive of that fact, but by "left" here I mean primarily the leftward positions on the **Figure 2** diagram. These move toward a re-enchantment or a divinization of Nature (with capital "N"). This direction has been taken in the West since the 1960s, by elements of the secular environmentalist movement and the New Age movement, in a kind of swing of pendulum, back from the industrial revolution, into a post-industrial society.

Coming of age in the USA in the 1960s, I recall powerful poetic verse that has remained imprinted in my mind ever since I first heard it; by Jim Morrison, lead singer of "the Doors,"

*"What have they done to the earth?
What have they done to our fair sister?
Ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her
Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn
And tied her with fences and dragged her down."
(From "When the Music's Over", from the album "Strange Days," 1967)*

I affirm this cry of protest against greedy exploitation and destruction of Creation. The cruelty to animals in the abuses of "factory farming," and wanton pollution and careless degradation of the environment must be decried. Morrison's phrase for the earth— "our fair sister" is resonant with St. Francis of Assisi's theology of Creation, emphasizing that humans are part of Creation, and thus a respectful care and stewardship of the rest of Creation is in order. Franciscan love of nature (cf. the Franco Zefferelli film on his life-"Brother Sun; Sister Moon", 1972) is commendable. However, because Francis was a Christian, he assumed a clear distinction between humans made in the Image of God, and all the rest of creation.

Unfortunately, many of the baby boomers that were fans of "the Doors" have followed a stream of environmentalism that took a pantheistic turn in the 1960s. The development of the Western "New Age" movement since then has lost the distinction St. Francis held, and the Bible holds, between humans and the rest of Creation. This distinction has been lost by the post-Christian, post-modern Western secularism. What has ensued is a tendency to treat animals like humans and humans like animals. So in the last thirty years we have seen several admirable campaigns to

save endangered species, but some of the same campaigners are strong advocates of abortion rights and abortion-on-demand. Right... so we save baby whales, but freely kill baby humans? Many in this radical environmentalist movement think because humans are the problem, it is a good idea to decrease the surplus human population through abortion and sterilization, and so "save the planet."

So while advocating Biblical creation care, I believe we must keep our priorities straight. Humans are not essentially "one with Nature" but are, in our personhood, above nature. The Creator gave Adam and Eve dominion over nature, not to abusively exploit it, but to be stewards that husband it well to serve God and human need (Genesis 1). Any ideology or movement that puts animals or land or nature above human need is not Biblical. We must be discerning as we navigate the seas of the "green" movement and various politically- driven forms of secular environmentalism in our time. We must construct a truly Biblically informed theology and applied science of Creation; one closer to St. Francis than to the late modern New Age Nature mysticism. We need a balanced view and practice of stewardship that will be sometimes further to the left of the stewardship continuum of **Figure 2**, ("Hands Off") and sometimes further to the right ("Hands On"); this will differ according to time and place, and should be decided based on Biblical ethics; one major biblical ethical consideration must be legitimate human need. We need to develop a paradigm and practice of *Biblical Creation Care vs. a Post-Christian Environmentalism*.

Chapter 2- Putting Us in Our Place

We need an expanded understanding of the full range of the Bible's teaching on the place of humans within the rest of God's creation (beyond merely the "dominion" mandate in Genesis 1:26 & 28). The Book of Job gives a significant counterpoint to the Genesis 1 dominion mandate.

A. The Creation in God's Answer to Job

1. *Job 38-39 is the Longest Passage in the Bible about the Non-Human Creation.* McKibben claims that with its appreciation of wild nature there is nothing quite comparable to these passages subsequently until the writings of John Muir (p.38).
2. *God Takes Job into View of a Vast Panorama of the Cosmos.* God answers the problem of suffering and evil with this unexpected theodicy. Job's questions are answered only with questions, a series of about 70! The effect was to deconstruct and reorder Job's whole view of the world.
3. *God's First Question Puts Job Definitively in his Cosmic Place vis-à-vis God the Creator and His Creation—* "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the Earth?"

B. The Physical Universe in God's First Address to Job (38:4-38)

Moving Job from hubris to humility, God makes these points:

1. *Creation of the Earth (38:4-7)* -God, in his wisdom (a wisdom to which Job is not privy) created an ordered cosmos.
2. *Formation of the Oceans (38:8-11)* - God also contains the forces of cosmic disorder, keeps them in check. To the oceans he says, "This far shall you come and no further" (38:11).
**Implication (by Bjoraker):* tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes are under his control.
3. *Regulation of the Dawn (38:12-15)* - The only explicit reference to humans (other than Job) in this panorama are to the "wicked" (38:13, 15).
Implication (by Bjoraker):* humans have a depravity different in kind and degree from the rest of creation. This of course reflects the fact that they **are different in kind and degree.
4. *The Underworld (38:16-18)* - Evil and the dark mysteries of the cosmos, including death, are beyond mortal understanding.
5. *Light and Darkness (38:19-21)* - With heavy sarcasm, God says, "Surely, you know all about this, Job, because you were there at creation, weren't you?" God associates knowledge with power; and ignorance with impotence. At the origins of modern science, Francis Bacon taught that knowledge is power. Job lacks both knowledge and power. God has both in unlimited measure. If Job knew...then he could control... as God does.

6. *Adverse Weather; Life-giving Weather; The Mysteries of the Weather; Controlling the Stars; Controlling the Weather* (38:22-38) – Meteorological phenomena designed and controlled by God. God is said to direct rain to places where no humans live (38:26).
**Implication (by Bjoraker):* Rain, often used by God as a vehicle of reward or punishment for the covenant people Israel, is here seen not as an expression of morality at all. Jesus would later say, “The rain falls on the just and the unjust.” So, “nature, red in tooth and claw” (Alfred Lord Tennyson) is generally amoral in its outworking, yet under God’s leash.

C. Reflections on Job 38:1-38

Subtitles in italics are Bjoraker’s

1. *Against Anthropocentrism* - “The effect on Job must be to decentre him away from his preoccupation with his own case” (Bauckham p. 45). This strikes a blow to an anthropocentric vision of the cosmos and to human hubris.
2. *Reorientation Through Encounter with Otherness* - The rhetoric is brutal and sarcastic, but God does not display anger. The imaginative effect of the poetry is to take Job out of himself, confront him with aspects of the cosmos, and overwhelm him with the vastness, grandeur, and wildness of the order of things. The “otherness” of the cosmos is brought home to Job. For Job to realize his place in the scheme of things must have been painful, but also healing. Job’s stance “is reoriented in a way that no mere reasoning, but only encounter with otherness, can effect (p. 45).
3. *Modern Science, Be Not Proud* - Modern science has vastly expanded our knowledge of the universe, such that meteorological phenomena that mystified Job is now understood. “For the story of science is that each advance in knowledge merely opens up new areas of mystery” (p.46). For example, only recently has it become apparent to scientists that the universe is full of “dark matter,” but no one really knows what it is. Or the long quest for a unified theory that will explain everything (“a theory of everything”) shows no sign of reaching its goal. Recently, “string theory” as a research framework in particle physics that attempts to reconcile quantum mechanics and general relativity has been developed. It is a contender for a theory of everything. But there is far from consensus or full understanding of this. Even if there was, string theory would not “explain everything, only the laws of sub-atomic physics. Bauckham quotes science writers Arthur Peacocke, “Our awareness of our ignorance grows in parallel with, indeed faster than, the growth in our knowledge” ... and John Maddox, “The big surprises will be the answers to questions that we are not yet smart enough to ask. The scientific enterprise is an unfinished project and will remain so for the rest of time.” (p 46).
4. *A Little Cosmic Humility in Order* - Bauckham states, “Cosmic humility is a much needed ecological virtue” ... “We need the humility to recognize the unforeseeable risks of technology before we ruin the world in pursuit of

technological fixes to all our problems. We need the humility to know ourselves as creatures within creation, not gods over creation, the humility of knowing that only God is God.” (p.46).

D. The Wild Animals in God’s First Address to Job (38:39-39:30)

After ten strophes on the physical universe, God’s answer to Job turns to animals. God asks Job to consider ten selected animal species. The questions are much the same: does Job know, can he comprehend, can he control, as God does? Additionally, can Job provide for these creatures as God does?

E. Reflections on Job 38:39-39:30

Subtitles in italics in this section by Bjoraker

1. *Creatures Wild and Free from Humans* - The Old Testament makes a clear distinction between domestic animals, which belong to the human world, and wild animals, which do not. These latter species are independent of humans, have lives of their own, do not serve nor need to be provided for by humans. God provides for them. The wild ass is an image of unfettered freedom (as in Psalm 104:11)
2. *Counterpoint and Caveat to the Dominion Mandate* - Job is again decentered and reoriented to realize he is not, cannot be dominant over wild animals. Book of Job scholar Norman Habel argues that Job subverts and undermines the Genesis dominion mandate. Bauckham thinks it at least gives another side of the picture, limiting and qualifying dominion. It strikes a blow to anthropocentrism and the hubristic view of Genesis 1:26 and 28.
3. *Divine Delight in Animals* - In these passages, God expresses sheer joy in His creatures, rejoicing in their variety.
4. *Things Have Changed; We Have a Responsibility* - Applied to our own contemporary context, today we have encroached upon the habitats of wild creatures in a way Job never could. “Species go extinct every day as a result of human activity” (p. 52). Humans have a responsibility to protect their habitats.
5. *Acknowledging the Mystery of Other Beings* - Our knowledge of these animals has increased vastly since ancient times, but we still do not understand fully how the hawk migrates. And beyond our objectifying scientific knowledge about species, there remains the mystery of other beings. The descriptions in Job presuppose that animals are “subjects of their own lives” (quoting Jay McDaniel). “The descriptions are restrained in their anthropomorphisms, that is, in their attribution of human feelings and intentions to animals (see 39:7, 13-18 and 21-25). But only by means of anthropomorphism can we have any means at all of empathy with other conscious creatures. ... we have no other means of accessing the experience of animals. Renouncing anthropomorphism altogether is

bound to be reductionist, explaining behavior in wholly mechanistic terms.”(p. 52-53).

F. God’s Second Address to Job (Chapters 40- 41)

1. *Behemoth and Leviathan* - Bauckham argues exegetically that the long and poetic descriptions of these beasts are not about merely the hippopotamus and the crocodile, as often thought. “Behemoth” is actually the plural form of the ordinary word for a four-legged mammal, but is treated as a singular masculine by the Job poet (p. 55). So it means “something like ‘The Animal’ or ‘the beast *par excellence*.’” Leviathan is undoubtedly the name of the primordial chaos monster, the personification of the destructive forces in nature that threaten the order of God’s creation (Ps. 74:13-14; Isa. 27:1) (p. 60). Though these beasts recall, or take -off from, those two animals of the Nile respectively, they are a symbolic heightening of them, and refer to another fact of creation altogether, which Job can have no hope of controlling.
2. *The Raging Sea* - The destructive powers in nature are most often portrayed under another image: the Sea (p.60). The raging sea was the most dangerous and fearsome thing they knew in nature. In Genesis 1:1-2 chaos, when the earth was “*tohu v vohu*” (“formless and void”) it is the waters of the great deep over which God’s Spirit hovers. When the great flood of Noah’s time came, it was anti-creation, threatening to revert the cosmos to primordial chaos. In the beginning of these addresses to Job, God addresses the sea, “Thus far shall you come and no farther, here shall your proud waves be stopped” (Job 38:11). Leviathan is a sea monster, and so this connects the original Genesis 1:1-2 chaos, God’s initial address to Job and the elaborate symbolism of Leviathan as the dark wild card in creation, to communicate powerfully to Job (and us) that darkest aspects of creation are awful and dreadful anti-God forces, that continually threaten God’s created order and that only God himself can gain final victory over.

PERSONAL	GOD HUMANS ANGELS	GOD	INFINITE
NON-PERSONAL	ANIMALS	HUMANS	FINITE
NON-PERSONAL	PLANTS	ANGELS	FINITE
NON-PERSONAL	INANIMATE MATTER	ANIMALS	FINITE
NON-PERSONAL		MATTER	FINITE

Figure 3- Hierarchy and Ontology

Bjoraker’s Excursus 2 - Humans as “Imago Dei” are Different in Kind, not Just Degree from the Non-Human Creation.

Given God’s blow to anthropocentrism (as Bauckham terms it) in the Book of Job, the decentering of Job, this is a good place to discuss a Biblical ontology (the philosophy of “being”), and the God-ordained hierarchy existing among the beings God created.

Job and modern humans need this message countering human hubris. But we must maintain, especially because the strong influence of the Darwinian theory of the biological evolution of humans from lower forms of life, that only humans of all creatures are made in the “image and likeness of God,” called the *Imago Dei* (Latin) in Christian theological tradition.

But Bauckham seems so intent on correcting the abuse of the dominion mandate of Gen. 1:26 and 28, that he downplays or minimizes the very real ontological (qualitative) difference between human beings and the rest of creation. In discussing the *Imago Dei*, Bauckham states, “Attempts to draw a hard distinction between human nature and animals have often hung on this text, but scientific research makes it increasingly difficult to identify any absolute difference.” (p. 30). Surely this has some truth if we compare only the physical bodies of humans and other mammals and their chemical constitution. This is because all mammals are designed by God to live in the same physical environment. But the immaterial features of human beings (the soul and spirit) are qualitatively different than those

of animals. Ascertaining this knowledge is of course outside the domain of science's ability to gain and measure. For this we need Biblical revelation.

The same passage teaching us about the *Imago Dei* also gives us the "dominion mandate" (Genesis 1:26-28). Thus the two are associated. Humans are given a level of authority to exercise rule ("*radah*") over the rest of creation, because humans are made in the Image of God. This has been abused, but the mandate remains. The issue is to have a proper interpretation and practice of what this means—abusive, exploitative rule? Or caring, responsible management?

Figure 3 above depicts the ontological categories of, on the right side, *Infinite and Finite*. In this category God is absolutely, qualitatively different than all He created. God is the only infinite being; the *Infinite-Personal God*. On the left side, *Personal and Non-Personal*, God and humans and (apparently) angels are personal (a personhood that at least involves the endowment of a rationality and speech that reflects God's own). All other creatures are non-personal. Of no other creature is it said that when the Logos came into the world, he was the "true light that gives light to every human." (John 1:9). Humans are endowed the light of reason that comes directly from the Eternal Word.

This makes a sharp distinction between God, angels and humans on the one hand, and all the rest of the non-human creation, on the other. God is different in kind, not just in degree from all His creation. Thus humans are different in kind, not just degree from the non-human creatures. A thought experiment that immediately highlights this is as follows— God was incarnated (in Christ) as a human being, not as an animal. So Bauckham statement that, "our creatureliness is more fundamental than our distinctiveness among creatures" (p. 31), does not square with Biblical ontology.

Tellingly, Bauckham never once discusses Psalm 8, and only refers to it once in passing (p. 69-70), where he quotes Brown who admits to the anthropocentrism of Psalm 8. This psalm gives one of the highest expressions of the uniqueness of human beings over all other created beings, and their order in a hierarchy. Here are the pertinent passages (italics mine),

“... When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
⁴ *What is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?*

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and *crowned him with glory and honor.*

⁶ *You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,*

⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,

⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas. ...” (Psalm 8:3-8)

In a book that purports to treat the entire range of Scripture on nature and the non-human creation, the omission of Psalm 8 is glaring.

Bjoraker's Excursus 3 - On Climate Change and Anthropogenic Global Warming

Bauckham assumes in his book, without providing evidence or documentation, that the current global warming cycle is anthropogenic (man-made). He states, "Climate change is the climactic sum of many such miscalculations, as well as reckless irresponsibility." (p. 90). Further he states, "When Bill McKibben wrote his book 'The End of Nature' (1990), he meant by that title that, especially by causing climate change, contemporary humanity has put an end to the idea of nature as independent of humans..." (p. 107).

The evidence is quite irrefutable that there is climate change. It is inevitable. There has always been climate change and cyclical periods of global cooling and warming. That we have been, in recent decades, in a period of warming is also irrefutable. *The Economist* magazine ran a 14-page special report entitled "The Melting North. Though the article uses as one of its sources the science from the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC), established by the United Nations (UN), whose credibility has been formidably challenged (see below), it is clear from other sources documented in *The Economist* special report (and many other sources) that the Arctic's glaciers and Greenland's vast ice cap, are retreating. There is some thawing of the permafrost.

However, it is far from proven that global warming and climate change is caused by humans. Patrick Johnstone, in his monumental research of future trends, *The Future of the Global Church* states, "The scientific evidence that global warming is solely or largely due to human production of CO₂ is not adequately established" (Johnstone 10). Yet, most people in the secular West today assume it to be established science.

There was a significant warming in medieval times. Vikings who settled Greenland were able to cultivate and harvest crops for two or three centuries. The warming period was not catastrophic, but actually must be associated with human development and prosperity.

Following the "Medieval Warm Period," there occurred what is called the "Little Ice Age" in Europe. The River Thames in England froze over for many years, which of course it has not now for nearly two centuries. **Figure 4** depicts the two major warming and cooling eras over the last millennia:

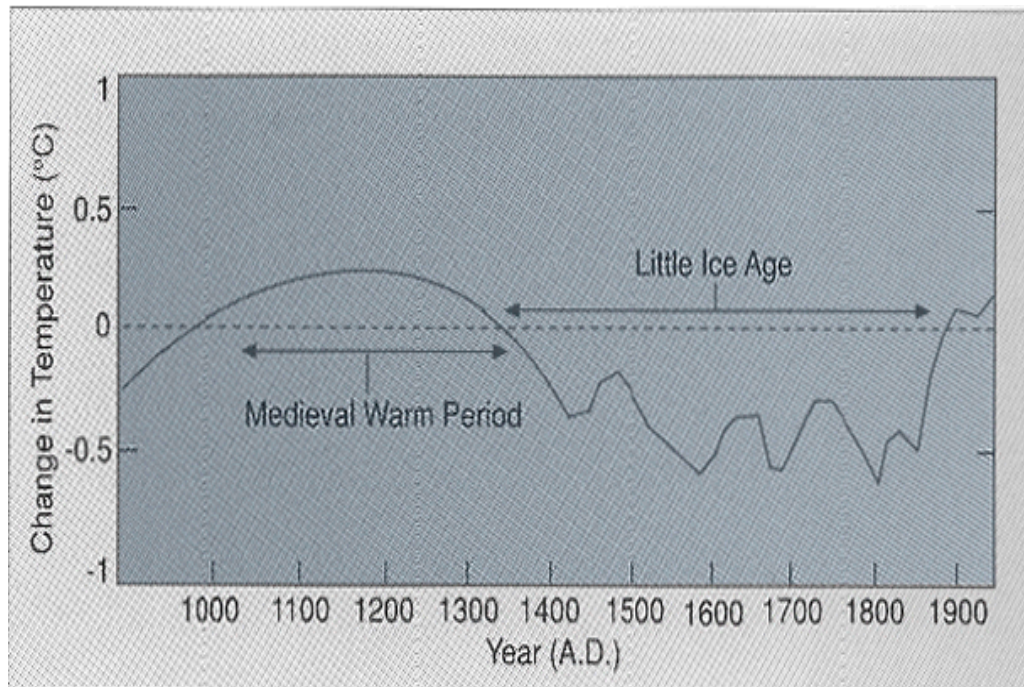


Figure 4 – Medieval Warm Period and the “Little Ice Age”

Source: http://www.environmentalsolutions.net/blog/?page_id=15

The web site “Environmental Solutions” cites the following as sources of the data depicted in **Figure 4**, “Example of regional variations in surface air temperature for the last 1000 years, estimated from a variety of sources, including temperature-sensitive tree growth indices and written records of various kinds, largely from Western Europe and Eastern North America. Shown [above] are changes in regional temperature in °C, from the baseline value for 1900. Compiled by R. S. Bradley and J. A. Eddy, based on J. T. Houghton et al., 1990 and 1991. (See Pifer, Ronald “An Inconvenient Fib”)

It makes eminent sense that the sun, being the engine of the earth’s warmth, would be the, or at least a major, source of climate change, with more causal valence than the factors transpiring on earth (though not necessarily so). But, there is a body of evidence that explains the warming and cooling trends on planet earth as being caused by cycles in the sun, and solar storms. Timely for this study, the cover article in *National Geographic* June, 2012 edition is on “Solar Super Storms.” The study shows how solar storms affect the earth.

Observations reveal that the Sun goes through a regular cycle of activity. There are periods of “solar maximum” and “solar minimum.” During periods in between these peaks of activity, the sun cools slightly, a phase in the cycle known as the ‘Solar Minimum.’ Researcher John Daly states, “During the Solar Maximum, the sun breaks out in sunspots, a direct indication of more intense solar radiation and activity.” (Daly, “Days of Sunshine”)

Daly states,

“The most remarkable event in the last 500 years was the ‘Maunder Minimum’, a 50-year period from 1650 to 1700 when there were hardly any sunspots at all, indicating a prolonged cooler period on the Sun. Another period from 1800 to 1830 shows very reduced activity, and a further moderate period in the late 19th and early 20th century. Contrast these with the heightened level of activity and warmth in the latter half of the 20th century, the most intense since solar observations began around 1600 AD.”

“Reference to the climatic graph for Europe of the last 1,000 years shows that the ‘Maunder Minimum’ of solar activity during the 17th century occurred at exactly the same time as the ‘Little Ice Age.’ The low level of solar activity in the period 1800-1830 coincided with another cool climatic period dubbed the “Dickensian Winters” (Charles Dickens was a young boy at the time, and his novels depicting snowy Christmases in London, which normally does not get snow in December, reflects his memories of childhood). 1816 has been called ‘The Year without a Summer’, due to the severe cold which affected America and Europe that year. In 1814, a frost fair was held on the River Thames in London, indicating that temperatures had very briefly descended to even the Little Ice Age level when Thames frost fairs were common. (Daly, “Days of Sunshine,”)

Patrick Johnstone shows how the UN’s IPCC skewed data to “prove” global warming by removing the “Medieval Warm Period” and the “Little Ice Age” in their 2001 graph to support “alarming predictions of impending temperature rises—it is the bend in the graph that gained it its nickname ‘the hockey stick.’” (Johnstone, 10)

The *Los Angeles Times* recently ran a front-page article on how elders of the Inuit resent outside interference on how the Inuit manage their polar bear population.

“IQALUIT, Canada — Doomsday predictions of the polar bear's demise tend to draw an Inuit guffaw here in Nunavut, the remote Arctic territory where polar bears in some places outnumber people. People will tell you about the polar bear that strode brazenly past the dump a month ago or the bear that attacked a dog team in the town of Arviat in November. Heart-rending pictures of polar bears clinging to tiny islands of ice elicit nothing but derision.” (Murphy, “Canada’s Inuit Roar in Protest”)

The polar bear as an endangered species has become a “poster animal” for those who take an alarmist man-made global warming viewpoint, featuring, as the article referenced above puts it, “heart-rending pictures of polar bears clinging to tiny islands of ice.” Two-thirds of the world’s population of polar bears is in northern Canada. The local Inuit communities there have lived in symbiosis with the polar bear from time immemorial. They know the situation first hand, and have an interest in sustaining the polar bear population because it is central to their

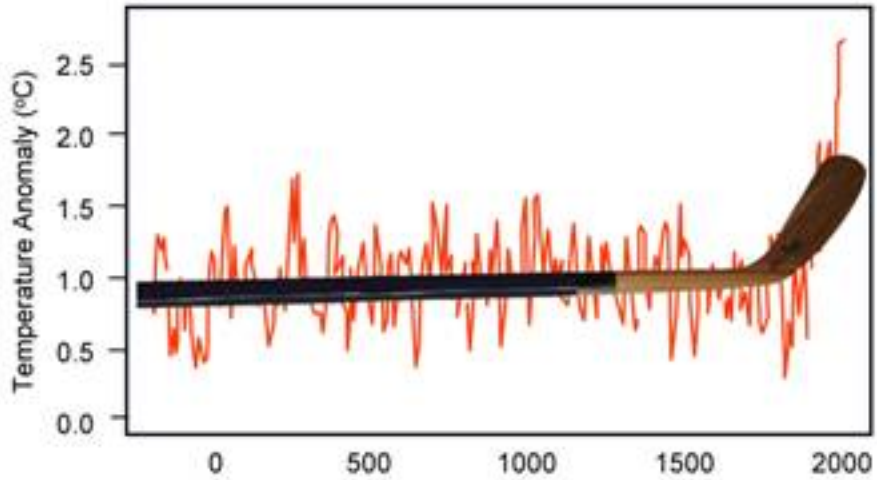
livelihood (bear meat, sale of pelts, fees for guiding hunters, etc.). They claim that animal rights activists put the species more at risk than hunters; this because should international bodies such as the 175-nation “Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species” (CITES) be able to ban all harvesting of polar bears, the “the whole management objective in Nunavut will change... .” They think that eliminating the market for pelts and sport hunts would wipe out any economic incentive to protect bears from indiscriminate shooting. As a parallel, think of how we kill billions of broiler chickens every year, yet we don’t hear anyone warning that they’re about to go extinct. The reason is obvious. The market for them gives growers an incentive. Sustain a market for polar bears, and you give incentive for their husbandry.

As to the manipulation of statistics in the interest of proving man-made global warming, the story of the IPCC’s “hockey stick “ illusion must be told. Michael E. Mann, professor in the Department of Meteorology at Penn State, was one the chief contributors to the IPCC’s data and report. It became clear that Mann used wrong statistics and was discredited. Michael S. Coffman writes,

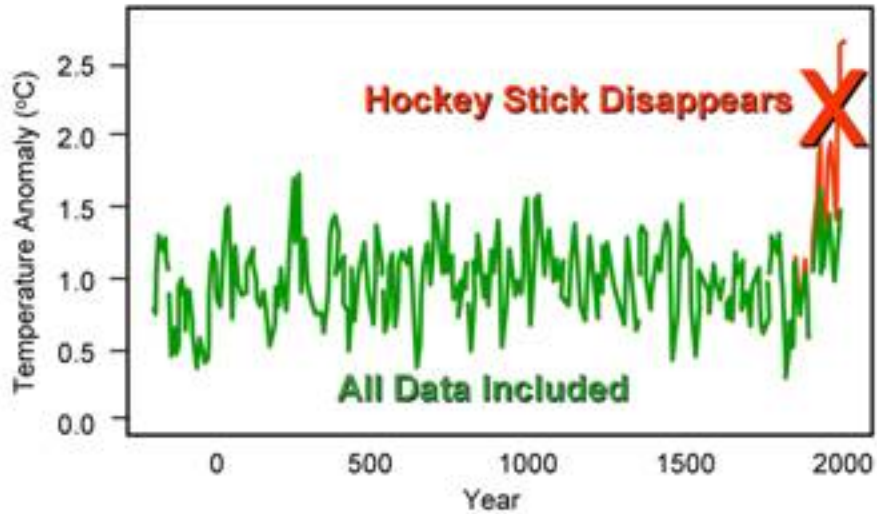
“Michael Mann’s original hockey stick graph [due to resembling the sharp upward turn at the end of the “stick”] was the centerpiece of the 2001 IPCC report “proving” that mankind was responsible for global warming. By 2004, it was discredited because Mann employed wrong statistics to create it. After nearly ten years of stonewalling, Mann was finally forced in 2009 to give the data he used to create the curve to other scientists. Scientists were shocked to find tree ring data after 1960 was not used because it showed a decline in global temperature. Instead, Mann and his coauthors used CRU [Climatic Research Unit, University of East Anglia, U.K.] data to show the hockey stick. The released emails showed this procedure was used many times in other research.” (Coffman, “No Cap and Trade”)

Below in **Figure 5** is depicted the graph with the hockey stick illusion, and then the data graphed when all the data are included.

The Original IPCC Hockey Stick Graph



Hockey Stick Disappears When All Data Included

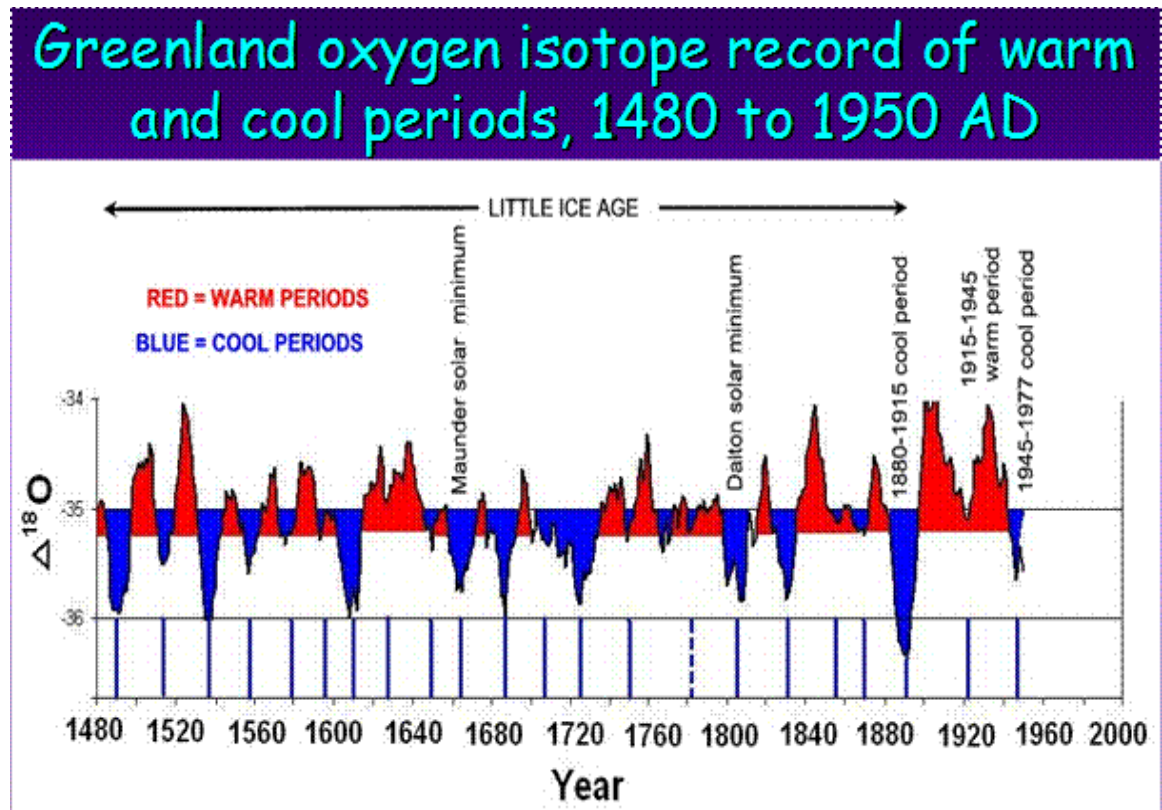


Source: Steve McIntyre, 9/27/09 Yamal: A "Divergence" Problem. <http://www.climateaudit.org/?p=7168>

Source: http://www.nocapandtrade.us/global_warming_lie.htm

Figure 5 - The IPCC's Discredited "Hockey Stick" Data

There is also a major book length treatment on the manipulation of this data in the service of the ideology of catastrophic anthropogenic global warming. See *“The Hockey Stick Illusion: Climategate and the Corruption of Science”* by A. W. Montford. London: Stacey International, 2010.



Source: [http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/2010 where does it fit in the warmest year list/](http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/2010%20where%20does%20it%20fit%20in%20the%20warmest%20year%20list/)

**Figure 6 -
Cyclical Warming and Cooling Trends from 1480-2000 AD.**

These data above are from the research organization ICECAP (International Climate and Environmental Change Assessment Project), which states about itself that it,

“... is the portal to all things climate for elected officials and staffers, journalists, scientists, educators and the public. It provides access to a new and growing global society of respected scientists and journalists that are not deniers that our climate is dynamic (the only constant in nature is change) and that man plays a role in climate change through urbanization, land use

changes and the introduction of greenhouse gases and aerosols, but who also believe that natural cycles such as those in the sun and oceans are also important contributors to the global changes in our climate and weather. We worry the sole focus on greenhouse gases and the unwise reliance on imperfect climate models while ignoring real data may leave civilization unprepared for a sudden climate shift that history tells us will occur again, very possibly soon.” (ICECAP)

The ICECAP data in **Figure 6** show that the earth was gradually warming in early 20th century, until the 1940s. With the post-war economic boom, during which CO2 emissions from increased manufacturing and industry rose, temperatures *decreased* for three decades, to the point where there was a movement, similar to our current alarmist global warming campaigns, that predicted a new ice age! There was a 1974 BBC production on “the Big Freeze.” It was an apocalyptic, sky-is-falling, doomsday presentation, but turned out to be wrong. Then temperatures started warming again, over the last 30 years. Now, the warming trend is attributed to industrial society and carbon emissions. Yet the warming trends in the 15th and 16th centuries happened *before* the Industrial Revolution, and so were not caused by carbon emissions or “greenhouse gases” emitted from human industry or activity.

If global warming and cooling is not man-made, then a major conclusion we can draw that, as humans *we cannot mitigate* global warming. *We can adapt* to climate change, but not stop it.

A growing number of credible scientists support the view that the current warming period is **not** due to the manmade carbon dioxide in the air causing the “Greenhouse Effect.” (See for example: <http://www.globalwarmingawarenessblog.com/globalwarming-is-not-due-to-manmade-carbon-dioxide.html>)

Another important point is the relative significance of carbon emissions. The conventional wisdom says that carbon emissions, increased CO2 in the air causes a rise in temperatures. However, there is evidence that it is actually *the other way around*— *rising temperatures cause an increase in CO2* in the atmosphere. Note this from researchers at ICECAP,

“A final concern related to the ongoing rise in the air's CO2 concentration is the worry that it may lead to catastrophic global warming. There is little reason to believe that such will ever occur, however, for several observations of historical changes in atmospheric CO2 concentration and air temperature suggest that it is climate change that drives changes in the air's CO2 content and not vice versa. In a study of the global warmings that signaled the demise of the last three ice ages, for example (Fischer et al. 1999) found that air temperature always rose first, followed by an increase in atmospheric CO2 some 400 to 1000 years later.” (ICECAP, “About Climate Change”)

Johnstone further points out that volcanoes produce much more ecological catastrophe and global impact on the environment than any warming or cooling trends ever have. Animals and bacteria, dying vegetation, but especially the oceans produce more CO₂, by far, than any other factor.

And 95% of “greenhouse gases” are water vapor. Scientific evidence does not support CO₂-driven warming, rather ice core samples show the opposite: as temperatures rise, CO₂ levels followed; warmer temperatures produced more CO₂.

Other resources that provide ample scientific evidence against anthropogenic global warming are “The Great Global Warming Swindle” (Parts 1-7 video available on YouTube). This presentation includes interviews with credible climate scientists, physicists and geologists. The documentary argues that although humans do pollute and hurt our environment it's not to the degree of “heating-up” the Earth. See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=augWGYU_Av4 And for evidence that we may soon be entering a period of global cooling, see: <http://notrickszone.com/2011/01/22/signs-of-strengthening-global-cooling/>

So back to Bauckham’s book; by attributing such power to humans as to change the earth’s climate, Bauckham, in effect, contradicts the thesis he argues in “**Chapter 2 -Putting us in our Place**” — that humans are a lot less significant in this vast cosmos than we think we are. The whole tenor of Scripture seems to be that God controls the forces of nature, not humans. This is at least part of the message God drove home to Job.

This of course is no cause for humans to wantonly pollute the air, water and land that we have been given to steward and care for. We should limit and prevent pollution as much as possible. But we must not think that we humans can turn back the natural global warming and cooling trends by limiting pollution. These are two different issues.

Consequently, though many of the various “green” movements are helpful to the degree they educate, and advocate policies that, help people reduce air, water and land pollution and exercise responsible creation care, Biblical creation care practitioners will critique movements like the “Green Party of the United States” whose political platform includes this commitment,

“Greens want to stop runaway climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions at least 40% by 2020 and 95% by 2050, over 1990 levels. ...

Climate change is the gravest environmental, social and economic peril that humanity has ever met. Across the world, it is causing vanishing polar ice, melting glaciers, growing deserts, stronger storms, rising oceans, less biodiversity, deepening droughts, as well as more disease, hunger, strife and human misery. It is a tragedy unfolding in slow motion. Greenhouse gases warm the Earth by trapping heat in the atmosphere. Much of that heat is initially absorbed by the ocean, creating roughly a 30-year delay in the impact of that heat at the surface of the planet. Practically speaking, that means that the melting glaciers and expanding deserts of 2009 were the result of greenhouse gases dumped into the atmosphere in the late 1970s,

when the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was below 350 parts per million (ppm). To return to a safe level of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere, we must reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases as quickly as possible to levels that existed before 1980, to 350ppm carbon dioxide. ...

Greens support science-based policies to curb climate change. We have an ambitious plan to make drastic changes quickly to avert global catastrophe. We will expend maximum effort to preserve a planet friendly to life as we know it by curtailing greenhouse gas emissions and actively removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.” (The Green Party of the United States Platform)

I trust that the reader, who investigates the science in the sources I have provided above, will detect the danger in such a political approach. The massive diversion of time and resources to attempt to stop the unstoppable would have unintended consequences far worse than the effects of the current warming trend. Advocacy groups, lawmakers and public policy makers today need to be adequately informed as to what is at stake.

What is at stake? Is this just a political controversy, between liberals and Greens, on the one hand and conservatives on the other hand? Johnstone says,

“Nor is the science of atmospheric CO₂ well enough understood for it to make sense to seek to limit it by spending trillions of dollars heavily subsidizing “green” energy and investing in other ways to reduce emissions energy. Focusing on the contribution of human-generated CO₂ alone is not only unscientific but also dangerous, and possibly economically suicidal, for those countries that espouse such policies.” (Johnstone10).

What may well be at stake is justice for the most impoverished of the world who would suffer most from draconian laws to limit carbon emissions, because poor nations will not be able to abide by such laws. The poor spend a higher percentage of their income on energy and desperately need economic growth to rise out of poverty and overcome their miseries. Many do not have the leisure or wealth to develop alternative forms of energy; carbon-emitting fuels are still the cheapest and most available.

An evangelical organization called “The Cornwall Alliance: For the Stewardship of Creation” offers thoughtful analysis of many ecological issues, including global warming and climate change. See <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/>

In their “An Evangelical Declaration on Global Warming” they state, among other things that,

“We deny that alternative, renewable fuels can, with present or near-term technology, replace fossil and nuclear fuels, either wholly or in significant part, to provide the abundant, affordable energy necessary to sustain prosperous economies or overcome poverty.” ... and “We deny that carbon dioxide—essential to all plant growth—is a pollutant. Reducing greenhouse gases cannot achieve significant reductions in future global temperatures, and the costs of the policies would far exceed the benefits.” (*An Evangelical Declaration on Global Warming, The Cornwall Alliance*)

Chapter 3- The Community of Creation

Continuing his exposition of the whole range of Scripture’s teaching on creation and the environment, Bauckham continues to develop a theocentric “community of creation” paradigm. He discusses the role of humans in that community, and the ontology of nature (the nature of nature, if you will). He discusses *two major nature Psalms* and *two major New Testament nature passages*.

A. Reflections on Psalm 104 - Sharing the Earth

1. *Psalm 104 is the Second- Longest Passage in the Bible about the Non-Human Creation* There are similarities between God’s Voice from the Whirlwind speech in Job 38-39 and this nature psalm.
2. *All creatures are Dependent on God for Sustenance* - “This is a psalm of praise to God for his ‘generous extravagance’ (quoting Walter Brueggemann) in creation and in provision for his creatures.” (p. 67). The whole sprawling zoological panorama of creation is all portrayed as “completely and directly dependent on God’s generous giving.” (p. 69).
3. *The Place of Humans in this Panorama of Creation?* “There are hints at a certain exceptionality... But there is no trace of human supremacy over the creatures in general. The impression is rather of fellow-creatureliness.” (p. 69-70). Quoting Brown, Bauckham says “compared with the anthropocentricity of Psalm 8, Psalm 104 ‘moves toward an ecocentric profile.’ Bauckham then states that the psalm is primarily a theocentric praise of God for his creation.” (p.69)
4. *Leviathan Will be Tamed* - In Job, Leviathan is chaos personified. In 104:26, he “is not here the agent of destruction, as in Job, but merely a monster (a whale?) playing in the ocean” (p. 71). This could be translated “this Leviathan You fashioned to play with” (Alter’s translation). He appears in Genesis 1, only in reference the reference to sea monsters, created with other sea creatures, on the fifth day (Gen. 1:21). Thus in Psalm 104, as in Genesis 1, before the fall, the chaos monster is tamed. Because the threat of cosmic destruction Leviathan represents has here been eliminated, Bauckham thinks this

psalm portrays creation “in an ideal, or utopian or eschatological way.” (p. 71)

5. *Humans Exceptional, but in the Psalm Mostly as Despoilers*- The whole picture is positive, with only one reference to death, but “It seems to be simply accepted as part of the natural cycle of life and death (“... return to dust” [104:29]). The only exception to this positive view is at the end of the psalm, it states “Let sinners be consumed from the earth...” (104:35a).

B. Matthew 6: 25-33 – Sharing God’s Provision for His Creatures

1. *A Cruel Promise?* -This passage, about God’s provision in nature for all living creatures, including humans, to live from—“Don’t worry about your life, what you shall eat or drink. ... Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather in barns, yet your heavenly father feeds them...” —would be easy to regard as cruelly unrealistic in light of the famine and scarcity that afflict large part of the world. “Is not Jesus, like the author of Psalm 104, seeing the world through rose-tinted glasses?”
2. *Provision Through the Community of God’s People* - Bauckham asserts that “Jesus here presupposes the agricultural means by which food reaches people, so he can presuppose the provisions of the Torah that are intended to supply the basic needs of the poor” (the tithe, gleanings in the fields for the poor, generous almsgiving, etc. See Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12-15; Lev. 19:9-10) (p. 74) in Bauckham view, the Biblical teaching is that provision comes to the poor through the community; ... “community sharing is the channel through which the Creator’s provision supplies the needs of all.” (p. 75).
***Implication (by Bjoraker):** Where God’s people do not reside, the promised provisions cannot reach the destitute. What responsibility He delegates to the redeemed people of God on earth! The implication is that world poverty could be eliminated if the people of God were to fully implement the community principles taught in the Torah, and the rest of Scripture. A practical implication is that God’s people need to physically move to locations where the poor live and then practice compassionate community there.
3. *All Reasonable Needs Can Be Met* - Bauckham deduces from his above interpretation of Psalm 104 and Matthew 6:25-33 that the God-given resources of creation are sufficient for all the “reasonable needs” of God’s creatures, but not for the kind of excess in which only humans indulge. If all humans would live within the “ecological limits,” then God’s provisions, if equitably shared, would meet all needs. “We in the affluent parts of the world are finally having to recognize this,” he states. (p. 75).
4. *Living Within “Ecological Limits”* - The birds and flowers in the Matthew 6 passage are not just “picturesque illustrations.” For

Bauckham, the “birds and flowers are essential to the argument” (p. 75); that we humans are participants in the community of God’s creatures, not “masters of creation entitled to exploit its resources to our hearts desires.” (p. 76). All of us co-creatures in the world are part of creational community that can live within God’s ecology and provision, if we learn to live within its limits. Jesus’ teaching may seem extreme, but so is the affluent nations’ addiction to excess. Living within ecological limits will require us who live in modern affluent nations to question our personal consumption and the broad economic goals that drive our consumer society and its globalization. (p.76).

C. Praising Our Maker Together – Psalm 148

The most profound way we can recover our place in the world as creatures alongside our fellow creatures is the biblical theme of the worship all creation, animate and inanimate, offers to God. This theme is widely present in the Psalms, but the most extensive example is Psalm 148.

1. *Nature is the “Cosmic Choir”* -This psalm is a call to the whole of the created order to praise the LORD. More than thirty categories of creatures are summoned to praise their Creator. The first word and the last word of the psalm is “Hallelujah.” It expresses a grand cosmic vision, beginning with the heavenly beings and moves down to earth and humankind.
2. *Humans are Placed at the End of the Catalogue of Worshippers.* Bauckham sees no climax of an ascending scale of value in this ordering of humans last. “The praise of God by all creation levels all creatures before their Creator, angels and heavenly bodies included.” (p. 81)
3. *Biblical Metaphor Points to the Reality of Being* - Modern Christians may take this theme of all creatures worshipping God as “some kind of pre-scientific animism. But though the poetry is metaphorical, “the metaphor point to reality: all creatures bring glory to God simply by being themselves and fulfilling their God-given roles in God’s creation.” (p.79)
4. *Intrinsic, Not Merely Instrumental Value of All Created Beings* - “To recognize all creation’s praise is to abandon a purely instrumental view of nature.” (p. 80) All creatures exist for God’s glory. Their value has nothing to do with their usefulness to us humans.
5. *Not All is Under Human Dominion* – “No part of the heavens or creatures that inhabit them are included in the human dominion of Genesis 1:26 and 28. The dominion is over sea creatures. The birds, and land animals only, while the heavenly bodies, according to Genesis 1:14-18, have their own dominion.” (p. 80)
6. *Ideal and Eschatological Vision of the Fulfillment of Creation* - The unqualified positivity matches that of Genesis 1 (before the Fall), so anticipated the eschatological fulfillment, and invites all created beings into that fulfillment, to be the universe of praise it was meant to be

(though since the Fall they have been “delivered to corruption” and “groan” for liberation- Romans 8:20-22). This call to all creatures is prophetic of the Day in which every created being in the universe will glorify God by being fully what they were designed to be.

D. Cosmic Celebration

This is Not a Pantheistic Vision but Celebratory Worship. It is not the universe celebrating itself, reveling in its own life. It is an ecstasy of being that takes one out of oneself into praise of the source and goal of one’s being. “Because all creatures, by virtue of being creatures, are intrinsically related to the Creator, they can fully celebrate their own life only by also praising their Creator.” (p. 83)

E. Are Humans the Priests of Creation?

Humans are Not a Kind of Priesthood to Creation, acting as mediators, or as a link between the Creator and the rest of creation. Bauckham sees this praise of God by all creatures as leveling all creatures before their common Creator. In his view “it would be a mistake to try to assimilate this aspect of our human place within creation to any of the hierarchical models that seek to interpret the Genesis dominion.” (p. 83)

F. Nature – Divine, Sacred or Secular?

Bauckham notes, “The Biblical and Christian tradition has been both praised and blamed for de-divinising and de-sacralising nature. For supporters of the modern project of scientific-technological domination of nature, it was of great value that the Bible and the Christian tradition had allegedly de-divinised nature, opposing all forms of nature religion, clearing away all superstitious reverence for nature, clearing the way for objective scientific investigation of nature and technological use for human benefit. Modern green criticism of the Christian tradition has often accepted this account but held it against the Bible and Christianity. By de-divinising nature, Christianity exposed it to the ruthless exploitation that has brought us to the brink of ecological disaster.” (p. 86). See my **Excursus 4** and **Figures 7 & 8** for analysis and comment on the Biblical view of nature.

G. The Community of Creation

The Bible “envisages a theocentric community of creatures.” Bauckham concludes that humans are natural member of the community of creation. We share the same earth, are “affected by the processes of the Earth, affecting the processes that affect each other, with common interests in at least life and flourishing, with the common end of glorifying the Creator and interdependent in the ways we do exactly that.” (p. 88)

H. The Whole Creation Mourns

Another series of passages in the Hebrew Bible metaphorically attribute voice to the non-human creatures, but depict them not as rejoicing but as *mourning*. Creation's mourning is for what we might call "ecological death." (p.92). usually it is the "*eretz*" (Hebrew for the "land") that is mourning (sometimes this word is used for a local area of land, sometime for the whole earth). What the land mourns is the effect of human wrongdoing on the non-human inhabitants, both flora and fauna.

1. *Reversion to Chaos or "Uncreation" Due to Human Sin.* One passage—Jeremiah 4:23-28—portrays a kind of reversion to the chaos that was before creation, using the phrase "*tohu v vohu*," ("waste and void") which occurs only here and in Genesis 1:2 depicting the condition before creation. It is thus "a hyperbolic image suggesting the uncreation of all creation." (p. 94).
2. "*Human Evil has ecological consequences.*" The Hebrew Bible portrays a strong sense of a created order and a community of creation within that order. Most of the time other creatures observe this order, but humans all too often flout it. (Jer. 8:7). "Humans are the disorderly factor in the world" (p. 94).
3. *Divine Judgment and Natural Processes are Connected.* Sometimes the prophets speak of the destructive consequences of human evil as the "direct intervention of God in judgment" (Isa. 42:1-4; Zeph. 1:2-3); sometimes as though they are "processes built into the order of creation" (Hos 4:1-3). The two are not necessarily in contradiction. The natural order and the moral order are by no means unconnected." (p 95).
4. *Creation Mourns, Groans, and Travails Due to Human Sin.* Paul takes up this theme from the prophets of the mourning of creation in Romans 8:18-23. He describes all creation as "groaning and travailing," "in bondage to decay," and having been "subjected to futility" by God. Most exegetes have seen here a reference to the Fall in Genesis 3. Bauckham contends, however, this cannot refer to some drastic change in the natural world that followed the fall of Adam and Eve, like the introduction of death. He claims this traditional view is impossible to hold because of our modern knowledge that animals were dying for millions of years before humans appeared on earth. Rather, he contends "Paul is thinking of ecological degradation and desertification of the kind the prophets indicated when they portrayed the Earth as mourning ..." (p. 97).
5. *The Natural Creation Will be Regenerated and Transformed.* According to Romans 8:20-21, "the creation was subjected to futility ... in hope that the creation itself will be set free." If indeed the background to this idea of the mourning of creation is in the prophets, then Paul also likely found in those same prophets the warrant for representing it as a subjection "in hope." There shall be a Divine regeneration of the natural world that shall accompany the redemption of the people of God. For example,

*¹The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
 And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
²It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
 Even with joy and singing.
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
 The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
 They shall see the glory of the LORD,
 The excellency of our God.”*
 (Isaiah 35: 1-2; cf. 32:15-20; and 51:3; Amos 9:13-14; Joel 3:18).

6. *As the People of the Kingdom of God, We Anticipate that Regeneration and Must Act in Consonance With It.* “If we accept this diagnosis that human degradation is responsible for ecological degradation, then it follows that those concerned to live according to God’s will must be concerned to avoid and to repair damage as much as possible. Like the coming of the Kingdom of God, we cannot achieve the liberation of creation, but we can anticipate it.” (p. 100).
7. *The Hebraic Understanding of a Holistic and Symbiotic Ecology is Affirmed by the Apostle Paul.* What becomes clear is that Paul assumes the same kind of close relationship between human wrongdoing and the well-being of the non-human creation that the prophets do.” (p. 100). In contrast to the modern tendency toward dissection, fragmentation and compartmentalization, the physical, moral and spiritual orders interpenetrate one another.

Bjoraker’s Excursus 4 – The Nature of Nature: Enchantment, Disenchantment and Re-enchantment

What is a proper understanding of the non-human created world? What is the nature of nature? A Biblical ontology of nature is important in every period of history. The Apostle Paul in the beginning of his most theological treatise, addresses the phenomenon of humans worshipping the creation more than the Creator (Romans 1, esp. verse 25 “... [They] *exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator ...*”). Nature has been worshipped as a god/goddess and nature has been exploited and abused. I will discuss below what influential sociologists, scientists, religious and philosophical writers, politician and economists have believed about this question, and end this excursus by summarizing a Biblical ontology. What have been the moral sources of these views?

Sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) originated the use of the terms “enchantment” and “disenchantment” as applied to nature in our times, as the negative effects on the environment of the industrial revolution became more apparent.

In premodern times, nature carried a mystique, a mystery. Most people held it in awe, whether in fear or adoration. Weber lamented the “disenchantment of nature” in modernity. He wrote,

“The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world’.” (“Science as a Vocation” 1918).

He used the term “disenchantment” to describe the culture of rational and commercial calculation of extraction of resources from nature as mere stuff to be exploited. There was a devaluation of nature by secularized, bureaucratic, modern society, where scientific analysis and dissection became the focus, displacing awe and respect for Nature.

In the pre-modern period, traditional and folk religions generally drew on moral sources immanent to Nature (with a capital “N”). The basis of folk religion was the unseen world of gods, spirits and forces of personified Nature. Nature—or the gods emerging from Nature—is the primary domain for moral sources in folk religion. Traditional religionists generally believed the fundamental force in Nature was natural fertility. An animistic and/or pantheistic worldview was pervasive, and thus the cosmos was often divinized and feminized. In short, Nature was enchanted. Even in the modern West before the onset of the New Age movement, nature was often personified—“Mother Nature” and “Nature knows best.”

In modernity, and especially the European Enlightenment, “Nature” was disenchanting, reduced to a Newtonian machine—nature with a small “n.” In the rationalistic and scientific worldview, in which the cosmos is perceived to be a closed system of natural causes and effects; no supernatural intervention is given credence. This materialistic naturalism embraced a disenchanting nature as all there is. Darwinian natural selection and sociobiology (in which human social behavior and human nature understood as a consequence of adaptive mechanisms of biological evolution) become deterministic *forms without freedom*. These views reduced humans to the level of other biological life forms, as part of the system of nature.

Figure 7 below depicts the shift in moral sources that occurred in the modern era. I define “moral sources” here as: *the moral goods, or first principles, or spiritual powers, recognized as authoritative and/or empowering, to which persons or groups turn for guidance, meaning, legitimacy or empowerment*. All human societies, and each individual person, generally seek some higher source, or recourse—whether personal or impersonal, internal or external—to which they turn for meaning, guidance, comfort, moral justification, hope for fulfillment of aspirations, or empowerment for life decisions and for understanding the world. I depict five very broad traditions or episodes in Western history. **Note especially** the European Enlightenment’s shift from the God of the Bible to the alternative moral sources of disengaged reason, and movements in reaction (romanticism and postmodernism) to Nature (with a capital “N”) as a primary moral source.

THE MAJOR TRADITION OR MOVEMENT	Pre-modern: Pagan, Folk, Traditional (From "Time Immemorial", onward)	Classical Greek Heritage (5th cent. BC, onward)	Judeo-Christian (Abraham to the present)	European Enlightenment: Rationalism - free rational agency (18th cent.)	Modern & Postmodern: Romanticism, in reaction to rationalism; "New Age" mv't. (post - 1960s)
TRANSCENDENT EXTERNAL MORAL SOURCES	gods, Nature (capital "N") (enchanted),	The Good, or gods,	The God of Abraham, the Bible	-none-	Nature (capital "N") (re-enchanted)- mysticism, "Gaia"
IMMANENT INTERNAL MORAL SOURCES	Immanent spirits, natural forces	-none-	The Holy Spirit	Disengaged Reason, & nature (disenchanted, mechanistic)	The Voice Within human nature (the deep inner self)

**Figure 7 -
Moral Sources In Western History**

The modern Romantic movement (19th century) and the postmodern shift (1960s) have been in part a reaction to this modern determinism, and the perceived ecological crisis due to Western technological and consumerist exploitation of nature. With this has come a shift back toward a re-enchantment of nature, as "Nature" (with a capital "N") once again. Thus there is a return of pantheism, animism, goddess worship ("Gaia"), and various mysticisms often classed under the rubric of the New Age movement. Extreme environmentalism and radical feminism are associated with these New Age beliefs.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), British novelist, best known for his novel *Brave New World* and a wide-ranging output of essays, was a humanist, pacifist, and satirist, and he was latterly interested in spiritual subjects such as parapsychology and philosophical mysticism. He is also well known for advocating and taking psychedelic drugs. Huxley wrote,

"Modern man no longer regards Nature as being in any sense divine and feels perfectly free to behave towards her as an overwhelming conqueror and tyrant." (Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*).

Huxley, in his last novel, *Island* [wrote], "Elementary ecology leads straight to elementary Buddhism." By this, he was referring to a solution to the Western civilization's abuse of nature, which would be taken up in earnest in the Post-Christian postmodern shifts. As a solution to our environmental problems, these movements indicated the need to shift our culture to the alternative worldview of

Zen Buddhism, where both mankind and nature are of one "essence." We see here the beginning of a shift to a non-Christian religious ecology.

A popular movement that functions as a religious ecology is "Deep Ecology." Norwegian mountaineer and naturalist Arne Naess (1912-2009) coined the term in 1972; he is considered the father of the movement. Naess stated,

"Life is fundamentally one. ... The deep ecology movement is the ecology movement which questions deeper. ... The adjective 'deep' stresses that we ask why and how, where others do not." <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/deep-ecology-movement-arne-naess.htm>

Deep Ecology is correct to question deeply some the assumptions of modern Western culture. The philosophy provides a foundation for the post-Christian environmentalism, ecology and green movements and has fostered a new system of environmental ethics advocating wilderness preservation, human population control and simple living. But it is not informed by a Biblical ontology of nature, nor of human nature (the *Imago Dei*). Its strong emphasis on the oneness of humans with all nature, and the religious nature of the movement is apparent in the following quotes from Fritjof Capra.

Capra (b.1939), is an Austrian-born American physicist. He is a founding director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California, and is on the faculty of Schumacher College. Capra is the author of several books, including *The Tao of Physics* (1975), *The Turning Point* (1982), *Uncommon Wisdom* (1988), *The Web of Life* (1996), and *The Hidden Connections* (2002). He has been influential in seeking to merge physics with Eastern religious thought. Capra stated,

"Deep Ecology is rooted in a perception of reality that goes beyond the scientific framework to an intuitive awareness of the oneness of all life, the interdependence of its multiple manifestations and its cycles of change and transformation. When the concept of the human spirit is understood in this sense, its mode of consciousness in which the individual feels connected to the cosmos as a whole, it becomes clear that ecological awareness is truly spiritual. Indeed the idea of the individual being linked to the cosmos is expressed in the Latin root of the word religion, *religare* (to bind strongly), as well as the Sanskrit *yoga*, which means union.

"The basic pattern of life is a network. Whenever you see life, you see networks. The whole planet, what we can term 'Gaia' is a network of processes involving feedback tubes. And the world of bacteria is critical to the details of these feedback processes, because bacteria play a crucial role in the regulation of the whole Gaian system." (Capra, *The Web of Life*)

Paul R. Ehrlich (b.1932), another influential academic who affirms "Deep Ecology," is the Bing Professor of Population Studies in the department of Biological Sciences at Stanford University and president of Stanford's Center for Conservation Biology, a prominent ecologist and demographer. Ehrlich is best known for his dire warnings about population growth and limited resources. Ehrlich became well-

known after publication of his controversial 1968 book *The Population Bomb*. Ehrlich stated,

“The main hope for changing humanity’s present course may lie ... in the development of a world view drawn partly from ecological principles - in the so-called deep ecology movement. The term ‘deep ecology’ was coined in 1972 by Arne Naess to contrast with the fight against pollution and resource depletion in developed countries, which he called ‘shallow ecology’. The deep ecology movement thinks today’s human thought patterns and social organization are inadequate to deal with the population-resource-environmental crisis – a view with which I tend to agree. I am convinced that such a quasi-religious movement, one concerned with the need to change the values that now govern much of human activity, is essential to the persistence of our civilization.” (Ehrlich, *The Machinery of Nature*) See <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/deep-ecology-movement-arne-naess.htm> and <http://www.heureka.clara.net/gaia/deep-eco.htm>

An example of an influential author and television series that popularized an atheistic naturalistic evolutionary religious view of the universe was *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage* is a thirteen-part television series written and presented by Carl Sagan (1934-1996).

“The series was first broadcast by the Public Broadcasting Service in 1980 and was the most widely watched series in the history of American public television until *The Civil War* (1990). As of 2009, it was still the most widely watched PBS series in the world. It won an Emmy and a Peabody Award and has since been broadcast in more than 60 countries and seen by over 500 million people. A book was also published to accompany the series.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmos:_A_Personal_Voyage

Sagan’s trademark phrase was “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” This is the opening line in his book (*Cosmos*, 1980). Note how Sagan capitalizes the word “Cosmos” just like religious believers capitalize the word “God.” This is in a liturgical form. Early Christians sang the *Gloria Patri*: “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and every shall be, world without end. Amen.” [probably based on “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8 ESV)]. For Sagan, the cosmos was god. He mystified the cosmos and the awe and worship that the only the Creator deserves, he gave to the cosmos. This is also a personal tragedy because Sagan was Jewish; he should have known better from his own heritage.

Modern Liberalism: Left and Right Both Hold Unsustainable Views of Nature - In late modernity, Western societies have fewer beliefs, ideals and commitments held in common; as a consequence people and groups look increasingly to the state as an arbiter to enforce their values over opposing groups.

This increased politicization of everything is certainly true about environmental issues, such as “greenhouse gases,” “global warming”, and “climate change.” What is our political culture’s view of nature?

I use the term “liberalism” here to refer, generally, to Western-style constitutional democracy and free-market economics (as opposed totalitarianism, monarchy, and theocracy). The terms “liberal” and “conservative” in their political sense did not mean in early modernity what they mean today as describing the American Democratic and Republican parties, respectively. Early modern liberalism (or “classical liberalism”) was more akin to today’s conservative Republican views of preference for a *laissez-faire* market and limited government, as well as “family values,”— the “conservatives” of today. Reform liberalism is more akin to the Democratic party’s preference for more government regulation in the market economy and a more interventionist role for government in producing equality in society, and free individual self-expression and “liberated” sexual ethics— the “liberals” of today. But in the broad sense used here, both are two wings of liberalism. Both champion individual rights and liberty, but emphasize different aspects of it.

But, as Patrick J. Deneen, Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, argues— both our liberal and conservative wings of political thought are “constituted by a pair of deeper anthropological assumptions that give liberal institutions a particular orientation and cast: 1) individualism and a voluntarist conception of choice [the autonomous self], and 2) **human separation from and opposition to nature**” (Deneen 2012: 26) (**bolding mine**). Deneen offers a provocative analysis of liberalism that challenges both “left” and “right.” I will summarize his argument in the four paragraphs that follow.

In pre-modern political thought (Aristotelian and medieval), human nature was understood to part of a comprehensive natural order. Humans could freely act against their own nature and the natural order, but such actions deformed them and harmed them and the natural world. Natural law was thought to place limits on human beings. Liberal political philosophy (beginning with the Renaissance and advanced by Hobbes and Locke) rejected these forms of limitation on humans. The “first wave” of this modern thinking insisted that man should seek control and mastery over nature (Francis Bacon), employing natural science and the new economic thinking (market-based free enterprise). The “second wave” replaced the belief in a fixed human nature with a belief in human “plasticity,” with a seemingly limitless capacity for progress and transformation (hence “progressive” liberalism).

The “first wave” (early modern liberalism) held that human nature was unchangeable. The “second wave” (ranging from Rousseau to Marx, from Mill to Dewey, and from Richard Rorty to contemporary “transhumanists”) criticized this view of human nature, rejecting the notion that human nature is in any way fixed (Deneen 2012:28). The first wave (“conservatives”) support nearly any utilitarian use of nature for economics, but oppose most forms of biotechnological enhancement of humans. The second wave (“liberals”) “... increasingly approve of nearly any technical means of liberating man from the biological imperatives of our own bodies. Thus utilitarianism is applied by biotechnology in the conquest of human nature.

However, Deneen contends, both these forms of liberalism presuppose individualism, believing the end and goal is to maximize the scope of human autonomous self, and free choice— conservatives through harnessing and controlling nature for greater economic freedom and wealth, and liberals through liberation from traditional families and communities (“progressive “marriage and sexual ethics, abortion), weakening the constitutive social and primary group connections.

Today’s political debates are largely between liberals, first and second wave, “neither of whom confront the fundamentally alternative understanding of human nature and the human relationship to nature that pre-liberal tradition defended” (2012:28). Deneen states,

“Contemporary ‘conservatism’ does not offer an answer to liberalism, because it itself is a species of liberalism. While the elders on the political right continue to rail against ‘environmentalists,’ they fail to detect how deeply conservative (conservationist) is the impulse among the young who see clearly the limits of the consumptive economy and the ravages it bequeaths to their generation. What these elders have generally lacked is recognition that one cannot revise one of liberalism’s main commitments, today characterized as ‘progressivism,’ while ignoring the other, particularly economic liberalism. A different paradigm is needed, ...” (2012: 30).

Examples of sloganized views of the Left are “Pro-choice” and “reproductive freedom,” and “civil liberties.” Those of the Right are free enterprise and freedom from government intervention. Both sides emphasize freedom of the individual; sometimes *freedom to* (do what you want); sometimes *freedom from* outside control. Neither side has an adequate view of the place of humans within nature. They tend to hold to *freedom without form*, (which inevitably leads to *forms without freedom*). The Biblical view is that freedom for the creatures of God is *freedom within form*, the forms God designed (truth sets free, see John 8:32). See **Figure 1** above for a depiction of the interdependent symbiotic ecology in creation design.

Deneen contends that such liberalism, on both sides, is unsustainable. He predicts that without a new paradigm, we will “suffer by default an oscillation between growing anarchy and likely martial imposition of order by an increasingly desperate state” ... and we will “back slowly but inexorably into a future in which extreme license invites extreme oppression.” (2012:31). In sum, Deneen see the political Right as opposing nature by a greedy, utilitarian, disrespectful exploitation (continued abuse of the “dominion mandate”), and the Left as opposing nature by an ontological distortion (mystifying it, worshipping it, and treating humans as just another part of it on the level of other animals (with no fixed *Imago Dei* nature).

Deneen is right about both sides deficient view of nature, and he could be right about liberalism’s trajectory toward final collapse. However, I must counter that (speaking to Americans here) the resources in our political culture for an ordered liberty, for respect for humans as the *Imago Dei*, and responsible creation care that are not exhausted or subsumed by liberalism. We have deeper wells our

heritage. *Freedom within form* is enshrined in our U.S. Constitution, expressed so succinctly in one of America's great anthems, which is a prayer,

“... God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!”
(*America the Beautiful*, Katharine Lee Bates)

“Liberty within law”— God's moral law, and as it is expressed in natural law — are truths that can be retrieved within the American heritage, without appealing directly to the Bible. So there may be ground for more optimism for a return to balanced creation care in the United States, even from the side of government and public policy, than Deneen seems to allow for. This, though, will require informed moral leadership (requiring spiritual revival and reformation).

There are a spectrum of views and practices today about nature that are extreme and out of order, from a Biblical perspective. **Figure 8** below depicts a continuum by which to plot these views.

Extremes and Distortions on the Right - Often these positions are taken by the contemporary political “right,” so the analogy to the political right is suggestive, but by “right” here I mean primarily the rightward positions on the **Figure 8** continuum. On this side are beliefs and practices that have instrumentalized nature as mere raw material to be commodified, exploited for human consumption and disposal. The elements and creatures of nature have no intrinsic value, but only have value if useful for humans. Nature is disenchanted in the sense that its elements deserve no awe or respect as gifts from God, mysteriously and wondrously made. It is but dead matter and stuff to be used and disposed of.

Extremes and Distortions on the Left - Often these positions are taken by the contemporary political “left,” so the analogy to the political left is suggestive, but by “left” here I mean primarily the leftward positions on the on the **Figure 8** continuum. On this side are beliefs and practices that invest nature with divinity. Many of these movements began as a reaction to, and helpful corrective to the abuses on the right. But to many in the post-Christian, postmodern West, environmentalism has become, functionally, a religion. It has filled the vacuum opened up by receding Christianity.

The dominant views of God in this “religion” are either *atheism* (a secular naturalist environmentalism, usually embracing Darwinian evolution as explaining origins), or *pantheism* (the belief that God is everything), or *panentheism* (the belief that God indwells everything as the soul does the body), or *animism* and *spiritism* (every material thing is indwelt by a spirit). If there is no Infinite-Personal Creator distinct from the universe, who created the universe out of nothing (John 1:1-3), then the universe, or the cosmos, effectively takes the place of God; it turns out to be the Supreme Being.

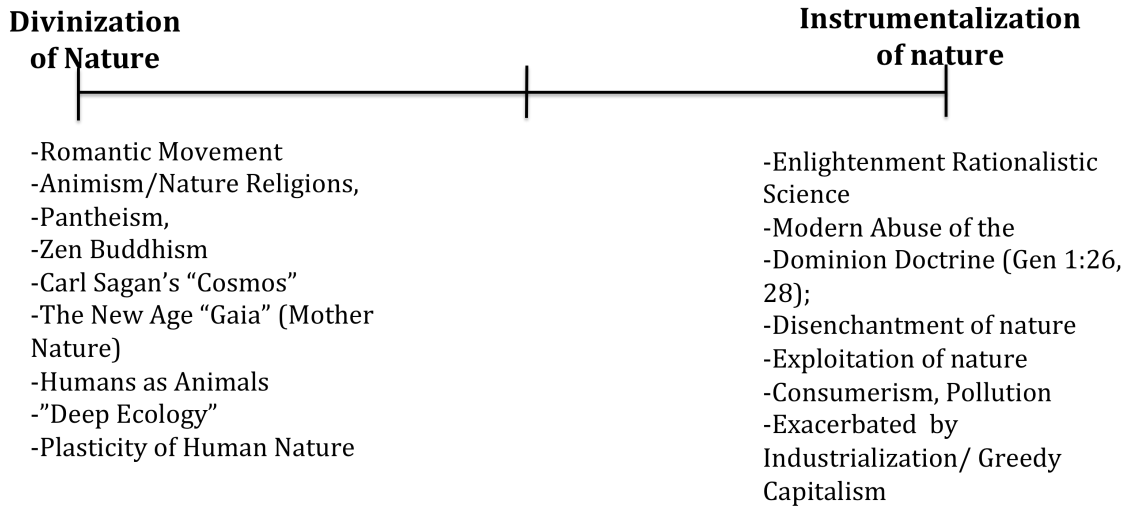


Figure 8 - Views of the Ontology of Nature: A Continuum

For resources that critique radical environmentalism, with several accessible video clips, see <http://www.resistingthegreendragon.com/>.

In sum, both the “enchantment” of Nature (capital “N”), the “disenchantment” of nature, and the re-enchantment of Nature (capital “N”) are not Biblical views. A Biblical ontology of nature must comprise: 1) an accurate view of the transcendent Creator (who created all things out of nothing- John 1:1-3; Hebrews 11:3); 2) what are the constitutive elements of nature; 3) a hierarchical ordering of those entities according to God-given being, value and purpose. Among many other Scripture passages, Psalm 8 is representative in its emphasis on the transcendence of God over all He has created, refuting pantheism and panentheism. Psalm 8 is also clearly anthropocentric, under God, affirming humans as the *Imago Dei*, thus correcting views that equate humans with “other animals.” Other sentient life is below humans in the hierarchy, non-sentient life below sentient life and inanimate matter below non-sentient life. This corrects many of the notions of “Deep Ecology.” Though a rough representation, a true-to-what-is view (“A Biblical Ontology”) of man-within-nature is closer to the center of these extremes depicted in **Figure 8**.

Chapter 4- Where the Wild Things Are

In this chapter Bauckham addresses the charge often leveled against the Bible— that it promotes a negative view of the wilderness. All Bible readers know that the “wilderness wanderings” of the people of Israel for forty years was a time of testing and trial and sorrow. In our contemporary times in the West, especially since the “Back to Nature” movements of the 1960s and the “green” environmentalist

movements, many revere the wilderness, and seek to preserve it in its pristine condition, the “hands off” and “let it be” position on **Figure 3** above (think: Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and the “Sierra Club” - <http://www.sierraclub.org/>). Bauckham quotes what he calls the “classic work” by Roderick F. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (2001), where Nash claims that the Old Testament portrays wilderness as a “ ‘cursed land,’ ‘the environment of evil,’ and ‘a kind of hell.’ “ Speaking of the American Puritans, Nash states “ ‘their Bible contained all they needed to know in order to hate the wilderness.’ ” (p. 103)

Is this truly the Bible’s view of the wilderness *per se*? This of course depends on the definition of “wilderness,” and from what perspective one views the wilderness. Bauckham begins by assessing whether or not the Garden of Eden may be considered “wilderness.”

A. The Garden of Eden— Orchard or Forest?

The description of the primeval Garden is in Genesis 2:8-15. What sort of place was the Garden of Eden? “Eden” in Hebrew means “bliss” or “delight.” We think today of gardens as intentionally planted by humans; but this was a Garden planted by God. Was it more like an orchard or a forest? Perhaps it was both. Summarizing Bauckham:

1. *Eden was a Beautiful Orchard* - Gen. 2:9 (“every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food”) seems to indicate the garden was an orchard. The phrase indicates that the trees and their fruit were aesthetically beautiful (pleasant to sight) but also utilitarian (for food). The lover’s description of his bride as a “garden” and an “orchard” that was a place of fine fragrance, luxury and pleasure emphasizes the aesthetic aspect (Song of Solomon 4:12-15). The Hebrew word translated “orchard” is “*pardes*” from which the Greek, Latin and English variants “*paradeisos*” “*paradisio*,” “paradise,” are derived. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible uses “*paradeisos*” to translate the “Garden of Eden.” (p. 104)
2. *Eden was a Wild Forest* - Ezekiel tells a parable in which the empire of Assyria is represented as the tallest tree in the world (think of the giant sequoias in California). In the parable he states that the cedars and fir trees in the Garden of God could not rival it (Ezekiel 31:8-9). This sounds like a wild pristine forest of magnificent trees. From this description, Eden sounds like it was the “original, glorious heart of wild nature.” So Psalm 104:16 can say God Himself planted the cedars of Lebanon. (p.105) This would presumably include mountains, lakes, rivers, jungles, coastlines, beaches and the rest of the features of the terrain we today consider pristine wilderness.
3. *Adam and the Garden are Made for Each Other* – “The garden is there to delight and nourish Adam, and he is there to cultivate and care for it. “ (p. 106). “Adam is at home in the orchard-forest, and his tending of the fruit trees do not make it less wild or natural” (p. 106)

4. *This is a Condition of Nature and Culture in Harmony* - God and all his creatures are in harmony, as God takes his daily walk in the Garden (Genesis 3: 8).
5. *The Fall Breached the Harmony of Nature and Human Culture* - Henceforth wild nature and human culture would never be the same. Their story since has been a tangled relationship, of sometimes a degree of harmony and sometimes various degrees of conflict and abuse.
6. *How Do Humans Both Cultivate, Find Sustenance In, and Protect Nature?* – Before the Fall Adam was both “*to cultivate and to care for it*” and there was no problem (Gen. 2:15). Since the Fall, humans are challenged with the problem of how to “protect nature from our work, so as to keep from fouling the source of our own life. Through most of human civilization, wild nature was always there ready to reclaim human territory for itself at the slightest opportunity. It was civilization that seemed fragile, not wild nature. Now it is the opposite.”

Bjorker comment: *For encroaching wild nature*, think: drought, dust storms, insect plagues, bubonic plagues, earthquakes, floods, hurricane and tsunami destruction, and ghost towns. For an imaginative scenario of such possible encroachment, see the 2007 movie, “I Am Legend,” based on the 1954 novel by Richard Matheson by the same title, is set in a depopulated Manhattan, due to an out-of-control virus-based vaccine. Herds of deer and other wild animals and plants were moving into and taking up habitat in what was mid-town Manhattan. Or think of the effects on New Orleans of the monster Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Whole parishes of the city were under water and have never recovered. Some of those areas may be left to return to wild nature.

For encroaching civilization, think: urbanization, air and water pollution, deforestation, strip mining, and improper agricultural practices or overgrazing that cause land degradation and desertification, and endangered species. *Either way— encroaching wilderness or encroaching civilization—* there is disruption of the harmony between nature and culture.

B. Wild Nature in the Bible

Until this point in the chapter, Bauckham used the terms “wild nature” and “wilderness” synonymously, but usually used the term “wild nature” because the term “wilderness” is ambiguous. He now defines the terms. In modern English ecological discussion, “wilderness” refers to the entire natural environment that is “not manipulated or managed by humans.” But English translations of the Bible use the term “wilderness” to translate the Hebrew *midbar* and Greek *eremos*, which refer to arid, or semi-arid, barren regions, with little vegetation or water, that is unsuitable for farming or even for grazing livestock. It is desert or “wasteland”, where humans can scarcely survive, say nothing about practicing agriculture. These

two different meanings should not be confused. Thus, rather than to speak of the “wilderness wanderings” of the “children of Israel,” it is more accurate to talk of their “wasteland wanderings.” They wandered in that “great and terrible ‘wilderness,’ an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions” (Deut. 8:15). (p. 109).

These differences in meanings of the terms clears up the misunderstanding behind the charges (mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) that the Bible has a negative view of the “wilderness.”

1. *Forests are Also Wilderness* - However, this “wasteland” sense of the word is not the only part of the Biblical world that we would term “wilderness” in our modern sense of the word. There are also “forests” spoken of in Scripture, where the only negative thing mentioned about them is that dangerous wild animals live there.
2. *Places Not Fit for Human Habitation May be Well-Suited for Non-Human Creatures* - In the prophets there is a recurrent scene in which a city that comes under the judgment of God, is conquered and razed to the ground, becomes a desolate and uninhabitable place. See the description of Babylon, after judgment, becoming a desolate and wild place, a wilderness not good enough even for grazing sheep, but belongs only the wild creatures that frequent such places—wildcats, owls, ostriches, hyenas, jackals (Isa. 13:20-22a). Or there is the description of Edom, which carries Isaiah’s fullest list of desert creatures— all those above, including hawks, ravens, “Lilith” [perhaps a bird, later applied to a demon] and owls (Isa. 34:11a and 13-15).
3. *Wild Creatures Have an “Otherness” Which Has Positive Value in God’s World* - What is striking about these lists in Isaiah is that— though at least five of the birds listed appear in the list of twenty-one unclean birds (because they are scavengers or predators) in the Torah (Lev. 11:13-19; Deut.14:12-18)— they do not draw any from this legally unclean list. Yet, these species are known to the prophet and carefully distinguished by different names. (p. 113) Bauckham interprets this as conveying that these creatures possess an “otherness, a quality easily perceived negatively, but in fact has its own positive value.” (p. 113)
4. *The Hebrew Bible Does Not Suppose that All Parts of the World Are Intended for Human Use or Habitation* - From a human point of view, these desert habitats are viewed negatively, but this merely conveys that these non-human habitats are habitats for other creatures, whom God has made for them. These habitats and the creatures that inhabit them are made for each other.
5. *Despite the Charges Leveled Against the Bible, It is Closer to Our Contemporary Appreciation of Wild Nature as “Wilderness” in its Pristine, Unspoiled “Otherness” Than Most Might Think* - The areas of wild nature described in the panoramas of Psalm 104 and Job 38-39 are not viewed negatively, but as part of the variety of habitats God created, and so to be valued, appreciated and conserved.

C. Return to Ecotopia (1) Forests

1. *Prophetic Visions of Nature's Renewal* - The prophets also portray visions of salvation, on the far side of judgment, that depict "utopias" projecting ideal conditions for human flourishing and ideal relationships between humans and other creatures, both flora and fauna. Bauckham calls these "ecotopias," a term he takes from Bill Devall. (p. 115)
2. *The Prophetic Vision is Both Eschatological and Protological* – They project forward to the future renewal of the whole creation, but also evoke the situation prior to the expulsion from Eden and the historical disruptions between humans and nature.
3. *Back to the Garden* - Isaiah's oracle of restoration in his chapter 32 contains an ascending scale of renewal: "the wilderness becomes a fruitful field ("carmel" in Hebrew, meaning an "orchard") and the fruitful field will be deemed a forest (Isa. 32:14-15). The fruit orchard will be so flourishing that it will be considered a "forest." Surely, we are back in the "orchard-forest" of Eden! (p. 116).
Comment by Bjoraker: Those who came of age in the 1960s, some of whom have been called "the Woodstock Generation," will likely recall the song "Woodstock" (Crosby, Stills & Nash, 1969), whose refrain lyrics are— "We are stardust, we are golden, we are billion year old carbon. And we got to get ourselves back to the Garden." The words express the sentiments, ideals and aspirations of many in the "Back-to-nature" movements, and the new environmentalism that began then. But in reality it expresses the longings we all have as fallen humans for a return to Eden; as 17th century English poet John Milton penned it in his epic poetry —"Paradise Lost," and "Paradise Regained."
4. *The Restoration Will Mean, According to Isaiah 32, a Restoration of Shalom and Harmony Between Humanity and the Natural World.* Note 32:17 ("shalom"), and how wild animals will not be a threat to domestic animals any more.

D. Return to Ecotopia (2) Wild Animals

1. *Primeval History (Genesis 1-11) shows the development of violence in the world after the Fall.* Originally, humans and all animals were herbivores (Gen. 1:29-30 and 9:3), but this did not preclude violence, as the Cain and Able story shows (Gen. 4). The earth became filled with violence before the great Flood (Gen 6:11-13). The Flood was not really a solution to this problem; violence was too endemic in the lives of humans and animals. The Flood was designed to regulate the violence not to eradicate it. The earth would need not just new generations, but re-generation.
2. *After the Flood, Human Dominion Over Animals was Given as a Form of Protection of Humans from Dangerous Animals* (Gen 9:2 "the dread of you shall be on every animal").

3. *After the Flood Humans Were Hence Allowed to Kill and Eat Animals, with the Proviso that the Sacredness of Life Should be Acknowledged by Abstaining from Eating Blood* (Gen. 9:3-4). Humans now become carnivores.
4. *In Ezekiel's Vision of Ecotopia, Humans are Assured They Will No Longer Need to Suffer the Predation of Wild Animals* (Ezekiel 34:28). People can live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely (34:25). The ideal is for people to inhabit the forests again, as Adam did in Eden.
5. *The Isaianic Ecotopia* - Most glorious is Isaiah's vision of shalom the Messianic Kingdom. Note how predators and prey are paired,

"The wolf shall live with the lamb,
 The leopard shall lie down with the kid,
 The calf and lion and fatling together,
 And a little child shall lead them.
 The cow and bear shall graze, ...
 The lion shall eat straw like an ox.
 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
 And the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
 They will not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.
 (Isaiah 11:6-9)

What is depicted is the reconciliation of the human world with wild nature. There is healing of the disruptions created by the Fall. Carnivorous animals have become herbivores; this apparently includes humans. All violence is abolished. The focus on violence and its suppression by shalom, is a thematic link back to Genesis 1-11.

6. *The Abuses of Human Dominion (Gen. 1:26-28) shall be healed.* The image produced with "a little child shall lead them" (Isa. 11:6). A little child can lead a flock of sheep because no force or violence is required. He caringly leads the flock to good pasture and beside still waters. What the original dominion was meant to be—caring responsibility and management, rather than as exploitation— is now fulfilled.
7. The coming transformation of the world will be a new creative act of God, comparable only with the original creation; it will be a new future for the whole of creation, not just for humans.

E. Jesus in Ecotopia

Bauckham interprets Jesus' temptation in the Judean desert ("the wilderness") as "Jesus in Ecotopia." He acknowledges the main theme arising from Jesus "wilderness" temptation is that it evokes the wilderness wandering of Israel, where they were tested—Jesus relives the experience and overcomes, where Israel succumbed. But Bauckham sees Isaiah 11 as prominent in the background of the encounters of Jesus in the desert in Mark 1:13. (p. 126-127)

1. *Jesus “Was with the Wild Animals” (Mark 1:13)* - Why must Jesus go to the wilderness? The wilderness is the non-human sphere, the habitat of the non-human creatures of God. It is there that Jesus will meet three categories of non-human beings— Satan, the angels, and the wild animals. The order of the three beings he encounters is not accidental. Satan is the natural enemy of the righteous person and can only be resisted. The angels are the natural friends of the righteous person; the minister to Jesus. The wild animals are in the middle, and have been, since the Fall, a threat or danger to humans, if they are in the habitat that belongs to them. If Jesus is to consummate the Messianic Kingdom, as prophesied in Isaiah 11, might we not his relationship to the wild animals to be appropriate to that Kingdom, the return to Eden we find in the Isaiah’s Ecotopia? The expression “to be with someone” in Mark’s usage and elsewhere. Genesis describes the animals in the ark as those who were “with Noah” (Gen. 7:23; 8:1 and 17).
2. *Jesus Demonstrates an Anticipatory Sign of the Coming Shalom Between Humans and Wild Nature in the Consummated Kingdom.* The ideal relationship between Jesus, the “Second Adam” and the wild animals is not one of abusive domination or of recruiting them to human use, but simply being “with them.” The Messianic King here demonstrates the reconciled and peaceable companionship relationship between humans and animals when the Kingdom comes in full.
3. *As Those Who Anticipate the Coming Kingdom, We Should also Respect Wild Animals and Respect their Habitat.* Jesus does not try to bring the wild animals into human habitat, but lets them be in peace in their own habitat. He affirms them as creatures that share the world with humans in the community of God’s creation.

E. The Value of Otherness

1. *Adam Gives Names to All the Animals; Naming is Not About Power or Domination but About Recognition.* The sequence of creation events is different in Genesis 2:18-24 (where man is first created, then the animals, and finally the woman) than the sequence in Genesis 1 (where the animals are created before the simultaneous creation of human couple). Bauckham’s contends that were we were to take the sequence in Genesis 2 literally, it might appear the animals were a mistake, because they turned out to not be able to be the “suitable helpers” that Adam needed, so God created woman to be that “suitable helper” (Gen. 2:18). Bauckham rejects the interpretation that the animals are introduced only to make the point that only a human of the opposite sex could meet the need of the single human.
Bjoraker’s comment: Of course God did not make a mistake supposing the animals could meet Adam’s need for completion, but I think there is most probably a pedagogical purpose to the sequence here— to emphasize that animals are not human, and so cannot meet that deep

human need for intimacy, companionship and relational completion. In Bauckham's terms, the essential "otherness" of the animals needs to be recognized. This distinction is important in our contemporary world, where the lines are blurred and increasingly animals are treated like people and people like animals.

2. *Naming is Fundamentally About Recognition.* Naming has often been here interpreted as expressing Adam's power over the animals. If taken this way, then we would have to Adam's naming even this way (Gen. 2:23 and 3:20). Adam distinguishes the similarities and differences between the animals, by virtue of their creation by God, and so acknowledges each species' place in the world. "We might say Adam is the first naturalist, classifying species and giving them names" (p. 130). Quoting Pinches, Bauckham suggests, "When we name and study species, we continue Adam's work" (p. 130). So we can think of Adam as the first zoologist and botanist. One thinks of William Carey, "the father of modern missions," and his work in botany as a missionary in India. When Eve is created, Adam recognizes her as "*bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*" (2:23), and hence of a different order than the animals.
3. *Otherness is not the same as alienation, but should produce humility and awe.* Alienation is a result of Fall. But the human recognition and delight in the otherness of other creatures is a sign that these creatures have value in themselves. They are a reality other than human, we see something other than a reflection of ourselves; that these creatures are not made in the Image of Man. The effect of true, pristine wilderness has on us "depends on it being a world to which we do not belong, and the good it does us depends, paradoxically, on the inherent value we recognize it to have entirely independently of us." (p. 131). Modern urban life can so isolate city-dwellers from nature that their whole existence can seem to be a humanized creation. Noting one of the dangers to where modern bioengineering may be taking us, Bauckham quotes McKibben, "the monster of our own egos is going to be reflected in everything around us." ... "In a world where nothing is untouched by human interference and modification, we shall see only ourselves in everything and feel only pride or disgust, never humility or awe." (p. 131).
Bjoraker comment: "National Geographic" magazine published an article on "light pollution" in modern cities, pointing out that most city skies after dark have become virtually empty of stars. "Ill-designed lighting washes out the darkness of night and radically alters the light levels—and light rhythms—to which many forms of life, including ourselves, have adapted. Wherever human light spills into the natural world, some aspect of life—migration, reproduction, feeding—is affected." (Klinkenborg, "Light Pollution").

F. Our Family and Other Animals

1. *The Bible Makes Distinctions Between Wild Animals (“chai-yah”) and Domestic Animals (“behemah”, often translated “cattle”).* The catalogs of kinds of creatures listed with reference to creation, The Flood and the Noahic covenant suggest distinctions that belong to the Creator’s intent. Domestic animals are virtually seen a member of the extended human household, as seen most clearly in the Sabbath Commandment: ‘you shall not do any work- you, or your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or nay of your livestock (“behemah”), or the resident alien in your towns” (Duet. 5:14; Exodus 20:10).
Bjoraker comment: This is a relevant issue today, and controversial, in that some animal rights groups are challenging the justification for humans to have domestic animals, claiming it is a kind of “enslavement.” Bauckham cites feminist scholar Rosemary Radford Ruether, who contends that ““organized warfare, domination of women, of conquered people and of animals developed concurrently, and encouraged the equation of all three dominated groups (women, conquered people and animals) as symbolically the same”” (p. 134, and fn 79 p. 198-199)
2. *However and Whenever in History the Domestication Process Happened, Domestic Animals Today are Physically and Mentally Adapted to Living in Symbiosis with Humans.* Dogs, though descended from wolves, are not wolves and cannot revert to being wolves. Domestication should be seen as a process of co-evolution, in which humans and animals developed relationships of mutual advantage. Deliberate strategy came only in later history with breeding and selective breeding to produce the characteristics people wanted.
3. *The Bible Requires Compassionate Treatment for All Creatures, Humans as Well as Animals.* Proverbs 12:10 is instructive,

“The righteous person knows (*yada*) the *nephesh* of their domestic animal,
but the compassion (*rahamim*) of the wicked person is cruel.”
(Bauckham’s translation)

The occurrence of the same phrase in Exodus 23:9 illuminates the proverb,

“You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know (*yada*) the heart (*nephesh*) of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

The people were told that they can and should empathize with an alien. So interpreting the proverb we might say, “The righteous person is attentive to the feelings of their animal.” Animals are brought within the sphere of human ethics. This would refer to farmers who know their animals well enough to know when they need to rest or drink. Traditional

farmers, unlike modern factory farmers, could do this, as could Balaam who rode the same donkey for years. Such knowledge is available only through compassion. “Today some farmers abuse chickens and livestock by reducing them to efficient machines and consider it a mercy to feed them the best grain to increase their production and or fatten them for market” (quoting Waltke) (p. 139). Factory farming today applies the methods of mass production to animal farming, without regard for the sentient nature of animals, who feel pain. This is the “cruel compassion of the wicked” (Prov. 12:10b). What the wicked consider compassion is no better than cruelty.

Below in **Figure 9** is depicted a Biblical God-ordained hierarchy of beings and elements or entities in creation.

I have depicted the order in rows. Had I depicted the order in concentric circles, Creator God would be at the center, so we appropriately have a *theocentric* universe. Next would be humans, just under God (except for a time fallen man is lower than some angels, according to Psalm 8, but retains his higher ontological status as the *Imago Dei*). Thus, rightly implemented under God, *anthropocentrism* is a correct order of priority and orientation (the “Deep Ecology” movement rejects anthropocentrism). The next circle would be sentient life, then non-sentient life, and finally, in the outer circle- inanimate matter.

The Triune Creator God; the Incarnate Messiah

Orders and Ranks of of Angelic Beings (Archangels, “thrones, dominions, principalities, powers.”)

Humans (in the Image of God) (In fallen state, lower in rank, ontologically higher — Psalm 8)

Orders of Animals (Primates to Worms)

Orders of Plants (Trees to moss and bacteria)

Chemical matter (rocks, minerals, etc.)

Figure 9– Ordained Hierarchy of Created Beings

C. S. Lewis, in his *“A Preface to Paradise Lost”* affirms an authoritative cosmic order in creation and asserts that freedom for the orders of creation exists for each when they abide within their order in the hierarchy. What he calls the “hierarchical conception” he describes thus,

“According to this conception degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors. When it fails in either part of this twofold task we have disease or monstrosity in the scheme of things until the peccant being is either destroyed or corrected. One or the

other it will certainly be; for by stepping out of its place in the system (whether it step up like a rebellious angel or down like a uxorious husband) it has made the very nature of things its enemy. It cannot succeed.” (Lewis, 73-74).

He defines two ways in which this order can be destroyed, “... (1) By ruling or obeying natural equals, that is by Tyranny or Servility. (2) By failing to obey a natural superior or to rule a natural inferior—that is by Rebellion or Remissness.” (Lewis, 76).

Accordingly, any kind of monism (all is one), and any kind of “biospherical egalitarianism” (a term from “Deep Ecology”) is not true to God’s design in creation.

Bjoraker’s Excursus 5- Animal Rights Movements

Bauckham’s assessment above, based on Proverbs 12:10 is surely correct. Cruelty to animals is wrong. Factory farming today that keeps animals in cruel and unnatural conditions and that uses chemicals and hormones to exploit maximize yields, is an abuse of God’s creatures.

But in reaction to this abuse, contemporary animal rights activists, operating out of a non- biblical worldview and philosophy, have swung to extreme positions and practices. Due to this, Bauckham’s subtitle for this section, “Our Family and Other Animals” makes me uneasy. Probably the largest animal rights group (which boasts the support of high-profile figures like former Beatle Paul McCartney and Hollywood figures like Oliver Stone and Alec Baldwin) is “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals” (PETA): <http://www.peta.org/>

From a Biblical perspective, we should acknowledge the contributions and changes they have catalyzed in society through drawing attention to animal cruelty and working for legislation to prevent such cruelty, we must also be critical of many of their views. They strongly advocate vegetarianism as the only ethical approach to eating, and are against the use of leather or wearing anything that comes from animals, oppose any scientific experiments using animals, oppose sport fishing, and oppose caging birds as pets.

One ad on their web site compares graphic images of people being viciously attacked, with blood-letting and screaming, with a fish lying on a cutting board, ready to be cleaned and readied for frying. A direct comparison is made, with the concluding phrase, “Some screams are silent” (meaning the fish’s) (<http://features.peta.org/silentscream/>)

Much more extreme is the radical “Animal Liberation Front” (ALF): <http://www.animalliberationfront.com/>. Here is a brief look at part of their “Credo”:

“The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) carries out direct action against animal abuse in the form of rescuing animals and causing financial loss to animal exploiters, usually through the damage and destruction of property. ...

Because ALF actions may be against the law, activists work anonymously, either in small groups or individually, and do not have any centralized organization or coordination.

The ALF consists of small autonomous groups of people all over the world who carry out direct action according to the ALF guidelines. *Any group of people who are vegetarians or vegans and who carry out actions according to ALF guidelines have the right to regard themselves as part of the ALF.*"

And then their mission statement:

"The ALF Mission Statement:
To effectively allocate resources (time and money) to end the "property" status of nonhuman animals."

This group clearly makes no distinction between "human animals" and "nonhuman animals." One of the statements on their site pointed out how inconsistent and incredulous it is for those who are "pro-life" (oppose abortions of human babies) to at the same time eat animals. One writer on the AFL web site stated that a human fetus is not "sentient" until several months into a pregnancy; therefore abortion was permissible until a late stage.

One of their slogans for action on a video, available on the website, calls people to come to the aid of "our brother and sister animals ... until every cage is empty." On a current show of KCET's "SoCal Connected" one of these activists compared the violent intent of some of their group to the necessary violence of the abolitionists of 19th century America, against slavery, claiming it may be necessary to correct the horrible animal rights abuse, just as it was necessary for the cause of abolishing slavery. ("Testing the Limits", 2011)

Enter the phenomenon of "eco-terrorism." Activists have regularly harassed and demonstrated against UCLA scientists who practice bio-medical testing on animals to save lives. Professor J. David Jentsch organized a campus rally April 22, 2009 of those who believe biomedical testing on animals saves human lives. His car was set on fire March 7, 2009 by opponents of the experiments. One of the activists screamed that he was "murdering primates." See:

<http://battlefieldamerica.wordpress.com/category/eco-terrorists/> and

<http://battlefieldamerica.wordpress.com/2010/11/24/eco-terrorists-charged-with-violence-against-ucla-researchers/>

The philosophy undergirding these groups is similar to that in Indian Jainism—non-violence toward all living beings— with the one exception being the despicable human animal. This is a clear symptom of a post-Christian Western culture which has completely lost the distinction between people and animals; one that treats animals like people and people like animals. In this post-Christian worldview, we owe humane treatment to animals. But if humans are no different than animals, then "humane treatment" means nothing different than "animal

treatment.” Thus humane treatment of animals equates with beastly treatment of humans. Most radical environmentalists today are strong advocates of population control, after all are not humans the most troublesome and destructive of animals?

We must be aware that most radical environmentalists are strong advocates of population control. The clear and present danger is that, with the loss of a biblical ontology of the essential difference between humans (bearing the *Imago Dei*), and animals, that violent and unethical means to reduce human population (abortion, sterilization, infanticide), already practiced, will increase in acceptability. These could pave the way for much worse atrocities to limit human population, in the name of ecologically saving the planet. With the biological technology we now possess (the human genome map, cloning, stem cells, bionics)—it is truly frightening.

Chapter 5- From Alpha to Omega

A. The Biblical Metanarrative

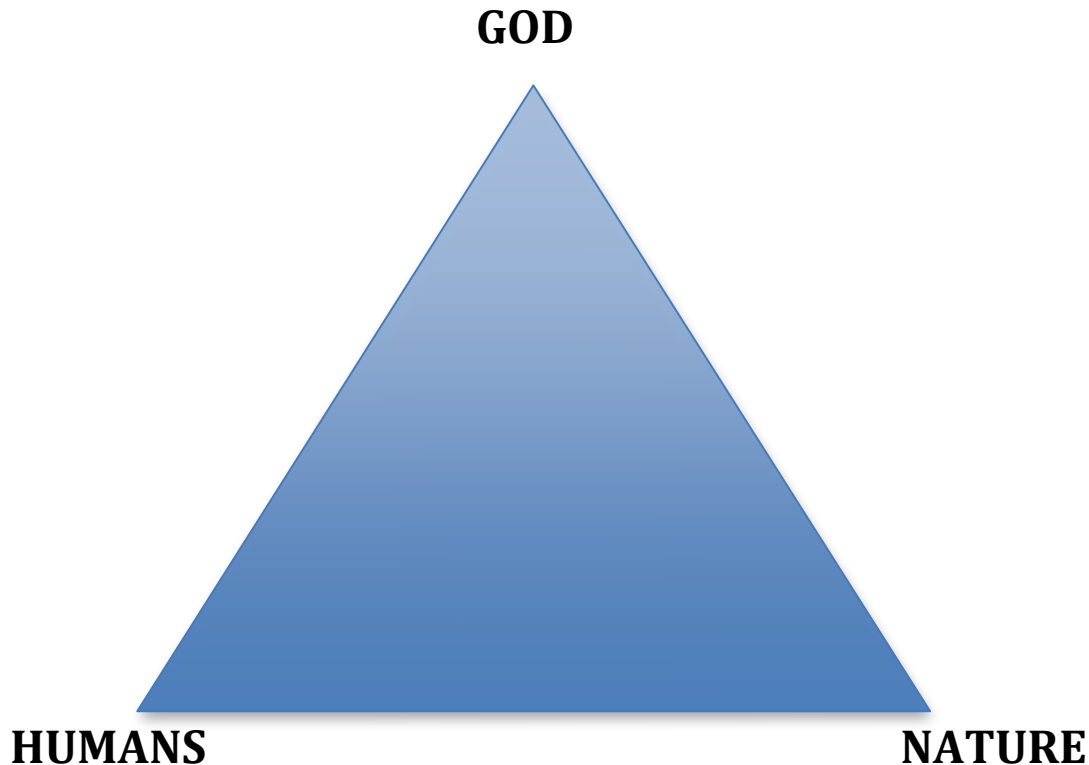
1. *The Bible's Theology of Creation is Developed in the Old Testament and is Then Presupposed in the New.*
2. *A Metanarrative is a Grand Story We Tell About the Meaning of Everything.* Modern metanarratives have included the Marxist classless society, Darwinian macro-evolution, the West's idea of Progress and its current metamorphosis into a narrative of economic globalization, technological salvation and the global triumph of liberal democracy, as the “end of history.” A most self-conscious alternative to this is the Islamic metanarrative.
3. *The Bible's Metanarrative is an Ambitious One, Running from Eternity to Eternity, Specifically from Creation to New Creation.* Within this are the phases of the story of Israel and the Gospel story of Jesus. But in a sense, the Story of Jesus encompasses the whole grand story, because in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:15-20) and all things will be brought together and consummated in Him (Ephesians 1:20-23).

B. The Metanarrative as Eco-narrative

1. *There are Three Key Group Participants in the Great Reconciliation Metanarrative— God, Humanity, and the Rest of Creation.* So often in the history of Christian thought, this third participant has been minimized, degraded, or forgotten altogether. Even worse, in some Christian tradition, human embeddedness in nature has been viewed as a fate from which we need salvation. This has been largely due to the influence of Platonic and Gnostic thought, which affected the theology of the church from the early centuries onward. The strong *matter/spirit dualism*, in which matter is inferior and spirit is superior, is contrary to the Hebraic

view that God made all things good. This Platonic view has plagued the church for centuries.

2. *Bauckham Describes the Three-fold Relationship between God, Humans and the Rest of Creation as Three Corners of a Triangle.* (p. 146). Each of the three has its own relationship with the others, as I depict in **Figure 10**.

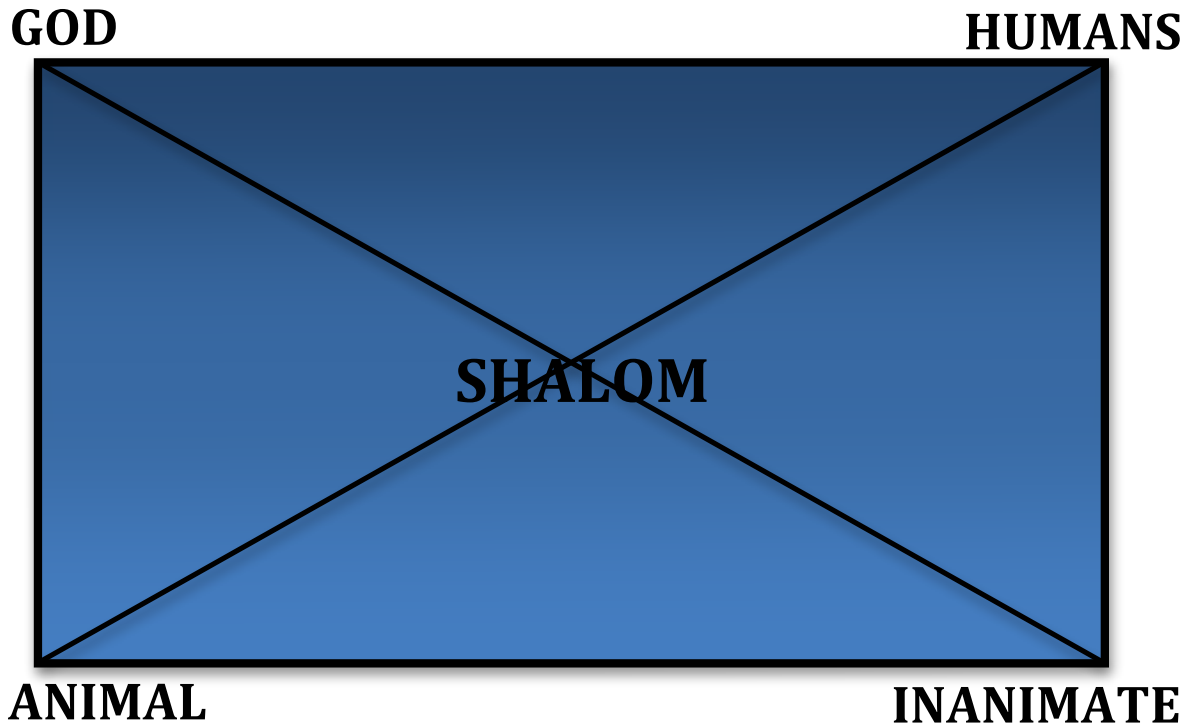


**Figure 10 -
Community of Creation: A Triangle**

3. *Bauckham Then Contends That it Would be More Accurate to Depict the Reality of God and All Creation by a Four-Sided Figure, Crossed by Lines That Link Opposite Corners, as I Depict in **Figure 11**.* The four corners represent God, humans, other living creatures (sentient and non-sentient), and the inanimate creation, each of which has its own relationship with the other three. This would do justice to the fact that Scripture draws a significant distinction between living creatures and inanimate nature and attributes to human much more commonality with the former than with the latter.

4. *This Counters the Modern Tendency in "Environmental" Discourse to Treat the Whole of Nature as "The Environment" (i.e. the Human Environment).* Bauckham claims the Bible recognizes living creatures as sentient beings that are "subjects of their own lives" in a way that is not true of plants or

mountains. (p. 146). Our modern practice of abusively objectifying and instrumentalizing living creatures, such as in factory farming, is a crime against God's creatures, which we could never tolerate if we recognized them as partners in God's covenant with Noah and the animals.



**Figure 11-
Community of Creation: A Quadrilateral**

*5. The Platonic Influence in Christian Tradition Has Probably Been Exceeded in Influence by the Modern Scientific-technological Project to Subjugate the Whole of Nature to Human Use and Thereby Engineer Utopia. So, in a sense, the old **matter/spirit Platonic dualism** has been replaced by a new dualism of **nature/human history and culture dualism**. That is to say that nature is viewed as something that is there to be exploited for human benefit and use, i.e. humans over nature. Nature used for human benefit would be much better than nature untouched by humans. "The modern project was to achieve progressive liberation of humans from nature and the progressive sovereignty of humans over nature" (p. 149). Modern technophiles who work with bioengineering and artificial intelligence work for a world in which there will no longer be any nature that is independent of us. As Bible-believing Christians we must employ the doctrine of the resurrection of the*

body against these anti-human technological aspirations, just as the church fathers did against Platonism. The Bible's metanarrative holds that God's purpose in history and in the eschatological future is not to abstract humans from nature but to heal the human relationship to nature. (p. 150).

C. The Cosmic Christ in Colossians; Exegetical Comments on the "Colossian Hymn"

1. *Colossians 1:15-20—the "Colossian Hymn"— Offers the Fullest Overview of a Christological Metanarrative to be Found in the New Testament.* The hymn impresses upon us the cosmic scope of both creation and reconciliation: "all things" in Heaven and on Earth were created through and for Christ (Col. 1:16); and "all things" in Heaven and Earth will be reconciled through Him and for Him (Col. 1:20). "The scope of reconciliation is as wide as the scope of creation." "It attributes a pan-temporal and pan-cosmic significance to the person of Christ" (p. 152-153).
2. *Christ is the "Firstborn over all Creation."* Called "the firstborn over all creation" (Col. 1:15) cannot mean He was the first creature to be created, but that He precedes all creation yet has such a close relationship to it, that He has the relational status of the "firstborn" to all creatures and the supremacy of the firstborn over them.
3. *He is Also the "Firstborn from the Dead"* (Col.1:18) –He has pioneered resurrection and the new creation for the whole of creation.

D. Ecological Reflections on the Colossian Hymn

1. *The Hymn Offers a Holistic Vision of the Whole Creation Integrated in Jesus Christ. It is He who "Holds All Things Together."* (Col. 1:17)
2. *There is a Coming Cosmic Order but Still a Present Cosmic Disorder*
3. *The Crucified and Risen Christ is the Hidden Mystery of the World Revealed in the Gospel.* From creation itself alone, as it is, "red in tooth and claw," we could not tell that its destiny is shalom, and that the way to that peace is not through violent conquest but through self-giving love. Modern science especially Darwinian evolution ("survival of the fittest"—life emerges and advances by the struggle of the species) has revealed the extent to which violence is part and parcel of the whole process of the world. Among themselves humans have experienced unending conflict. As missiologist Ralph Winter so memorably stated,

"Man has virtually erased his own story. Human beings as far back as we have any paleological record have been fighting each other so much that they have destroyed well over 90% of their own handiwork. Their libraries, their literature, their cities, their works of art are mostly gone. Even the little that remains from the distant pasts is riddled with evidences of a strange and pervasive evil that has grotesquely distorted man's potential. This is strange because apparently no other species

treats its own with such deadly hatred. The oldest skulls bear mute witness that they were bashed in and roasted to deliver their contents as food for other human beings.” (Winter, “The Kingdom Strikes Back”)

4. *The Christian Paradox: Violence Abolished by Absorbing it in the Self-sacrificial Love of the Creator.* That God has transcended this deep inherent violence that pervades the universe through Jesus’ absorbing it in self-giving love in the crucifixion, is a fact that is God’s secret known only by revelation through his Word and His church’s witness on earth.
5. *The Enmity and Violence in the Created World Certainly Have Something to do the “powers.”* (Col. 1:16). The hostility of the unseen spiritual forces is more than the sum of human intentions to despoil and destroy God’s world. Christ’s pacification of the powers takes place through us, the church, as we confront them in His name, and seek shalom between all participants in the triangle or rectangle (in **Figure 10** and **Figure 11** above) despite their seeming supremacy in this world (p. 159)
6. *The Problem of Animal Suffering and Death: the Fall of Nature before the Creation and Fall of Man? - A comprehensive eco-theology must come to terms with the issue of the evidence from modern science of the fact of death and suffering in the animal world long before humans appeared on the scene. In light of this evidence, Bauckham and many other scholars contend it is no longer possible to hold that death entered the universe at the time of Fall of Man in Genesis 3. Bauckham observes that the “violence and suffering of the evolutionary process (the aspect that seems most unequivocally evil) seem to be indivisible from the value the process produces in terms of the complexity, excellence and adaptation we see in the natural world. It does not seem possible to have the good of this process without the evil. If this is attributed to the intervention of malign powers, then it would seem that these powers are so extensively responsible for the character of life on the planet as to be virtually its creators.”* (p. 160).

Bauckham’s observation begs many questions and highlights a problem that evangelicals and Bible-believing people must come to terms with in our times if we want to both take the Bible seriously and take science seriously and build bridges for dialogue and Christian witness to the scientific community. Bauckham sees no resolution of this problem until the eschaton (p. 161). But I believe we can advance beyond Bauckham in reconciling the evidences of science with the authority of the Bible.

See **Bjoraker’s Excursus 6** below for a look at a pioneering thinker’s initiative toward addressing this problem in our time.

F. The Cosmic Christ in the Prologue to the Gospel of John

The Prologue (John 1: 1-14) goes further back in time, actually to before time began, further back than the Colossian hymn, as far back as it is conceivable to start,

to eternity before creation, “evoking the fully cosmic scope of the biblical metanarrative.” (p. 161-162). As the Logos is incarnated into flesh and into the *kosmos*, He partakes of the “mortal nature humans share with all living things, in order to give the life of God to all flesh. Creation finds its fulfillment in thus being taken into the divine life.” (p. 164).

G. The Kingdom of God as the Renewal of Creation

The Synoptic Gospels emphasize the theme of the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ teaching assumes the rich creation theology of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus teaches about His Father who feeds the birds and clothes the wild flowers (Math. 6:26-30). Those hearing Jesus’ Kingdom teaching would have the background in the Psalms where the kingship and rule of God are quite prominent. And in the Psalms, we see the Creator of all who rules over His whole creation (see esp. Psalm 145, and other nature psalms). The Kingdom has a fully cosmic scope. And it is the God who rules from His heavenly throne who comes to rule on Earth (Psa. 11:4; 103:19). So when Jesus teaches the “Lord’s Prayer” we are to pray “Your Kingdom Come, Your will be done, *on earth* as it is in heaven.” (Math. 6:9-10). “The Kingdom does not come in order to extract people from the rest of creation, but to renew the whole creation in accordance with God’s perfect will for it.” (p. 166). The “nature miracles” (e.g. still the storm) of Jesus were small-scale anticipatory signs of the coming of the Kingdom in its holistic and universal dimensions in the future.

H. Jesus Pacifies the Forces of Chaos in Creation (Mark 4: 35-41)

This story has “mythical” overtones (in the sense of referring to creation symbols and metaphors for the forces of nature, like the primeval waters of chaos in Genesis 1:2, the Great Flood and to Job’s Leviathan) and metaphysical overtones. “For the Israelites, the waters of the mythical abyss were not simply a metaphysical idea. In an event like a storm at sea, the real waters of the sea became the waters of chaos, threatening life and controllable only by God” (p. 169). So, in the story, when Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace, be still,” it evokes the way the Hebrew Bible speaks of God’s subduing the waters of chaos—“at your rebuke the waters flee” (Psa. 104:7); “By his power, He stills the sea” (Job 26:12). It is the Creator’s rebuke to chaos then that Jesus utters, and the peace of creation is secured as Jesus restores shalom. So Jesus calming the squall on the Lake of Galilee is “a small-scale enactment and prophetic anticipation, of God’s final elimination of chaos from the natural world, when as the Book of Revelation has it, there will be no more sea” (Rev. 21:1). So Jesus’ inauguration of the Kingdom of God goes to the heart of the hostility and alienation between humans and nature. Jesus’ stilling the storm, reminds us that the control of nature is God-like, and humans may participate in it only as creatures not as gods. Has the great modern scientific-technological project over-reached itself, imagining humanity could accomplish what belongs only to the omnipotence of God? (p.170)

I. The Universal Solidarity of the Risen Christ

“Since the mortal bodies of humans are their solidarity with the rest of the material creation, when the Word of God ‘became flesh’, he too entered the physical, mortal, transient life of the whole of creation. In dying, he shared the fate of all living creatures on this Earth, and we cannot think that in rising to new life beyond death he abandoned this solidarity with the whole community of creation. His resurrection was the beginning of the new creation.” (p. 171) It is important that Jesus resurrection was a bodily, physical resurrection. This constitutes the redemption of human life in its psychosomatic wholeness, not some sort of Platonist, or gnostic deliverance of spirit from matter (common in the anthropology of the early church fathers). On the contrary, the Hebraic anthropology and soteriology of the Bible is a holistic salvation. Surely Jesus resurrection, as beginning the new creation, the “firstborn of all creation,” must lead the way for the whole community of creation, not just for humans.

J. The Universal Worship of the Triumphant Christ

In the Christological hymn of Philippians 2:6-11, we see that the story of Jesus culminates in the universal worship of God. In 2:10 it states that “every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” The phrase “in heaven and on earth and under the earth” is a literary way “of summing up the whole cosmos, and we should not suppose Paul is referring only to those creatures who can literally bow the knee and speak with the tongue.” (p.173). This passage is in the tradition of the Hebrew Bible which describes the trees of the field “clapping their hands.” All creatures will finally, in their own ways, glorify their Creator, who will bring his whole universe to triumphant conclusion. This is confirmed in the Book of Revelation, where the vast cosmic choir expands to the furthest degree, when “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth **and in the sea, and all that is in them**” (bolded phrases are added to the Philippian hymn’s language), will praise God and the Lamb together. The author John goes out of his way to prevent us of thinking only of creatures who can think and verbalize their praise.

K. The New Creation As Ecotopia

In the final vision of the Book of Revelation, John sees “a new heaven and a new earth; for the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.” (Rev. 21:1). This resembles Paul’s statement about the new creation in 2 Corinthians 5:17- “So if anyone is in Christ —new creation! The old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.” Paul’s “behold” gives a visionary quality to his exclamation (cf. “Behold” in Rev. 21:3 and 5). Paul does not regard this born again human as the replacement of the present human being, by an altogether new human being. The vivid language of “old things passing away and all things becoming new” refers to a transfiguration of reality into a new form. It is radical transformation, but not replacement. In the same way, we can see that Rev. 21:1 does not foresee the replacement of the old altogether, but the radical renewal and transformation of the

old. The new creation will no longer be governed by death and transience, but will live from the eternal life of God.

The vision of the new creation is described in the image of the “New Jerusalem” where people will live in harmony and bliss reminiscent of Eden—its river and trees of life (21:2) recalls the Garden, but also recalls Ezekiel’s vision of the river of life that flows from the new temple, turning lifeless waters into habitats swarming with abundant life (Ezekiel 47:6-12); “everything will live where the river goes” (47:9). Ezekiel’s vision of ecological renewal comprises not merely symbols for eternal life for humans, though they are that. Ezekiel’s vision resonates with the ecological character of the “water of life” and the “tree of life” in Revelation (which tree of life recall the tree of life in Eden). Revelation and Ezekiel give us visions of an ecological eschatology.

The New Jerusalem will surpass Eden, in that the Tree of Life (of which Adam and Eve did not partake) is now available for all the redeemed, but multiplied as twelve species of trees, whose “leaves are for the healing of the nations.” Whereas Eden was a “temple-garden,” the New Jerusalem is a “temple-city,” which Bauckham quite convincingly interprets as meaning that “the New Jerusalem is the transposition into the new creation of all that is good in human culture.” All the cultural artifacts, arts and products and beauty that humans have made, by their God-given creativity in this old creation, will somehow be transposed into the renewed world. It says that the kings of the earth are welcomed into it, bringing the glory and honor of the nations to contribute to the greater glory of God. Will some of the “Seven Wonders of the World” make it (transfigured to immortality of course)?

“The New Jerusalem fulfills humanity’s desire to build out of nature a human home, a place of human culture. Yet the paradise garden also lives within it. It is a ‘garden-city,’ where human culture does not replace nature but lives in harmony and reciprocity. It represents the final reconciliation of culture and nature, of the human world with the other creatures of the Earth.” (p. 177-178). The Church’s ministry of reconciliation today must include this message of the reconciliation to God and of God along with all His creation.

John’s vision at the beginning of Revelation sees Jesus declaring, “I am Alpha and Omega, who was and is and is to come, the Almighty.” ... “I am the first and the last, the Living One. I was dead and am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys to Death and Hades” (1: 8, 17-18). Mortal life runs out in death, but eternal life is available to all creation, because the “Living One” attained it for the whole creation through his dying solidarity with all creation.” (p. 178).

At this point, one can only sing the *Gloria Patri*:

“Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

Bjoraker's Excursus 6 - Intelligent Evil in Nature Before the Creation of Humans: The Problem of Animal-vs.-Animal Evil, Suffering & Death

The problem of how to explain and think about evil in the world of nature, specifically the evidence for vicious animal-versus-animal evil apparent in fossil discoveries dating back millions of years (dating accepted now by most scientists) has been provided with new possibilities for theorizing by the recent discoveries of science about DNA. Also to be taken into account is the recent "Intelligent Design" theory by evangelicals. Such theorizing has been advanced in a most innovative way by the late Ralph Winter. I quote below excerpts from Winter's *Frontiers in Mission: Surmounting Barriers to the Missio Dei* on this topic. The reader is advised to read them carefully and then read my concluding comments following. Winter:

"Evangelicals have recently stressed the inevitable intelligence and design in nature, but they have not, to my knowledge, attempted to suggest that there is evidence of any evil intelligence and design. This is perhaps due to a theological tradition which does not understand demonic powers to have the ability to distort DNA. Our Evangelical theological tradition is so old that it also would not conceive of good angels working at the DNA level. In other words, we have no explicit theology for intentional modification of either good or bad bacteria. Our current theological literature, to my knowledge, does not seriously consider disease pathogens from a theological point of view—that is, are they the work of God or Satan?"
(178-179)

"Thus, the "works of the devil" would seem to include the perversion of the very structure of life at DNA levels. The discovery of thousands of defective genes in the human genome is possibly evidence of demonic activity at the DNA level. Even the violent traits of animals and man may exhibit the same kind of distorting influence at that level." (27)

"I find it difficult, after making this switch, not to conclude that Satan's angels are the source of life-destroying forms of life, vicious animals, bacteria, viruses. Not that he created them but that he tampered with their DNA to distort them. To "destroy his works" means thus to take it as part of our efforts, our mission, to glorify God to restore, with God's help, what Satan has distorted." (180)

"For example, humans have concluded that cock fights and contrived animal-versus-animal shows are illegitimate and now are illegal. How much less likely should we suppose God to have created the nearly universal, vicious, animal-versus-animal world of nature? Indeed, were carnivorous animals originally herbivorous (as is implied in Genesis 1:28,29)? Does the Evil One and his assistants have sufficient knowledge to tinker with the DNA of God's created order and distort nature to become 'red in tooth and claw'?"

“That is, it would seem to be reasonable to postulate that after the Cambrian extinction event, and after lengthy familiarity with the entire DNA process, a new, profoundly antagonistic non-human being (along with many knowledgeable and skilled workers) apparently set to work to undo, to distort, and to destroy all that they had earlier assisted into being.” (198)

“It is said that two-thirds of all life forms now in existence are parasitic. The destructive forces could even tinker with DNA to transform a lion that would lie down with a lamb into a highly destructive, but still beautiful beast.” (198)

“Thus, for me the evolutionary process which I would prefer to call development could easily have involved intelligent evil as well as on-going intelligent good. Thus, Satanic meddling with our DNA could likely have engineered many genetic distortions and authored many destructive forms of life—from brilliant viruses to monstrously destructive dinosaurs. The good angels, meanwhile, have not been idle. With God’s guidance they have devised the human immune system and they have armed many creatures with all kinds of defenses such as hard shells, porcupine quills, changing color, etc.” (246)

“This corruption might then be said to have happened when Satan and one third of the angels turned against God. The sudden appearance of violence and predation in the Cambrian Period would seem to be a logical point at which this happened. Jesus’ death on the cross, then, while often seen as (merely) a tragedy essential to the rescue of humans, could, thus, be the key to the restoration of all creation.”

“For most Evangelicals there is a massive ‘disconnect’ here. Only when we stop and think about it can we imagine a monstrous, pervasive, intelligent distortion of creation. We don’t stop to realize how illogical it is to blame all that on God, as some do, instead of considering the involvement of an intelligent Evil One.”

“Thus, a better explanation for the massive suffering and premature death in nature might be what was mentioned already, namely, the possibility that many forms of life at all levels of size and complexity, although earlier created benign, have been distorted into vicious mutations by a skillful, destructive tampering with their DNA by the Evil One and his evil servants (whether human or angelic).”

“But our ‘disconnect’ may blind us to the theological significance of the corruption of all creation. We tend significantly to reduce our theological concerns to the “spiritual,”—the purely immaterial, the emotional and mental problems of human life forms. We let Jewish and secular doctors attend to the problems arising from microscopic evil and disease control. Those workers at this point, unconsciously or consciously, may be operating

intuitively from a more Biblical theology that was not damaged, as ours was, by Augustine's Neo-Platonism" (255)

"Thus, first Satan "fell" (long before Genesis 1:1) and had proceeded ever since the Cambrian era to tamper with and distort the DNA of benign animals and even to devise virulent pathogens. Next, very recently, the events of the Genesis account click in, and, as a result of Adam's fall, the new human creature dies spiritually. Hence, the unfolding story of the expansion of human beings into the entire planet turns out to be an account of unmitigated gross and violent evil. Satan and his workers now do what they did to earlier life forms, distorting the DNA of humans introducing vicious and warlike traits—a possible fourth aspect of the curse."

"Not only does cursed and depraved humanity proceed to kill off a large proportion of the earth's animal life—virtually all large animals, the life they were intended to replenish—humans themselves also succumb to pervasive cannibalism and human sacrifice as is revealed in the earliest remains of skulls and societies." (See Scientific American, August 2003:33) (Winter, *Frontiers in Mission*, 258).

For the most succinct treatment of Winter's theories about angelic/Satanic activity at the microbial level, I recommend the essay starting on page 197 titled, "A Larger Worldview."

Winter's proposals, if true to reality, go far in providing understanding for the intelligent evil we witness in fallen creation as we know it to be. They go far in taking seriously the accepted theories of contemporary biological, geological and anthropological science in a way consistent with the authority of the Bible. They go far theologically, satisfactorily providing answers that exonerate God of the charge of being the author of evil, and so removing stumbling blocks for many whose faith in a God of love is shaken by the evil and suffering they witness in the natural world and among humans. They also provide a framework of understanding whereby both "old earth" theorists and "young earth" creationist theorists alike can find validation for their views—the universe is very old as modern scientists say (13 billion years? ... we can grant that for the sake of discussion, because the Bible does not give us the age of the earth or the universe), but that the Six-Day creation account in Genesis 1 (and the new beginning in Eden) may have happened a matter of thousands (or tens of thousands) of years ago.

Scholars and scientists who are seriously pursuing constructing an eco-theology will need to grapple with Winter's views in the future, subjecting them to verification or falsification as further evidence and Biblical study is forthcoming. Winter himself welcomed such testing and grappling with his theories. Winter's model of taking both contemporary science and the Bible seriously and working toward integration, is one that all scientists and Bible scholars/theologians should follow. After all, true science (the Book of God's World) and the Bible (the Book of God's Word) are in harmony because they have the same Author.

IV. Significance of the [Bauckham's] Book

Bauckham's book is significant in that it is a worthy attempt at presenting a Biblical theology of nature (the non-human creation), or a Biblical ecology of nature, that takes into consideration the whole range of Scripture on the topic. This is timely and relevant, as Bauckham convincingly argues, because of the ecological crises we face today. He is keenly aware of the abuses of nature by the modern scientific-technological project and charges by modern secular environmentalist and green movements to the effect that Christianity and the Bible are to blame for this abuse due to the de-divinizing nature, the dominion mandate and thus exposing it "to the ruthless exploitation that has brought us to the brink of ecological disaster." (p. 86). Western civilization and Christianity are conflated in the perception of most people in the majority world.

Thus, indeed, we in the Bible-believing tradition have work to do to decouple modern Western culture (guilty as charged) from what the Bible actually teaches about God's Creation and about responsible creation care. Bauckham's study provides a commendable resource for doing just that. Bauckham's call for new "community of creation" paradigm is a worthy proposal to replace the assumptions of modern political liberalism. Other Bible scholars, writers and practitioners working in this field will need to consult his work. With some caveats, and critique, it can function as a basis for developing a new *Biblical Creation Care* paradigm, from which applications can be drawn for policy-making in the public sphere.

V. Concluding Evaluative Reflection

Does Bauckham succeed in convincingly establishing his thesis? Does he argue well his case that we (especially Western) Bible-believing Christians must move *from* a "dominion mandate" paradigm based on Genesis 1:26 and 28 *to* a "community of creation" paradigm? In my view, the answer is both "yes" and "no."

I think he rightly handles Scripture most of the time, though not consistently throughout. He has demonstrated that the Bible teaches that all created beings have intrinsic worth, not mere instrumental value for human use. He succeeds in relativizing or balancing the "dominion mandate" by properly interpreting the Genesis passage as caring responsibility rather than domination. He succeeds also by wonderful exposition of the Book of Job (which humbles human hubris before the mysteries of the Creator's universe), and the nature Psalms affirming the inherent value of the non-human creation, its beauty and God's delight in it all. Bauckham traces the meta-narrative of the Bible, hence of the whole cosmos, as inherently comprising also an "eco-narrative" and does this well. He avers that salvation is holistic and includes the whole non-human creation and cosmos, not merely extracting humans to heaven.

His exposition of the comprehensive scope, cosmic and ecological (from the Greek – *oikos*, "house" originally as *oecology*; thus, the whole universal "house" that

God built, i.e. *all* that exists, visible and invisible) of the Kingdom of God in the synoptic Gospels is excellent, a holistic dimension usually not observed in Christian traditions today. He succeeds well throughout the book in refuting the Platonic and gnostic stream long embedded in Christian theology that has often taken a dim view of, or neglected, the Hebraic view of the goodness of the physical creation, and that (though fallen) God intends to redeem and renew it. He ably explicates the Kingdom visions of the major Hebrew prophets, which are holistic and involve the natural creation. His explication of the final renewal of the heavens and the earth, when human culture and nature are finally reconciled in the garden-city of New Jerusalem is marvelous.

Where I think the book is weak is that he does not adequately address and critique some of the major contemporary philosophical and religious views that are contrary to the Biblical worldview, and are distorting our societies' understanding of what is true about nature. This is why, in reviewing the book, I felt compelled to write the six excurses I did. I believe that much is at stake in our times in these issues, and it is essential that we develop an adequate theology of nature and ecology, so as to speak prophetically into the public sphere with the Bible's views and wisdom. Here are the main weaknesses I observe:

1) *Bauckham is weak on affirming the uniqueness of human beings as made in the Image of God, and so are fundamentally different in kind and higher in rank in God's hierarchy of beings than the rest of created beings on earth.* Bauckham does not like the concept of "hierarchy" at all, and writes against it often. I write correctives to this in **Excursus 2** and accompanying depictions in **Figures 3, 8** and **9**. He was so intent on correcting the abuse and misapplication of the Genesis 1: 26 and 28 "dominion mandate," that he went too far in the other direction (the proverbial swing of the pendulum) and minimizes the actual mandate given to humans as God's representatives, made in the Image of God, to be managers and vice-regents on earth under Him. Without this foundational truth of the essential ontology of humans as *Imago Dei*, telling us who we are as humans and why we are here, we have no basis to hold that abortion and euthanasia are immoral, the use and killing of human embryos for experimentation is immoral, that marriage is between one man and one woman, and sexual promiscuity and homosexuality destroy individuals, families, and societies. **Excursus 5** on animal rights describes where people can end up, ethically, when they lose the Biblical distinction between humans and animals. Bauckham's theological weakness, perhaps in his great desire to envision a "community of creation," comes close to depicting animals and humans as close to the same level, without any hierarchy. I don't think his theology is robust enough to prevent treating animals like people and people like animals. We need such a robust theological anthropology today, due to increasing pressure by the secular world to control and limit human population through radical, dangerous and immoral means. Human survival and health must always take priority over the survival of any other species, or habitat, or environmental entity.

2) *Bauckham assumes that global warming is man-made.* I write correctives to this assumption, offering countervailing evidence that global warming and cooling trends and climate change are from natural causes, and have always been present in geological history, in **Excursus 3** and **Figures 4, 5, and 6**.

3) *The author falters in his explanation of the source and nature of evil in nature* (animal vs. animal predation and viciousness, suffering and death). Though he admits his agnosticism on the matter, he ends up coming close to attributing this to some Divine plan (see his pp.160-161). Because nature has manifestly intelligent evil present throughout, we must have the best explanations we can for this reality. It important we do not attribute evil to the Creator, and Biblically, we need not. Thus, I have written **Excursus 6** offering for consideration the pioneering integration of science and the Bible by the late Ralph Winter, where his innovative theologizing offers answers where Bauckham does not.

So as to establishing the “community of creation” paradigm, for it to really stand it needs to be defined and modified in the areas I critique herein. I depicted Bauckham’s major proposals in **Figures 10 and 11**, showing how he views an interdependent, symbiotic, non-hierarchical “community” among God, humans, animals, plants, and inanimate matter. The non-hierarchical aspect he advocates is the “fly in the ointment.” The word “community,” from the Latin *communitas*, from *communis*, means “having in common.” Bauckham emphasizes what humans have in common, on the physical existence level, with the rest of creation. We might call this the horizontal level. On this level we indeed are part of creation, we share the needs and resources and space *in common* with the non-human creation.

But Bauckham does not adequately assert the vertical community, what we have in common as persons with God and the angels (See **Figures 3 and 9**). Our deepest commonality, and hence communion is as persons with other persons. Thus our primary community is upward, not with animals and nature but with God and other persons. Without a strong Biblical ontology of human beings *vis a vis* the non-human creation, we cannot establish a community based on God’s design and truth, wherein freedom and flourishing for all creation can only be attained. As C. S. Lewis said,

“According to this conception degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors. When it fails in either part of this twofold task we have disease or monstrosity in the scheme of things until the peccant being is either destroyed or corrected. One or the other it will certainly be; for by stepping out of its place in the system (whether it step up like a rebellious angel or down like a uxorious husband) it has made the very nature of things its enemy. It cannot succeed.” (Lewis, 73-74).

In sum, a harmonious “community of creation” paradigm— only when defined by the God-given ontology, roles, and place in the hierarchy and with consequent proper relationships among the community members—is a helpful way to envision the renewed cosmos, and the transformed Garden-City which we anticipate as our destiny after the Second Coming of Messiah, and the consummation of His Kingdom.

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