

*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household,
he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

1 TIMOTHY 5:8



CHAPTER 31

The Religion of Environmentalism

In our lifetime there has been a radical shift in collective national religious belief. In essence America has been in the process of transitioning from adherence to our Judeo-Christian roots to the embrace of radical environmentalism, exchanging the worship of the Creator for the worship of His creation. This is an extreme error with dire consequences and it presages disaster.

The timeless truths of Genesis 1:26–31 have informed, guided, and dominated American thinking in generations past. Make no mistake—our past obedience to what God says in this passage has established America’s greatness. Historically, this bit of Scripture has provided us with a mandate for progress since the founding of our nation. My prayer is that you may understand the difference between the two dueling worldviews of Biblical Christianity and radical environmentalism, and embrace God’s purposes for our nation, and for humanity.

What has set America apart from other nations of the world has been the undertaking of God's mandate to steward our natural resources in ways that add value to them and benefit humanity. This premise is based on a mindset that assumes both the utility of natural resources and the value they possess to help people, the very things God saluted when He created the world. Notice these two aspects in the Genesis 1:26–31:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Clearly we see that we are stewards of His creation, and all that blesses us He calls *very good*. The psalmist reinforces the Genesis idea that God has given humanity *dominion* over His creation:

What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:4–8)

While we are to steward the abundant resources God has made, we are also to be a help to others, that the goodness of His creation blesses all (Philippians 2:3–4).

Whereas Scripture clearly teaches that humanity is the apex of God's creation, the priority of radical environmentalism is the preservation of the earth. Inevitably these worldviews clash. The inherently Christian concept of good stewardship is not good enough for radical environmentalists, who idolize and worship the earth and demand that progress and development of resources be limited. The earth, not humanity, is the highest priority in their way of thinking. God is a myth, harmless at best, but potentially dangerous. Clearly there's a big difference between environmental preservationists and Christian conservationists.

One illustration of this is California water. Please allow me to take the liberty of using illustrations from my home state, since I am from California and am intimately familiar with my state in this regard. In an average year of California rainfall, God blesses the state with two hundred million acre-feet of fresh water. On average, that is enough water to supply the annual needs of four hundred million households, or about 1.2 billion people—enough water to supply all the needs of India or China. Of that huge supply, only twenty million acre-feet are presently utilized, and the remainder is lost. And of the twenty million acre-feet that are captured, fifteen million are used for agriculture and only five million for residential use!¹ In other words, only 2.5 percent of California’s fresh water supply is directly used by households, and yet there is an outcry to limit household usage! 75 percent of California’s population lives in the south and 75 percent of the water is in the north. In order to secure tunneling under the Sacramento River delta that will deliver more Northern California water to the Bay Area and Southern California, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California had to agree not to expand its water usage, as if California water were somehow in short supply!

In fact, when Governor Pat Brown, who served from 1959 to 1967, pioneered the California Aqueduct, the state engineers designed the aqueduct to carry three times more water to Southern California than it ever has. This was before the religion of radical environmentalism was prevalent. That is to say, the state’s religious leanings changed from the time of his leadership to that of his son, Governor Jerry Brown.

Here we have an illustration of radical environmentalism attempting to limit the growth of human activities in the state by curtailing the supply of water, even though there is more than enough to go around. At the core of the heated decades-old water battle in California are dueling worldviews: one says that people are most important, the other says that the environment is.

Worldview inevitably determines how Public Servants and the nation as a whole utilize or fail to utilize natural resources for the betterment of humankind. With that in mind, what informs your worldview? Let’s notice what God says from the first chapter of His Book.

The Hierarchy of God’s Creation Order

Genesis 1:26–31 yields significant insights into the uniqueness of humankind in God’s estimation. God distinguishes people from the rest of His creation. After creating the heavens, light, land, atmosphere, seas, and vegetation, God creates the fish, birds, and animals (Genesis 1:1–25). After that, He creates humans. But notice an exclusive difference: God creates humans unlike any other previously created creature: “*in Our image, according to Our likeness,*”² we read in Genesis 1:26. This places humans in a unique position relative to the remainder of the created order.

Both of the Hebrew words, for “image” (*tselem*) and “likeness” (*demuth*), carry the idea that humans are a reflection of God’s attributes in the sense of His intellect, emotion, will, and morality. No other created life has all of these distinctions. Therefore, humans are unique: “*You have put all things under his [humanity’s] feet,*” says Psalm 8:6b.

God has placed people in a superior position over the remainder of creation. This is fundamentally important because it forecasts that God intends the remainder of creation to serve humans. Notice the Biblical order of creation:

The Hierarchy of God’s Created Order

HUMANITY

ANIMALS OF THE SEA, LAND, AND AIR

PLANTS, TREES, FRUIT

Compare this understanding to other belief systems. For instance in pantheistic systems—in which it is believed that God is immanent in everything—there is no hierarchical order to the things in the world. This means the rat has just as much right to the corn in the cupboard as does the child. In California, where the religion of radical environmentalism reigns supreme, the fish has just as much right to the stream as the dam builder. Pumping water for people must be curtailed because a smelt fish could be sucked into a turbine.

In God’s eyes humans are the priority, and reign preeminent over all of creation. Yet we do so with respect for the Creator, to whom we must answer. While we may find a way to pump water that does not cost the life of the smelt, at the end of the day the smelt doesn’t rule our lives—we rule the smelt’s life. The late Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer is right when he says, “So the Bible tells me who I am. It tells me how I am differentiated from all other things. I do not need to be confused, therefore, between myself and animal life.”³ Biblically informed Public Servants must therefore order their thinking in light of God’s revealed hierarchy of creation.

In creating the world God expects humans to reign and steward His creation in ways that are pleasing to Him. Lest there be any doubt about humans being the height of God’s created order—the ones in charge—the psalmist adds:

The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.
(Psalm 115:16 KJV)

The Housekeepers of God's Creation Order

In God's hierarchy of creation humans are at the top and are to rule over all of creation and subdue it (Genesis 1:26, 28). Notice these words *rule* and *subdue*. These two words define how people are to operate in their preeminent role within creation. Not only are we given the unique identity of being created in God's image, but we are also tasked with the charge to rule and subdue.

The Creator has appointed humanity as the caretaker of His possession.

Humans are to *fill the earth* (v. 28) and oversee its operation as a stewardship responsibility. Ian McHarg, one of the world's foremost landscape architects, said in summary of his thinking when commenting on Genesis, "If ever there was justification for a bulldozer mentality, this verse is it." Yet the word *subdue* does not in fact give license for a "bulldozer mentality." What McHarg failed to see is the Biblical context of the passage: humans are accountable to the Creator for their stewardship, as is borne out by the fact that this right of dominion is given before the fall, which does not occur until Genesis chapter 3. After the fall we are subject to sinfulness in stewardship if left unchecked, as in every other human endeavor (which is why evangelizing the lost is the most important strategy for achieving good stewardship of the planet). Unfortunately, McHarg elected to abandon Biblical ideas in favor of pantheism, which he believed was the religion best suited to planet stewardship.⁴

Inherent in His pronouncement in Genesis 1:21 & 31 that all He created is "*good*," is God's expectation that humankind will not destroy what He put us in charge of. Rather, states one leading Evangelical commentator regarding these passages, these words "speak of a productive ordering of the earth and its inhabitants to yield its riches and accomplish God's purposes."⁵

It was this foundational, Biblically based way of thinking that accelerated America's relatively sudden vault into world leadership. Rockefeller's innovation of the use of gasoline, a bi-product from the production of lamp oil, Carnegie's innovation of steel alloy from iron, Morgan's investment in the creation of electricity, the harnessing of water by Hoover Dam and its transportation by the Metropolitan Water District, and Mulholland's importation of water from the Sierra Nevada all gave birth to American innovation and the industrial revolution. Ruling and subduing of American natural resources was largely accomplished by Christian men whose minds and actions were informed by Genesis 1! The subduing of natural resources to fill human needs then gave rise to efficient modern

agriculture, energy production, transportation, architecture, and the like.

The current trend now to move away from this Biblical understanding drastically challenges the American way of life, our world leadership in innovation, and our very quality of life.⁶ This is perhaps best illustrated by a classic interview with William Gould, the retired CEO of Southern California Edison and the father of the western power grid. Gould remarked about a 1984 summit meeting with environmental leaders in Salt Lake City, and how the meeting went sideways. The environmentalists exclaimed that they had enough laws on the books to hinder the development of any new power plants. Gould went on to say how the development of the San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant was a nightmare due to continual public lawsuits. He remarked that SCE would never attempt another due to huge cost overruns coupled with the insecurity of not knowing if they would be able to come on line. Subsequently other power developers left the state for greener pastures. That laid the groundwork for the California electrical crisis, a shortage threat that still persists on hot summer days. Now years later, the radical environmentalists have succeeded in shutting down the world's most efficient way to produce electricity, and with technological advances, now one of the safest.

It's plain to see that countries such as India who possess similar natural resources but hold to dissimilar beliefs have experienced chronic intractability for a long time. And this is the exact road America finds herself on due to our rejection of what God so clearly exclaims in Genesis!

Allowing fish to limit the construction of dams, turtles
to govern power plants, flies to constrain hospitals,
or kangaroo rats to regulate home-building is to make a
mockery of God's Genesis proclamation.

God calls all Public Servants and citizens to walk in the confidence of His hierarchy of creation, but with an understanding of our housekeeping responsibilities. Discounting Genesis will cause America to walk backwards.

When the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California had the foresight to increase water storage to assure delivery during drought years, they spent over \$3 billion constructing the Diamond Valley Reservoir, which holds an additional eight hundred million acre-feet of water. As wise a stewardship responsibility as this was—insuring water for seventeen million people who live in Southern California—\$1 billion ended up having to be paid to fight the lawsuits of the radical environmentalists, who managed to delay the project for ten years.⁷ By contrast,

during California's drought years it was the radical environmentalists of Marin County who had to jerry-rig water pipes across the Richmond Bridge in order to keep their citizens from dying of thirst. That's what happens when endangered species rule over people: the false religion of radical environmentalism leads to human poverty and government insolvency.

Beloved, radical environmentalism is not a good religion to base a country on! America's problems are rooted not so much in a lack of creativity, markets, or conveyance as they are rooted in this new aberrant religious belief.

The Harvest of God's Creation Order

Continuing in the first chapter of Genesis, verses 29 and 30 specifically reveal that God's purpose in creating the world is for humanity's betterment, use, and enjoyment. Without the aid of Scripture, one might suppose that this is a greedy, human-centric lens through which Christians unfairly view other living creatures sharing the planet. Certainly that is the conclusion of those who reject the inspiration and authority of God's Word, and it is easy to see how one could arrive at such conclusions apart from God's Word. But in verse 31 God reassures man that His creation and His hierarchy are *very good*, and in fact every aspect of creation that God calls "good" is good for us: light, land and sea, food-yielding plants, day and night, fish and birds, land animals, and all that He made.

**Humankind need not feel guilty, because our basis
for bountiful living is not arrogance; it is revelation!**

Opposed to the self-abolishing anthropology of the radical environmentalist, Scripture unabashedly proclaims humanity's superiority in the world over all else, with responsibility. Again, Psalm 115:16 states, "*But the earth he has given to the sons of men.*" Further to the point, 1 Timothy 4:1–4 castigates those—and their religions—who fail to understand God's will on this. It powerfully states:

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will ... advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected.

God is pleased when organic and inorganic substances, the lesser of creation, are utilized to benefit those uniquely created in His image. Conversely, He is greatly displeased when humans inappropriately exalt His creation and

worship it at His expense. Romans 1:21–25 underscores this:

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God.... Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.... For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

In a crescendo of Biblical teaching, here the worship of God's creation instead of God Himself is deemed as *foolishness*. God has harsh words for those who *profess to be wise* based on Biblically unenlightened ideology. My friend, don't be counted amongst these people.

Here are three conclusions very applicable to the life of a Public Servant:

GOD IS PRO-HUMANKIND

The God of the Bible is pro-humankind. He loves us and wants to bless us. That is why He gave us a planet full of abundant natural resources! It is true that the fall has made those natural resources more difficult to utilize for our good, but nonetheless He didn't remove them from us. The religion of radical environmentalism on the other hand is anti-humankind. In their twisted way of not acknowledging, serving, or worshipping God, all they have left to worship is the physical world around them. Believing themselves to be on higher moral ground, theirs is a religion bent on keeping people from that which God has intended for our betterment.

THERE IS GREAT POLITICAL VALUE IN HOLDING ON TO THE GENESIS UNDERSTANDING

There is political value in holding to the Genesis order of creation. Communicate through your actions and voting record that people are of greater worth than anything else in your district, both animate and inanimate, because at the end of the day it is only human beings who are eligible to vote. (At least at this point in American history, fish can't vote!) Stand for the betterment of common people versus the "enlightened class" who seek to deprive people of their right to make a living and forge a better life.

THERE ARE DIRE DEMOGRAPHIC & POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IN STORE FOR RADICAL ENVIRONMENTALISTS

Very much worth noting are the demographic consequences of radical environmentalism. Those advocating this position tend to have had only one child, if that, in the last two decades. Therefore, radical environmentalists have

committed a sort of suicide—let’s call it ideological suicide by attrition. On the other hand, those who follow the Biblical command of multiplying and filling the earth have continued to have large families. It is estimated that the latter group has outperformed the former by six million children since the advent of radical environmentalism in America in the last two decades. Those six million children are just now reaching voting age. Said another way, young Americans raised with a Christian worldview will soon outnumber the children of radical environmentalists by a possible six million voters in coming elections. Indeed, the Scriptural truth that “your sins will find you out” will soon be realized across the country. Hopefully the religion of radical environmentalism will soon be relegated to fringe minority status in American society. Amen.

We are seeing how the American government has assumed authority over issues that God never intended for government to take on. Radical environmentalism is just one of a myriad of ways that America has stepped away from God’s blueprint for us. Can a nation go on indefinitely flouting His principles without some consequence? Are we subject to the judgment of God when we forsake Him? We will address those questions now.

Notes

- 1 Statistics from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.
- 2 The words *Us* and *Our* in this passage are indicative of the Trinitarian nature of God.
- 3 Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stroughton Limited, 1972), 51.
- 4 McHarg, Ian L., *Design with Nature* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday/Natural History Press, 1971), 68.
- 5 Ken Cayce, “Genesis Chapter 1 Second Continued,” *Discovering Books of the Bible*, accessed March 14, 2018, <http://www.bible-studys.org/Bible%20Books/Genesis/Genesis%20Chapter%201%20Second%20Continued.html>.
- 6 *Insight Magazine*; Spring, 2001.
- 7 I find it interesting that radical environmentalists, when given the opportunity to store California Bay Area drinking water in a new proposed reservoir near Lake Shasta in the northern part of the state so as to facilitate the deconstruction of the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir dam in the Sierra Nevada, refused the proposition because HHR water and power presently cost the Bay Area nothing! That is to say that when restoring the environment comes at a personal cost, they seem quick to jettison their ideology.