

Godly Dominion vs Environmentalism: Reducing Poverty, Restoring Liberty, and Renewing Human Dignity by Reclaiming the Blessings of Genesis 1:28

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A newspaper reporter once asked me what I thought Biblical environmental stewardship would look like.



Genesis 1:28

“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.’”

I responded that, on the basis of Genesis 1:28, which says God blessed Adam and Eve

- “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,’”

it would look like



Biblical Environmental Stewardship

... looks like people made in the image of God, reflecting God's own creativity, working together to enhance the fruitfulness, beauty, and safety of the Earth, for the glory of God and the good of our neighbors, thus tying together the two Great Commandments to love God and love our neighbor.

- people made in the image of God,
- reflecting God's own creativity,
- working together
- to enhance the fruitfulness, beauty, and safety of the Earth,
- for the glory of God
- and the good of our neighbors,
- thus tying together the two Great Commandments to
 - love God and
 - love our neighbor.

For example, I said, three hundred years ago the average yield per grain of wheat sown was 4 grains, but today it's 800.

Godly Dominion's Effect on Wheat Yields



A drought-stricken wheat field in Texas illustrates typical wheat yield throughout history until two centuries ago.



Today's normal wheat field yields 200 times as much crop per seed.

That astonishing increase in yield came from our exercising godly dominion

- over the soil through better methods of cultivation, fertilization, and irrigation;
- over the weeds, insects, and diseases, through herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides; and even
- over the very wheat grains themselves, through careful breeding and, recently, genetic engineering.

Farmers' exercising godly dominion over the Earth not only makes food more abundant and nourishing and affordable for everyone—especially the poor—and so prevents hunger and starvation, but also means we don't need to farm nearly so much land to feed the same number of people, and that's good not just for people but also for ecosystems and all the creatures that live in them.

This is an important difference between environmentalism and Biblical stewardship—what I call godly dominion. Today I want to unfold for you (1) what I believe it means to live out the dominion mandate of Genesis 1:28, (2) how most of the environmental movement undermines that mandate and robs us of its blessings, and (3) how to recover it.

A little historical background, tied to an analysis of two great creation themes in Genesis 1:27 and 28, will help you see the situation we're in, the challenges it presents, and how, working together, we can turn those challenges into opportunities.



Genesis 1:27: The Essence of Man

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

Man is

- the image of God;
- male and female.

Genesis 1:27 reveals **the essence of man**:

- “God created man
- in his own image,
- in the image of God he created him;
- male and female he created them.”

Man is

- ✓ the image of God; and

- ✓ male and female.

From these truths flow all truths about man's relationships with and duties toward God and other men, and particularly about sexuality, marriage, and procreation.

Genesis 1:28: The Mission of Man

“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.’”

God's mission for man, male and female, is twofold:

- to multiply and fill the Earth; and, filling it,
- to subdue and rule it.

Verse 28 expands on **the mission of man**:

- “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.’”

God's mission for man, male and female, is twofold:

- to multiply and fill the Earth; and, filling it,
- to subdue and rule it

—not abuse it, but rule it as God does, enhancing its fruitfulness, safety, and beauty, to the glory of God and the benefit of our fellow men.

- Human multiplication, and
- human rule over the Earth—

—these are the heart of this verse.



Environmentalism’s Attack on Genesis 1:28

Human multiplication and human rule over the Earth
are the nemeses of environmentalism.

But these two ideas—multiplication and dominion—are also the nemeses of environmentalism.

- Believing that we have overpopulated the Earth and so our multiplication has become a curse, not a blessing, environmentalists attack the first part—“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”
- Following the lead of eco-historian Lynn White Jr., who argued in his 1967 *Science* magazine article “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” that Judaism and Christianity justified ecological abuse by appeal to this verse, they attack its second part: “subdue it and have dominion over” it.

Sad to say, even some Christians have come to view having more than one or two children as irresponsible, despite Psalm 127's teaching that children—lots of them—are a blessing from the Lord. Unaware that the Church has not interpreted Genesis 1:28 as justifying abusing the Earth, they have forced a false interpretation on it, transforming man's role from ruler to slave of the Earth.

As a result, even many **Christian** environmentalists, advocates of what they call "creation care," now undermine the message of Genesis 1:28. They have borrowed, without discernment, from a broader worldview, not recognizing it as part of a spiritual world war focused on undermining faith in Genesis 1:27 and 28.

Genesis 2:4–16 retells the story of creation with a focus narrowed in two ways from that of Genesis 1:

- Genesis 1:28 records God's mandate to Adam and Eve respecting the whole Earth: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it and have dominion over ... every living thing that moves on the Earth."
- Genesis 2:15 records God's mandate to Adam (before Eve's creation) respecting the Garden of Eden: "God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it."

As we learn from allusions to it elsewhere in Scripture, the Garden of Eden represented the sanctuary, the place of special communion between God and man. It was distinct from the rest of the Earth. Scripture distinguishes the Garden of Eden from the wilderness, which it uses to describe parts of the Earth man hasn't yet subdued, or that once were subdued but under divine judgment have become wild again. It often associates wilderness with divine curse.

In short, while guarding and improving the Garden of Eden, mankind's mandate was to multiply, spread out from the Garden, fill the Earth, and turn wilderness into garden.

But many proponents of creation care obscure this mandate by reinterpreting Genesis 2:15 and then transferring that false interpretation to Genesis 1:28.

How the Creation Care Movement Undermines Genesis 1:28

The undermining happens in two stages:

1. Wrongly interpreting Genesis 2:15
2. Wrongly interpreting Genesis 1:28 in light of the mistaken interpretation of Genesis 2:15.

Their reinterpretation of Genesis 2:15 involves two mistakes.

- First, they falsely assume that what Adam was to “work and keep” was the whole Earth, not just the Garden of Eden.
- Second, noting that the Hebrew *abad*, usually here translated “work,” “dress,” “cultivate,” or “tend,” can mean “serve,” they grasp that meaning and insist that it’s the right one here. But *abad* means “serve” only when its object is personal, not when its object is impersonal.

Nonetheless, they insist that Genesis 2:15 says man should “serve and keep” not just the Garden but the whole Earth. Suddenly the idea from Genesis 2:15 becomes almost identical to the preservationist idea of environmentalism—that nature is best untouched by human hands.

Then, they insist that “serve and keep” in Genesis 2:15 restates and controls the meaning of “subdue and have dominion” in Genesis 1:28—despite the fact that the verbs have very different meanings.

- *Subdue* translates the Hebrew *kabash*, to bring into bondage, to subdue or force, to dominate.
- And *have dominion over* translates the Hebrew *radah*, to rule or dominate.

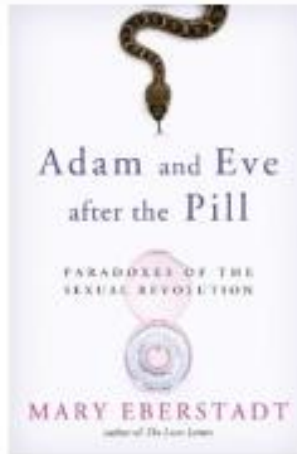
While I would certainly not say that evangelical proponents of creation care *intentionally* misinterpret Genesis 1:28, I'm convinced that their mistaken understandings arise partly because they have borrowed, without discernment, from a broader worldview heavily shaped by the environmental and population control movements.



And I'm convinced that those two movements are aspects of a spiritual world war that focuses on undermining faith in Genesis 1:27 and 28.

Let me quickly review some of the history of that spiritual world war for you. I'm drawing considerably on insights from three books:

3 Key Books that Unveil the Long War on God's Image

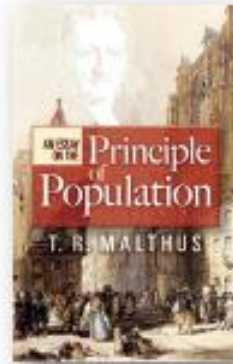


Robert Zubrin's *Merchants of Despair: Radical Environmentalists, Criminal Pseudo-Scientists, and the Fatal Cult of Antihumanism* (2012), Matthew Connelly's *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (2010), and Mary Eberstadt's *Adam and Eve After the Pill: Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution* (2012).

- In 1798, Thomas Robert Malthus published *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, inciting fear of overpopulation and depletion of

resources, portraying man as consumer, not producer.

1798—Thomas Robert Malthus

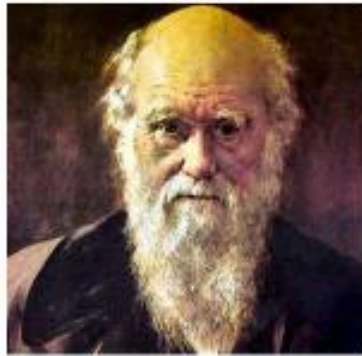


An Essay on the Principle of Population incited fear of overpopulation and depletion of resources, portraying man only as consumer, not producer.

- In 1859, building on Malthus, Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of the Favoured **Races*** (note that word!) *in the Struggle for Life*, undermining belief in the sanctity of human life and offering “scientific” justification

for racism.

1859—Charles Darwin

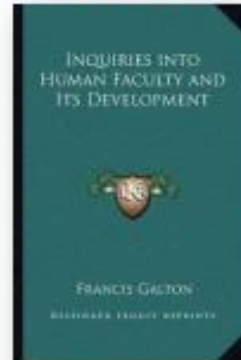


On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of the Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, undermined belief in the sanctity of human life as bearing the image of God and offering “scientific” justification for racism.

- In 1883, Francis Galton, building on Darwin, published *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*, launching the eugenics movement as a means for higher races (the “fit”) to weed out lower

ones (the “unfit”) through population control imposed on colonies.

1883—Francis Galton

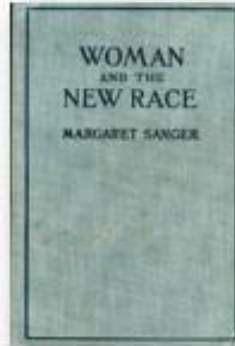


Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development launched the eugenics movement as a means for higher races (the “fit”) to weed out lower ones (the “unfit”) through population control imposed on colonies.

- In the 1890s through 1930s, Progressives like Margaret Sanger (founder of Planned Parenthood), building on Galton, launched the sexual revolution of the 1910s–1920s, advocating contraception and abortion to limit population growth among the racially “unfit.” Their efforts led to government “family planning” programs, including incentivized or coerced sterilization and abortion and refusal to alleviate famines, and contributed to Nazi anti-Semitism, eugenics,

and the Holocaust.

1920—Margaret Sanger

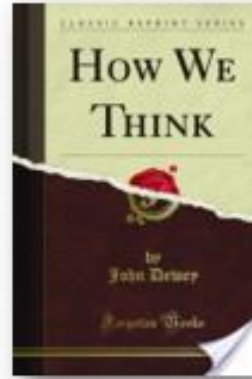
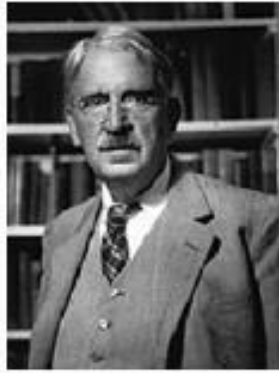


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- In the 1920s through 1950s, Secular Humanists led by John Dewey took over America’s colleges of education and then the public schools, undermining belief that human beings are the image of God with God-

given rights to life, liberty, and property.

1933—John Dewey



1920s—1950s, Secular Humanists, led by John Dewey, took over America's colleges of education and then the public schools, undermining belief that human beings are the image of God with a God-given right to life, liberty, and property.

- In the 1950s through 1970s, the Progressives' sexual revolution, delayed by the Great Depression and World War II, revived and, aided by new contraceptive technologies promising pleasure without consequences, became dominant, with destructive effects on

marriage, family, and broader society.

1953—Hugh Hefner



1950s–1970s: The Progressives' sexual revolution, delayed by the Great Depression and World War II, revives and, aided by new contraceptive technologies promising pleasure without consequences, became dominant, with destructive effects on marriage, family, and broader society.

- In 1962, Darwinist naturalist Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, popularizing exaggerated ecological fears that came to dominate the environmental movement. One consequence: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned DDT, though EPA's own scientific tests showed it safe, and the U.S. began requiring countries receiving foreign aid to ban it as well, leading to about 2 million malaria deaths

every year in poor countries.

1962—Rachel Carson



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- In the 1990s through today, the environmental movement has grown to world prominence, especially with
 - the U.N.'s Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), the Earth Charter, the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, Agenda 21, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiative (ICLEI), and the Kyoto Protocol;
 - the growth of the animal rights, plant rights, and ecosystem rights movements;
 - and demands for global governance to overcome alleged environmental crises, especially global warming.

1972—Maurice Strong



1970s—2010s: The environmental movement grows to world prominence, especially with the U.N.'s Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) the Earth Charter, the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, Agenda 21, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiative (ICLEI), and the Kyoto Protocol; the growth of the animal rights, plant rights, and ecosystem rights movements; and demands for global governance to overcome alleged environmental crises, especially global warming.

Environmentalism is a full-blown religion, with its own doctrines of God, creation, humanity, sin, and salvation. It is also, in my estimation, **the greatest threat to the survival of Western civilization and its institutions of the Rule of Law, government by consent of the governed, and the protection—however incomplete and flawed—of God-given rights to life, to religious and civil and economic liberty, and to property.** It is a threat

- greater than the Marxist secularism that spawned the Cold War,
- greater than the Secular Humanism that has now all but disappeared (except in American government-school education), overwhelmed by a vaguely defined “spirituality” all over the West characterized by imported spiritualities of the East; resurgent spiritualities of the ancient Near East, classical Greece and Rome, and pagan Europe; and the hybrid novel spiritualities of Jungian psychology;
- greater than radical Islam with its jihad.



4 Reasons Why Environmentalism Is a Great Threat to Western Civilization

- Internal and seemingly friendly.
- Speaks to spiritual yearnings of the human soul.
- Incorporates utopian vision, scientific façade, and religious fanaticism.
- Encompasses popular but vague “spiritualities.”

To borrow a literary device from the Prophet Amos, for three reasons and for four, environmentalism is a greater threat than all of these.

- ❖ First, because, unlike the Soviet Union and its satellites in the Cold War, and unlike Islamic jihad, which were or are external and clearly recognized as enemies by the overwhelming majority of people in the free world, environmentalism is internal and thought by most to be friend, not foe.
- ❖ Second, because, unlike arid and nihilistic Secular Humanism, it speaks to the inherent spiritual yearnings of human souls and provides plausible answers to dogged questions about how we got here, what causes suffering, and how suffering might come to an end.
- ❖ Third, because it incorporates the strengths of all three of those other threats: the utopian vision of Marxism, the scientific façade of Secular Humanism, and the religious fanaticism of jihad.
- ❖ And fourth, because it encompasses all those vague spiritualities that have already overwhelmed Secular Humanism and now threaten the Christian faith.

In short, the worldwide environmental movement today unites pagan religion, ecological utopianism, and socialist politics and economics to create a vision for a global government that is the conscious goal of those who lead it. Like the Earth Charter, the environmental movement seeks a fundamental transformation of the values, institutions, and practices on which modern civilization has rested.

A hundred years ago—about fifty years after Darwin's *Origin of Species*—the Darwinist movement had grown large and powerful enough to challenge the Christian teaching that previously prevailed not only in American churches but throughout American society, including the public schools. Darwinism attacked Genesis 1:27, on the essence of man. The result has been the tragic undermining of human dignity and the growing prevalence of all kinds of depravity, including abortion and euthanasia, which attack the sanctity of human life, and homosexuality, which attacks the God-ordained sexual differences and roles of human life.

My friends, listen carefully. This is the truth.


The Current State of the Church's War with Environmentalism

Today, the Christian church stands with regard to environmentalism where it stood a century ago with regard to Darwinism. At that time, some Christians strove valiantly, some were deceived, some were unaware, and some capitulated to Darwinism's attack on Genesis 1:27. We largely lost that battle, and the sad consequences are obvious all around us. Our response today to environmentalism must be better. To restore the teaching and reclaim the blessings of Genesis 1:28, we must exercise a wise, courageous, powerful, spiritual warfare, tearing down ideological strongholds, taking "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

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The Cornwall Alliance last year launched **In His Image**,



in HIS image 2012

Restoring the Glory, Dignity, and Purpose of People in God's Created Order

“...You have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor.”
—Psalm 8:5

“In His Image” (www.InHisImage2012.org) is the start of a multi-year effort to help evangelicals fighting on many battlefronts to see the interconnections and begin laboring more strategically and, we pray, effectively to reshape how people think of human beings and our role on Earth—to reassert the sanctity of human life and sexuality, the beauty and centrality of marriage, the goodness of human multiplication, and the dignity of human work and godly dominion over the Earth.

a multi-year educational effort to help Christian ministries fighting on many battlefronts in this spiritual world war to see the big picture and begin to cooperate better to restore the glory, dignity, and purpose of people in God’s created order. As part of that, we’re working on a new gospel presentation and training program that addresses young people’s longing for dignity and purpose in the face of environmentalism’s misanthropic view of people as parasites on the Earth. We need to help people recover the blessings of Genesis 1:28.

Earlier I told you about the astounding, two-hundredfold improvement in wheat yields. What are some other blessings that come from obeying Genesis 1:28?

For you really to appreciate them, let me paint quick and simple pictures for you of mankind’s past and present.



Human Life without Godly Dominion

- Abject poverty was nearly universal.
- Rampant disease plagued all ages of rich and poor.
- Nearly half of children died before their fifth birthday.
- Life expectancy at birth was about 27 or 28 years.

From a few generations after the flood in Noah's day, for the rest of the thousands of years of human history until just two hundred years ago,

- almost all people everywhere lived in abject poverty—on less than the equivalent of \$1.25 a day.
- Their main cooking and heating fuels were wood and dried dung, smoke from which even today kills over a million people a year in developing countries.
- Almost all transportation was by foot—and what wasn't had accidental injury and death rates sky high compared with today's.
- Slash-and-burn was the main agricultural method, resulting in terrible deforestation like what transformed Lebanon, famous in David and Solomon's times for its magnificent cedar forests, into a desert.
- Water-borne, smoke-borne, insect-borne, rodent-borne, and spoiled-food-borne diseases, along with hunger, stalked every land on Earth.
- Nearly half of all children died before their first birthday, and life expectancy at birth was around 27 or 28 years.
- No one enjoyed the benefits of
 - water purification,
 - sewage sanitation,
 - antibiotics or other medicinal drugs, or

- electricity and all the wonders that come with it—
 - from lights to work and learn by,
 - to power to run assembly lines,
 - to refrigeration and air conditioning,
 - to MRI's and computers.

Human Life with Godly Dominion

- While as recently as 1990 about half of all people lived in extreme poverty, today under one-fifth do.
- Many deadly diseases have been eradicated, and most others are now readily cured.
- Fewer than 5 in 100 infants worldwide die before their first birthday; in developed countries, under 4 in 1,000; in developing countries, mostly under 10.
- Worldwide, life expectancy at birth is over 65 years; in developed countries, near 80; nowhere below 40.

In the two centuries since then, in developed countries,

- real income has increased by a factor of about sixteen—and the standard of living it can buy has increased **by a factor of about 190**. That is, **the average person in developed countries today is about 190 times better off** than almost every person on Earth two centuries ago.
- While some abject poverty continues, and it should move our hearts to compassion and our hands to action, the share of the world's people living in extreme poverty has fallen from nearly one-half in 1990 to under one-fifth today, lower than at any time in history and rapidly declining—though environmentalism—not Biblical Earth

stewardship or godly dominion but environmentalism—constitutes a serious threat to reverse that trend.

- Our main cooking and heating fuel now is clean electricity (mostly from natural gas, coal, and nuclear—all of them hundreds, and nuclear thousands, of times cleaner than wood and dung).
- Almost all transportation is by car or truck, plane, train, or ship—and much safer and scores to hundreds of times faster.
- Cropland in developed countries has been improving in quality for over seventy years and is hundreds of times more productive.
- Because we've greatly reduced hunger and the causes of the diseases that brought the most deaths two centuries ago, life expectancy is near 80 in developed countries, over 65 in developing countries, and nowhere below 40.



How the Green Movement Robs Us of the Blessings of Genesis 1:28

- Trapping the poor in poverty
- Robbing people of property rights
- Touting false and exaggerated claims of eco-disaster
- Creating constantly-expanding, oppressive government
- Weakening sovereign states and pushing toward global government

But this progress can be stopped—and even reversed. The Green movement threatens to trap the poor in poverty and rob people of property rights by touting false or exaggerated claims of eco-disaster, creating constantly expanding, oppressive government while weakening sovereign states by pushing us toward global government.

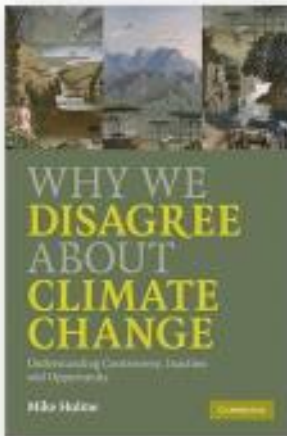
Would any of you want to go back to seeing half your children die before age five from disease or hunger? Of course not. But that's the consequence of the real world to which much environmentalism wants us to return.

We've looked now at environmentalism's threats to political liberty and material prosperity. I turn now to two other threats: to science, and to Christian faith and practice.

Environmentalism threatens the integrity of science and, therefore, the benefits of the technology that rests on it. This is relevant to the spiritual world war on Genesis 1:27–28 because science is one of our most important tools in fulfilling the Dominion Mandate to subdue and rule the Earth, and what is undermining it is a particular sort of irrationalism.

Consistent with the prevalence of mysticism in environmental thought, many environmental scientists today practice and promote post-normal science. Post-normal science is postmodern deconstructionism, which claimed that language doesn't convey meaning or truth but merely projects power, to science, resulting in researchers' going through the motions of science but with preconceived conclusions to serve a predetermined agenda.

Mike Hulme: Post-Normal Scientist, Socialist



Mike Hulme is a stellar example of a post-normal scientist. Professor of Climate Change (note that title—not of Climate, but of Climate Change) at the University of East Anglia (home of the infamous Climategate’s Climatic Research Unit), in which capacity he has taught many of the world’s leading climate alarmist scientists, and a leading contributor to the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, he is also the author of the book *Why We Disagree About Climate Change*. In short, though not much known to the public, Hulme, though rarely in headlines, may well be the most influential climate alarmist in the world.

Much as we might disagree with Hulme’s views on catastrophic anthropogenic global warming and reject his post-normal science, however, we should be thankful for his candor, for here are just four of many representative things he wrote in that book that reveal his commitment to post-normal science:

The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] is a classic example of a post-normal scientific activity. ...

... ‘self-evidently’ dangerous climate change will not emerge from a normal scientific process of truth-seeking ... scientists—and politicians—must **trade truth for influence**. ...

The idea of climate change should be seen as an intellectual resource around which our collective and personal identities and projects can form and take shape. **We need to ask not what we can do for climate change, but ... what climate change can do for us** Because the idea of climate change is so plastic, it can be deployed across many of our human projects and can serve many of our psychological, ethical, and spiritual needs.

... Within a capitalist world order, climate change is actually a convenient phenomenon to come along. ...

Oh—and did I mention that Hulme’s a Marxist?

My friends, the global warming juggernaut is how Hulme and others like him are promoting both socialism and global government by means of post-normal science, and post-normal science is first and foremost the attempt to project power by claiming consensus among scientists—it is as collectivist about alleged scientific facts as socialism is about economic production. And because it draws conclusions based on climate models regardless of real-world observations, it is also as irrational as pagan mysticism.

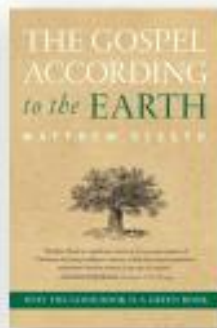
Let me now address environmentalism’s most important threat—to Christian faith and practice. I offer you three examples: its threat to the gospel and Christian ethics, its threat to Biblical authority, and its threat to the pro-life movement.

Environmentalism's Threat to the Gospel in the Name of "Creation Care"

The gospel becomes "If you love God, take good care of the Earth," not "Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
Imperative replaces indicative. Law replaces gospel.



J. Matthew Sleeth



Jonathan Merritt



Harper Collins Pub.

First, it threatens the gospel and Christian ethics. Books like

- Matthew Sleeth's *Serve God, Save the Planet* and *The Gospel According to the Earth* and
- Jonathan Merritt's *Green Like God* and even
- HarperCollins's *The Green Bible*

implicitly change the gospel from "Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried, and He rose again from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures," as Paul summarized it in 1 Corinthians 15, to something like, "If you love God, take good care of the Earth." Now, it's true that if you love God you will try to take good care of the Earth—and I encourage you to do just that—but that's not gospel; it's law, and law cannot give life. By obscuring this distinction, the evangelical environmental

movement threatens to obscure the gospel and thus rob the Church of her greatest treasure.

Environmentalism's Threat to Christian Ethics: Asceticism

Colossians 2:20-23:

If with Christ you died
to the elemental spirits of the world,
why, as if you were still alive in the world,
do you submit to regulations—
'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch'
(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—
according to human precepts and teachings?
These have indeed an appearance of wisdom
in promoting self-made religion
and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are
of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Some creation care books, like Jim Ball's *Global Warming and the Risen Lord* and Ben Lowe's *Green Revolution: Coming Together to Care for Creation*, get the gospel right but turn all kinds of environmentalist *desiderata*—recycling, using compact fluorescent light bulbs, not trespassing on the wilderness, eating only organic and locally grown foods—into moral imperatives, substituting the traditions of men for the commandments of God, sometimes even contradicting the commandments of God, and so becoming what the Apostle Paul warned about in Colossians 2:20–23: “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of

wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of **no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.**”

The grave danger to the Church of Jesus Christ is that so-called “Christian environmentalism” can become a new legalism: either a false gospel of justification by works rather than by faith, or, if not actually a false gospel, still a man-made, ascetic ethic not grounded in what the Bible calls “the perfect law of liberty.”



Environmentalism’s Threat to Biblical Authority

The Bible says we’re not supposed to be conformed to this world but

- to be transformed by the renewing of our minds by the Word of God;
- to test all things, hold fast what is good;
- to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Second, the Greening of the church undermines Biblical authority. Recently I was an invited plenary lecturer for the 2012 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, the theme of which was “Care of Creation.” I challenged some widespread environmental beliefs—including catastrophic, anthropogenic global warming (CAGW). Two New Testament scholars, also plenary speakers—were shocked that I would challenge the “98 percent of all climate scientists” who affirm catastrophic, anthropogenic global warming.

I don't challenge that consensus, because it doesn't exist. The survey on which that figure was based

- was sent to 10,257 Earth scientists;
- 3,146 responded; and
- the responses of only 79, who “listed climate science as their area of expertise [and] who also have published more than 50 percent of their recent peer-reviewed papers on the subject of climate change” (a highly incestuous group that carefully controls access to refereed journals) were counted in calculating the “98 percent of climate scientists”—thus excluding literally thousands from the count.

The survey asked only two questions, both guaranteed to return the desired answer. Every “climate skeptic” I know would have answered “Yes” to both. Respondents weren't asked, “Do you think human activity is the primary contributing factor?” or “Do you think anthropogenic warming has been, is, or will become catastrophic?” or “Do you think the benefits of mitigating future warming will outweigh the costs of mitigation?” Those are the debated questions, and those the survey completely sidestepped.

That's just one example of many attempts to show a consensus on global warming. Each has failed. In truth, thousands of scientists, representing every relevant specialty, deny the IPCC's view on climate change. But it doesn't matter, for consensus isn't a scientific value. The real scientific value is skepticism.

Nonetheless, the two other ETS speakers objected, saying that on those issues theologians “know nothing” and must simply “trust the scientists”

- —as if no theologians knew anything about the issues (I do!—as I pointed out, I've read over 45 books on the science of global warming, over 35 books on the economics of climate-change policy, and thousands of articles on the subjects);
- as if all scientists agreed (They don't!);
- and as if consensus mattered in science (It doesn't.).

Both compared questioning CAGW with questioning the historical existence of Jesus. I trust these brothers simply hadn't thought through the implications of what they said, but here are two:

- One, this implies that the ground for believing in Jesus' historical existence is no better than that for believing in global warming—which in turn implies either that the Bible, which affirms Jesus' existence, isn't the Word of God, or that the science behind global warming fears is as authoritative as the Word of God.
- Two, it gets things backward. The Bible says we're not supposed to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds by the Word of God. The Bible says we're supposed to test all things and hold fast what is good. The Bible says we're supposed to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. But "trust the scientists" amounts to saying, "Be conformed to this world, don't test all things, and let your thoughts be taken captive by others whose worldview, theology, and ethics might be radically anti-Biblical."



Environmentalism's Threat to the Pro-Life Movement

Minor, unintentional risk from environmental hazards is equated with intentional death from abortion, obscuring the meaning of "pro-life."


Third, the "creation care" movement threatens the pro-life movement. The largest and most influential "creation care" organization, the Evangelical Environmental Network—heavily funded by the pro-abortion and pro-population-control Rockefeller Brothers Fund—has argued that reducing mercury emissions from power plants is pro-life. Depending uncritically on

refuted studies, it claims that 1 in 6 American infants in the womb is at risk of devastating permanent brain damage because of those emissions. It praised as “sensitive to pro-life concerns” members of Congress who supported new mercury regulations—even some with 100 percent pro-abortion voting records. It questioned the pro-life commitment of members of Congress who opposed the regulations—even some with 100 percent pro-life voting records. Its campaign risked obscuring the meaning of “pro-life,” dividing the pro-life movement, and hampering efforts to elect more pro-life members of Congress.

But as Cornwall scholars documented in our major study *The Cost of Good Intentions: The Ethics and Economics of the War on Conventional Energy*:

- The number exposed to any mercury from power plant emissions is more on the order of 1 in 1,000 than 1 in 6.
- The actual risk to those exposed is not of “devastating brain damage” but of a delay in neurological development that
 - is so slight only a trained specialist, using specifically targeted tests, can detect it;
 - disappears in most by age two and in almost all by age seven; and
 - amounts to less than half a point reduction in IQ in those in whom it persists—a reduction less than commonly observed in identical twins raised in the same household.
- In stark contrast to the effort to curb abortion, none is at risk of death.
- And perhaps most important, none of the harm—whatever it is—is intentionally inflicted, as it is in abortion.

Pro-Life Leaders Fight Back



The screenshot shows the Cornwall Alliance website. At the top left is the Cornwall Alliance logo, a green 'CA' with a tree inside the 'A', and the text 'Cornwall Alliance For The Stewardship Of Creation'. To the right is a navigation menu: 'Home | Press | About | Articles | Blog | Contact Us | Get Involved!'. A 'Donate!' button is in the top right. The main content area features a title: 'Protecting the Unborn and the Pro-Life Movement from a Misleading Environmentalist Tactic' and a subtitle: 'A Joint Statement by Pro-Life Leaders'. The text below reads: 'Recently some environmentalists have portrayed certain of their causes as intrinsic to the pro-life movement. The tactic often involves appealing to a "seamless garment" of support for life, or to being "consistently pro-life" or "completely pro-life." As leaders of the pro-life movement, we reject that portrayal as disingenuous and dangerous to our efforts to protect the lives of unborn children. The term pro-life originated historically in the struggle to end abortion on demand and continues to be used in public discourse overwhelmingly in that sense. To ignore that is at best sloppy communication and at worst intentional deception. **The life in pro-life denotes not quality of life but life itself. The term denotes opposition to a procedure that intentionally results in dead babies.** In stark contrast, most environmental causes promoted as pro-life involve little threat to human life itself, and no intent to kill anyone. For example, even if one grants the **exaggerated numbers and harms** claimed by the

On the left side of the screenshot, there is a sidebar with the date 'June 15, 2012' and a section titled 'Key Documents' containing a list of links: 'Evangelical Declaration on Global Warming', 'Renewed Call to Truth', 'Cornwall Declaration', and 'Cornwall Stewardship Agenda'.

In response, over thirty top leaders of the nation's most prominent pro-life organizations endorsed a statement prepared by the Cornwall Alliance, "Protecting the Unborn and the Pro-Life Movement from a Misleading Environmentalist Tactic," repudiating the campaign. Nonetheless, sadly, EEN continues the campaign and has added support for carbon dioxide emission reductions to its list of "pro-life" causes.

A Call to Spiritual Arms for Spiritual Warfare

We face the prospect of

- an increasingly powerful U.N.,
- dominated by pagan religionists,
- backing an agenda for global wealth redistribution,
- engineered and enforced by global government,
- justified by the need to avert a global environmental crisis,
- belief in which depends not on real science but on irrational, mystical, post-normal science,
- used to intimidate a gullible world into submission to
- a comprehensive worldview that is anti-Christian and, *ipso facto*, anti-real science.

Let me conclude with a call to arms—to spiritual arms, that is, in spiritual warfare.

This is what we face: We face the prospect of

- an increasingly powerful U.N.
- dominated by pagan religionists
- backing an agenda for global wealth redistribution
- engineered and enforced by global government and
- justified by the need to avert a global environmental crisis
- belief in which depends not on real science but on irrational, mystical post-normal science
- used to intimidate a gullible world into submission to
- a comprehensive worldview that is anti-Christian and, *ipso facto*, anti-real science.

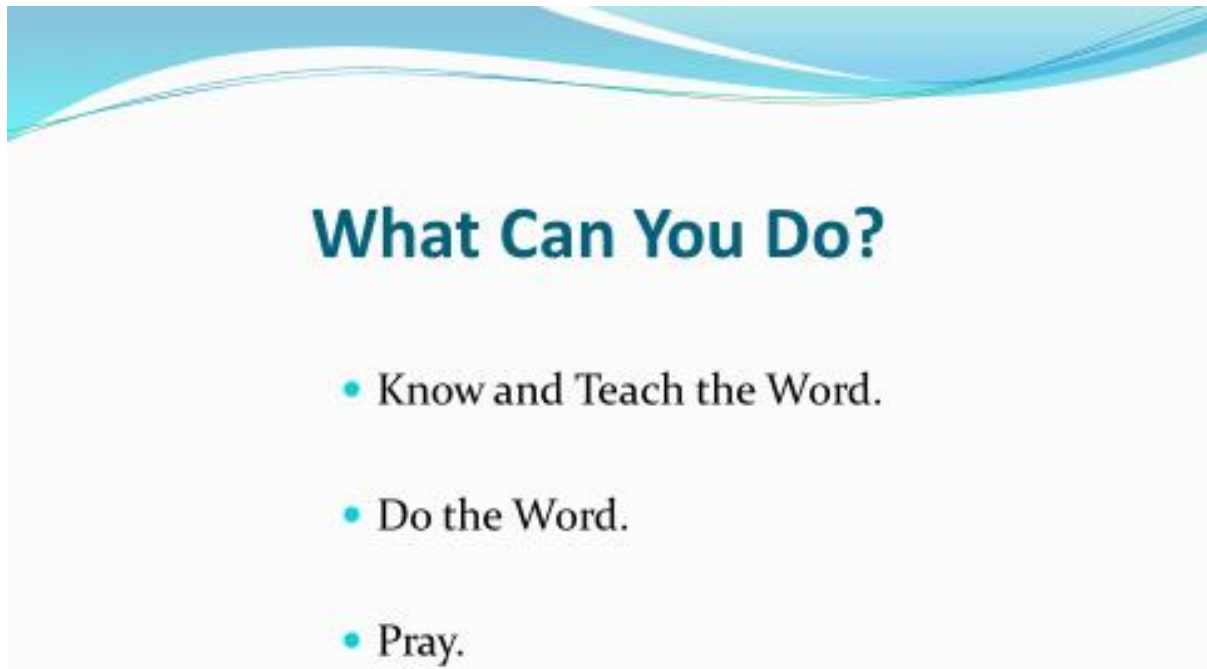
But liberty and property and the maintenance of national sovereignty and government by consent of the governed and real science with its

technologies have delivered the developed world, and can deliver the rest of the world, from abject poverty. But the Green movement is intent on destroying all of those and replacing them with

- paganism,
- global socialism,
- biological egalitarianism that demeans human life and seeks to reduce our numbers by 95 percent, and
- post-normal science, that is, pseudo-science,

all serving a political agenda that leads to global tyranny.

We need to wake up the Christian church to this threat and find ways to defeat it. We need to be like the men of Issachar, who, we're told in 1 Chronicles 12:32, understood their times, to know what Israel should do.



After all this, you might think the answer's complicated, but it's not.

What can you do?

Essentially, three things:

Know and teach the Word.

Do the Word.

Pray.

First, know and teach the Word. Many passages of Scripture can help people see through the false claims of environmentalism and understand, reclaim, and fulfill the blessed mandate of Genesis 1:28. Let me give you just three examples:

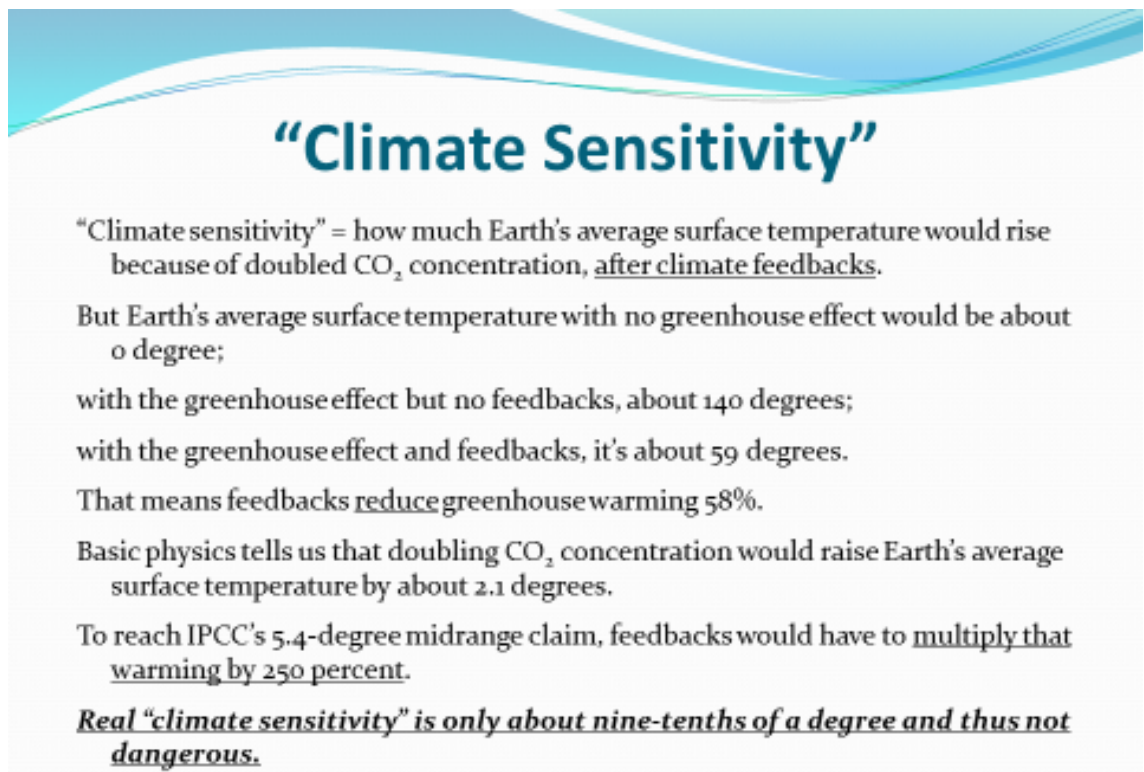
1. Psalm 104:9 says that after the Flood God “set a boundary [for the sea] that [its waters] may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth,” calling into question fears of catastrophic sea-level rise driven by manmade global warming.



2. Job 38:9 says God made clouds a “garment” for the sea, and as Wayne Grudem has argued, this implies that clouds act, as a garment does for the body, as a thermostat, a negative feedback mechanism regulating Earth’s temperature, warming it when it’s getting too cool, cooling it when it’s getting too warm—just as several scientific studies, by MIT’s

Richard Lindzen, University of Alabama's Roy Spencer, and others have shown.

3. Psalm 19:1 tells us, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." Is the fear of high "climate sensitivity"—how much Earth's average surface temperature would rise because of doubled CO₂ concentration, after climate feedbacks—consistent with belief that Earth's climate system is the product of an omniscient Designer, an omnipotent Creator, and a faithful Sustainer?



"Climate Sensitivity"

"Climate sensitivity" = how much Earth's average surface temperature would rise because of doubled CO₂ concentration, after climate feedbacks.

But Earth's average surface temperature with no greenhouse effect would be about 0 degree;

with the greenhouse effect but no feedbacks, about 140 degrees;

with the greenhouse effect and feedbacks, it's about 59 degrees.

That means feedbacks reduce greenhouse warming 58%.

Basic physics tells us that doubling CO₂ concentration would raise Earth's average surface temperature by about 2.1 degrees.

To reach IPCC's 5.4-degree midrange claim, feedbacks would have to multiply that warming by 250 percent.

Real "climate sensitivity" is only about nine-tenths of a degree and thus not dangerous.

Would a brilliant architectural engineer design a building so all feedbacks would magnify the stress of your leaning on a wall and make the building collapse? Yet global warming alarmism claims that increasing atmospheric CO₂ concentration from 27 thousandths of a percent to 54 thousandths of a percent could raise global average temperature by 5.4 Fahrenheit degrees or more. Instead, as much real scientific research has shown, overall climate feedbacks reduce greenhouse warming by 58 percent, eliminating its danger.

I wish I could go on and on, but you get the point. The Scriptures are a treasure trove of instruction about appreciating and caring for God’s Earth and fulfilling the dominion mandate. To learn more not only about Scripture but also about science and economics related to environmental issues, sign up for Cornwall Alliance’s email newsletter, read the many scholarly papers and articles on our website, CornwallAlliance.org, encourage your church members and friends to do likewise, read out book *Resisting the Green Dragon: Dominion, Not Death*, and view our 13-part video lecture series *Resisting the Green Dragon*—a complete Sunday school curriculum in a box—pray for us, and invite me or other Cornwall speakers to speak at your church, school, college, or community group.

Second, do the Word. How?



Some Concrete Actions

- “Adopt a Highway”
 - Neighborhood Cleanup
 - Neighborhood Gardens
 - Insulating Homes and Churches
 - Sensible recycling
 - Supporting or Volunteering with Ministries that Help the Poor in East Africa; e.g. www.cvtogether.org
 - Participating in Sensible Recycling Programs
 - Studying and Teaching Biblical Earth Stewardship
 - Praying for and supporting the Cornwall Alliance with online donations at www.CornwallAlliance.org
- Some of you might get your churches involved in local stewardship programs—like

- “Adopt a Highway,” or
 - working with local residents to clean up vacant lots in inner-city slums and turn them into community gardens (a great opening for evangelism), or
 - helping people save energy and money by caulking or insulating leaky houses or church buildings, or
 - getting involved in sensible recycling programs.
- But, frankly, America is already pretty clean and safe by historical standards and compared with poor countries around the world. So some of you might want to help the poor in developing countries, for example, through Cornwall Alliance’s sister ministry, Churches & Villages Together, which works with local church leaders in East Africa to bring evangelism, pastoral training, church planting, economic development through micro-enterprise, and basic environmental restoration and protection projects to remote, desperately poor villages.

Third and finally, **we all need to pray for each other and for the church around the world** to gain, and to put into practice, sound understanding of the Biblical, theological, scientific, economic, and other aspects of godly dominion, to reclaim the blessings of Genesis 1:27–28.



I'll close with this.

Not long ago my wife Debby and I read aloud through Erik Larson's *In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin*, which chronicled the lives of American ambassador to Germany William E. Dodd and his family from 1933 to 1938 and the horrors of which, little by little, they became conscious, and the ambassador's inability to awaken either the Roosevelt administration or the American people to them.

Not long after that, I happened upon the chilling 1940 movie *The Mortal Storm*, in which a handful of Hollywood stars, producers, and directors tried to warn drowsy Americans that the dangers of Hitler's Germany were far greater than they recognized.

Soon after that, I saw the classic 1964 movie *Judgment at Nuremberg*, which told the story of the trial of Nazi judges for crimes against humanity by an

American tribunal after World War II—a trial that could take place only because Americans still believed in transcendent, universal, absolute moral laws given by God.

Recently, Debby and I read aloud through Eric Metaxas's *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, about the heroic life and death of the humble German pastor who recognized and fought the evil of Nazism. Every pastor, and every seminarian, should read that book. We need men of God like him today.

About the same time, I read R. Daniel McMichael's *The Journal of David Q. Little*, a chilling, and terribly depressing novel—but nonetheless one you ought to read—about life in America after it, in part unwittingly, embraces Communism, by an expert on the tactics by which Communists brought about the capitulation of Czechoslovakia without firing a shot.

And most recently, given it by a new friend, I read Andy Andrews's *How Do You Kill 11 Million People?*—a very short book that every literate American should read, and could read in about 45 minutes.

I have never been more fearful for the collapse of liberty and order in America and around the world than I am today.

The whole world suffered immeasurably because people slept through the rise of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Castro, Pol Pot, and countless other socialist dictators. What are we going to do to help prevent another round of such terror and suffering—this time fueled by two utopian visions combined into one?

Am I concerned that God's sovereign control over the world is at stake? Not in the least.

But **I don't want it said**, a century from now, that **I didn't do my best, successful or not, to prevent the rise of pagan global tyranny.**

I hope you don't want that said of you, either.



**Cornwall
Alliance**
For The Stewardship Of Creation

www.CornwallAlliance.org

Who are we? A coalition of theologians, pastors, scientists, economists, and policy experts committed to promoting environmental stewardship and economic development built on Biblical principles.

What is our mission? We seek to magnify

- the glory of God in creation,
- the wisdom of His truth in environmental stewardship,
- the kindness of His mercy in lifting the needy out of poverty,
- and the wonders of His grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ.