

STEWARDSHIP 101-11

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CHAPEL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ADULT CLASS FALL 2003

God's Creation: Entrusted to the Steward's Care

As the advancement of science permits humanity to better understand its impact upon the earth, theologians are increasingly being forced to grapple with important questions of environmental ethics:

- What does the Judeo-Christian tradition teach about humanity's obligation to care for creation?
- Is human "dominion" responsible for the ecological crisis?
- How do the needs of the human person and the integrity of creation properly intersect?

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The first sentence of the Bible together with the subsequent creation of man, provide a necessary foundation for environmental reflection. God made the earth, and gave to human beings a special place and a role of stewardship in relation to the rest of creation. This place and this role afford human beings a unique dignity and responsibility. Environmental stewardship properly addresses both human responsibility to the environment and the special place and dignity of human beings within God's creation.

The creation mandate has two aspects:

Societal (be fruitful and multiply) and **developmental** (subdue and rule).

Man was never intended to stay in the garden, but was to move out to every corner of the earth and extend God's rule and build God's Kingdom.

"The world was delivered to man with "some assembly required." Just as an acorn cannot grow into a mighty oak without sun, soil, and time, so the earth required a process of maturation and growth. Creation was to be explored, new worlds were to be discovered, art and music produced, knowledge advanced, people, communities, and cultures built up."

Discipling Nations, Darrow Miller

"We must be going about the care and keeping of the creatures as Noah did and as God does (Psalm 104). God made a covenant with all the creatures, with all life, and with the earth (recorded repeatedly in Gen. 9:10,11,12,13,15,16, and 17). God is the Creator and that the awe and wonder we develop from the study of creation is to be directed to the Creator, not to creation (cf. Rom. 1:25 and Acts 14:14-18). The example of Noah is instructive: Noah cared for the creatures and preserved the species endangered by the flood not because they were gods, but because God required it - God's will and requirement is to keep the various species and kinds alive on the earth (Gen. 6-9)." Calvin Dewitt

**While 2 Peter 3:1-13 speaks of a judgment of fire, (cf Rev 11:17-18; Matt 24:35)
It also looks for a new heavens and earth (Rev. 21-22) and a bodily resurrection,
Romans 8:18-25 reveals that creation awaits a future redemption as well!**

More Resources:

- *Christian Stewardship of the Environment* by John E. Silvius
- *Preparing the Way for Action* by Calvin B. Dewitt
- *The Environment – A Christian Perspective* from The Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations
- *Creation's Laws: The Concept of the Development Ethic* by Darrow Miller
<http://www.uofnkona.edu/resources/worldview/creationlaws.html>
- Books on Christians and the Environment
http://www.earthcareonline.org/PopularBks_010829Web.html
- For links to Christian Environmental Organizations, see the web site.