



## ***FOCUS ON THE FAMILY:***

### ***A STATEMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT***

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*The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it. --Psalm 24:1*

Focus on the Family affirms, along with the Psalmist, that the earth and its resources belong to God. We further believe this encompassing truth regarding creation must be the starting point for understanding the environment and our place in it.

From a secular environmentalist point of view, which excludes God, the highest aim is to understand nature itself. How we treat nature, then, depends strictly on our own, relative ethics and preferences.

But if indeed there is a God, who not only created the heavens and the earth, but also expressed delight in His creation (Gen. 1:31), then it is crucial to learn about God and *His* expectations for our interaction with the world around us.

From Genesis 1 we learn that God gave man "dominion" or "rule" over the earth. Although many have charged that this passage justifies pillaging the earth, such thinking is alien to Scripture.

This charge is refuted by the fact that the very first job God gave humans was to tend and keep their surrounding environment (Gen. 2:15). More seriously, such thinking confuses authority with autonomy--the idea being that ruling involves an absence of accountability. In the Bible, however, authority involves not a *lessening* of accountability, but an *increase*.

This accountability is reinforced by Luke 12:48b, which says, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." The verse concludes a graphic parable in which Jesus contrasts the fate of a faithful steward with that of one who squanders and abuses his trust.

*Thus, the charge to rule over the earth should be understood not as a license to pillage it, but a command to care for it the way its Creator would.*

On the other hand, many environmentalists act as if concern for plant or animal trumps all others. This exclusive emphasis is likewise alien to Biblical thought, which cherishes *God* and *humans* above all else (Mat. 22:36-40). In fact, the Bible tells us that God takes personally our treatment of fellow humans--the poor, the naked, the hungry, the sick and the prisoner: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mat. 25:40).

Scripture repudiates any view that exalts creation above the Creator or trivializes human suffering. Though we oppose greed, covetousness and environmental "gluttony," basic human welfare--at home and abroad--must be preeminent in all environmental proposals.

Finally, Biblical thinking integrates consideration of the *physical* environment with the *spiritual and moral* climate as well (2 Ch. 7:13-14). A Christian understanding realizes the earth's ongoing history with environmental disasters--some of inconceivable magnitude--is resultant from the fact that humans have from the beginning frustrated God's best plan both for themselves and for the harmony of creation. We therefore recognize that human violence, injustice and other flagrant transgressions violate God and give rise to harm and disorder aberrant from original spiritual and physical design. Thus, as Christians who are called to love our fellow humans, we tremble to consider the consequences to a nation that spends billions for pure air and water, yet whose land--amongst other ills--is polluted by the blood of more than 40 million innocent preborn children.

Let us, then, love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind, and our neighbors as ourselves. Let us also cherish Creation as our Lord would, guarding it, as faithful stewards, from physical, moral and spiritual harm alike.

For "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it." ♦

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