

Environmentalism And The Christian Worldview

by Lauren Shirley

Environmentalism is a movement that is rapidly growing in popularity. Individuals and businesses are discovering the social and economic benefits of “going green.” While there are many beneficial “green” things, it is essential that we understand the worldviews propelling this movement. C.S. Lewis observed, “The most dangerous ideas in a society are not the ones being argued, but the ones that are assumed.” As Christians, we must understand these underlying philosophies to have the Biblical response to one of the most popular and important issues of our day.

Two worldviews largely influence the philosophies of environmentalism. A smaller percentage of proponents subscribe to a form of animism – worship of spirits found within nature. Commonly associated with indigenous tribes and recently promoted through James Cameron’s *Avatar*, it is a more traditional form of environmentalism and the call to protect “Mother Nature.”

The more dominant worldview behind environmentalism and the climate change promoted by the likes of Al Gore is a very different approach to the world. Environmentalism, with the sensational threat of global climate change and the necessary global government regulation to prevent such, is merely a cover for Marxism expressed through socialism and statism.

With a problem as massive as global warming has been made out to be, we are told that only immediate legislative and economic restrictions from both global and national bodies can reduce the coming calamity. From the Kyoto Protocol to the recent debate at Copenhagen, a unified global legislative method seems to be the preferred response. These agreements require much more of industrialized countries, prompting legislation such as cap-and-trade. All legislation comes at the expense of some freedom, but these place severe restrictions on businesses for theories without accurate scientific support. Such legislation is a blow to free market economics, businesses, and the consumers who will pay the difference as expenses increase.

There are many problems with the theories of global climate change and the propositions of the environmentalist movement. First, all scientists do not agree with the claims of human induced global climate change. Since 1998, over 31,000 scientists have signed a petition negating human responsibility for global warming.¹ Second, many sensational images have been emphasized in recent years, especially sea levels rising quickly rising, destroying coastal areas. However, more accurate estimates of global warming tell a different story. As E. Calvin Beisner, Ph.D notes, “IPCC mid-range scenario for sea level rise suggests only about 1.524 inches per decade, to which coastal settlements could readily adapt by building dikes.” Likewise, exaggerated scenarios such as increased tropical diseases, heat waves, and hurricane activity are either based on inflated or insufficient data, and there are often relatively simple responses that will reduce these “catastrophes.”ⁱⁱ

Although the facts indicate that global climate change is not the disaster it has been made out to be, Christians need to articulate a response to environmentalism that goes beyond the words “stewardship” and “recycling.” As the Lordship of Christ covers all areas of culture and creation, and in light of the Cultural Commission of Genesis 1, we have an obligation to have a comprehensive plan for protecting and developing what God has entrusted to our care. We must care for the plants, animals, land, and sea.

However, this must not be to the neglect or detriment of God's last creation, those made in His image to be in relationship with Him. The Biblical view values man's worth and population growth.

From Genesis to Revelation, we see the scope of God's story. We see history moving from a garden to His City, as God calls us to participate in His redemption plan for individuals, systems, and nature itself. In the Cultural Commission, He has called us both to protect and develop the natural resources He has given us. We are not to attempt to perfectly preserve the natural environment at the total limitation of human development and technological cultivation. Rather, we are to glorify God with the resources He has endowed to us. This is to be seen in the process of cultivation, the products themselves, and how the products are used. As sub-creators in the image of the Creator, we are to both conserve and cultivate what He has given us.

ⁱ <http://www.petitionproject.org/>

ⁱⁱ Beisner, E. Calvin, Ph.D. with Paul K. Driessen, Esq; Ross McKittrick, Ph.D.; & Roy Spencer, Ph.D. "A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming." Cornwall Stewardship Alliance. 2006.
www.cornwallstewardship.org