

# **TOWARD A BIBLICALLY BASED VISION OF CREATION CARE**

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“All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16-17, KJV).” This being true, the Holy Scriptures are and should be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice for the Bible-believing Christian. To subvert such authority with the vain and profane babblings of worldly philosophy and “oppositions of science falsely so called (I Timothy 6:20, KJV)” is to subvert that which God magnifies even above his own name (Psalm 138:2). Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all knowledge (Proverbs 1:7), all knowledge or quests for it should be filtered through the Word of the Lord, environmentalism being a case and point. Unfortunately, however, Christians have missed the boat on this issue, and it has been picked up by unregenerate humanistic activists who have turned earth care into a pantheistic religion. Christians then come behind and buy into the doom and gloom hysteria created by the secular environmentalists without ever really interpreting such in light of the truth—“Thy word is truth” (John 17:17, KJV). Steven Bouma-Prediger’s book *For the Beauty of the Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), a literary attempt to construct a theology of environmentalism, is somewhat typical of this. A casual perusal clearly reveals the evolutionary framework, postmillennial eschatology, over-inflated environmental statistics, inconsistency, and downright careless exegesis upon which the book is based. Though positive implications and nuggets of convicting truth can be gleaned, his theology of creation care, in short, is an emotional response that proceeds from the sensationalism of godless environmental “authorities” who seek to handcuff free enterprise, individual liberty, and human development. Regrettably, such naivety

is all too common in Christian educational circles, resembling the same naivety that bought into the “science” of evolution and endeavored to force Holy Scripture to reconcile with it (i.e. theistic evolution, day-age creation, etc.). If we are to be “people of the Book” as Bouma-Prediger claims (B.P., 116), then this should never be. The purpose of this brief excursus is to promulgate a *biblically-based* approach to creation care while at the same time critically evaluating the outlook embraced in many Christians educational circles, an example of which is set forth in *For the Beauty of the Earth*. This will be done by discussing biblical pillars that should undergird a Christian’s environmental conscience, reasons why Christians should respect creation, and how followers of Jesus Christ can gain an appreciation for what God has blessed mankind with through his abundant creative work. On a personal note, it may seem at this point that I harbor ill will toward environmental consciousness and creation care. This is far from the truth. I have tread the wonders of creation from Mt. Everest Base Camp to the Dead Sea, the Great Smoky Mountains to Yosemite, Mt. Rainier to Joshua Tree, the jungles of Southeast Asia to the beaches of Indochina, Badlands to Zion, the Grand Canyon to the Grand Tetons, and the Patagonian Andes to spewing volcanoes in Guatemala. Nothing gives me more joy than to behold the creative work of my Maker and praise his name for it. Like Bouma-Prediger, I love God’s creation and believe that there is and should be environmental consciousness in the life of the bible-believing Christian. However, such requires a *biblical* perspective not clouded by naivety and the ravings of unregenerate leftist environmental whackos who swim in ulterior motives. The Monarch of the Books commands me to be sober-minded (Titus 2:6), and sober-minded I will be with regard to the this issue. May God Almighty guide this quest.

#### A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR CREATION CARE

When one considers the *whole* counsel of God as proliferated in *all* of Holy Scripture, something Bouma-Prediger is unaccustomed to doing (see pp. 87-116), it becomes apparent that a biblically-based vision for creation care must be founded upon at least seven pillars—biblical creation, a proper understanding of sin and the dispensations of God’s grace, a pre-millennial eschatology, the believer’s pilgrim status, spiritual discernment, moral consistency, and subservience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Without these underlying bases, a “Christian” case for creation care is anything but biblical and therefore, less than Christian.

#### Pillar #1—Biblical Creation

“For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day (Exodus 20:11, KJV)”—This is the heart of biblical creation. An omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God framed the heavens and the earth by his word (Hebrews 11:3) in six twenty-four hour days (Genesis 1; Exodus 20:11, 31:17) for his divine pleasure (Revelation 4:11) and he, the Creator, sustains and preserves all that is in his creation according to his will and plan for the ages (Nehemiah 9:6). To speak of “keystone species” (B.P., 22), “ancient glaciers” (B.P., 28), an “Ice Age” (B.P., 29), “evolutionary adaptation” (B.P., 30), and “emerging from the ice” (B.P., 65) as Bouma-Prediger does, is to challenge the *ex nihilo fiat* creation account found in Genesis 1 with the *theories* of unregenerate evolutionists. In other words, Bouma-Prediger subtly sets forth evolution clothed in creation language. This is further demonstrated by his citations of evolutionists such as John Tuxill (B.P., 45) when he should be quoting the Holy Word of God. How can a Bible-believer legitimately develop an ecological theology “informed by science and guided by Scripture” (B.P., 15) when he bases it upon evolutionary concepts that fly in the face of divine revelation? Such is not an ecological theology informed by science and guided by Scripture, but one informed by Scripture and guided

by “science.” Unfortunately, the same evolutionary underpinnings that brought about the plethora of modern English translations of the Bible (e.g. B.F Westcott, F.J.A. Hort, Kurt Aland, Bruce Metzger, Eugene Nida, Eberhard Nestle, etc.) is underpinning environmentalism in today’s society. And, Christians are naively buying into this junk science. This should never be if the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Besides, there is plenty of scientific evidence out there promulgated by God-fearing creation scientists that coincides with the second law of thermodynamics (something evolution does not do), observable data, the creation account of Genesis 1, the catastrophic nature of the Flood (Genesis 6-9), and the relatively young age of the earth as implicated in the Bible. With regard to the latter, dust levels on the moon, the magnetic half-life of the earth, sediment deposits in rivers and oceans, the presence of comets, exponential population growth, a shrinking sun, and the high pressure of oil wells are just a start (Taylor, 282-308). When Bouma-Prediger should have been consulting the works of regenerate Bible-believing scientists like Henry Morris (*Scientific Creationism*) and Kenn Hamm (*Answers in Genesis*) to construct his theology of creation care, he was consulting and buying into the “science” of those who detest the Bible and its revelation of creation. At best, such an approach is inconsistent and downright dubious. Besides, if God utilized evolution to create the earth or the days of Genesis 1 represent ages (as Bouma-Prediger implies), one has yet to explain how plants and trees (created on the third day) lived for millions of years without the sun (created on the fourth day), or how birds (created on the fifth day) showed up millions of years before reptiles (created on the sixth day).

The Bible not only presents an *ex nihilo fiat* creation (“And God said, Let there be . . . and there was . . .”) and a young earth (Luke 3:23-38), it also sets forth mankind as part of the creation with dominion over it (Genesis 1:28, 9:1-7). The typical environmentalist agenda of

today, however, would have us to believe that man is somehow apart from creation with no right to intrude upon it or exert dominion over it. Some have even gone as far as to assert that dolphins have “an intelligence approaching that of human beings or even, some might argue, surpassing it (Limbaugh, 108).” With all due respect, when is the last time a dolphin wrote a book, constructed a high-rise building, discovered a medical breakthrough, sent a spaceship to the moon, or was able to grasp a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? The root of such whacko assertions and ideals is “the belief that man and animals are equal in creation, that man evolved from the apes, and that creation is an allegorical myth contained in that wonderful piece of literature known as the Bible (Limbaugh, 104).” Unbiblical presuppositions like these are what fuel organizations such as the Sierra Club, who if they had their way, would want all humans out of the High Sierra permanently. Then, there would be no backpacking, climbing, day-hiking, or sauntering in the “Range of Light.” For Christians, however, biblical creation yields another approach—mankind as an inevitable part of creation with special needs derived directly from the creation and God-given authority to govern over the creation. A biblical theology of creation care need not buy into secular environmentalism’s disjunction between nature and culture that is simply not consistent with the way things are biblically and observably. Initially, Bouma-Prediger gets this part right (B.P., 16) but then subtly contradicts it with his careless exegesis in Genesis (B.P., 74, 98-99). One writer sums things up nicely:

We are as much a part of it [creation] as any of its other inhabitants, both animate and inanimate; as much as a redwood tree or a spotted owl, as much a part of it as a glacier. But environmentalists paint humans almost as an aberration; as the natural enemy of nature. According to them, we are capable of destroying this wondrous planet merely by being ourselves. This is true vanity, or what I call humanity vanity (Limbaugh, 153).

Biblical creation is not only rooted in an Almighty God who made the earth but an Almighty God that sustains it according to his divine purposes (Nehemiah 9:6, Colossians 1:17). Bouma-Prediger touches upon this (B.P. 107, 120), but once again subtly denies himself by suggesting

that man can destroy the earth with technological progress, population growth, and the “raping and plundering of the earth.” (B.P., 39-86). A theology of creation care that is based upon the presupposition that mankind can destroy, is destroying, and will destroy that world if he does not take care of the environment (i.e. recycle, ride his bicycle, do away with SUVs, limit oil drilling, outlaw hunting, hug a tree, etc.) is not founded upon biblical creation. For, “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1; I Corinthians 10:26), “all things shall be subdued unto him” (I Corinthians 15:28), and “thou preservest them all” (Nehemiah 9:6). The earth is a remarkable creation and God Almighty is perfectly capable of sustaining it according to his divine purposes. “We can’t destroy it. It can fix itself [e.g. the earth’s response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill]. We shouldn’t go out of our way to damage, but neither should we buy into the hysteria and monomania which preaches, in essence, that we don’t belong here” (Limbaugh, 168).

The bottom line for the Christian is this: Any and all concepts of creation care should proceed from a framework of biblical creation as opposed to the “scientific” ravings of humanistic evolutionists and environmental sensationalism. According to the Bible, God is in control while we have a right to be here and use the earth to make our lives better.

#### Pillar #2—Proper Understanding of Sin and the Dispensations of God’s Grace

A biblically-based concept of creation care must also take into account the presence and effects of sin while realizing the dispensations of God’s grace in dealing with that sin. Not long after God created the heavens and the earth, mankind fell from his state of innocence. The woman was deceived and the man willfully disobeyed. Such actions were rooted in the ignorance, questioning, and changing of God’s Word (Genesis 3:1-3), so when Bouma-Prediger attempts to alter the perfectly preserved words of God with his private interpretations (cf. II Peter

1:20), the Bible-believer should turn a deaf ear (e.g. B.P., 93-94). Anyway, when sin entered the picture, the entire creation fell. What once existed in perfect herbivoric harmony with man as the benevolent sovereign under God's authority quickly became a chaotic groaning (Romans 8:22) where Satan was given power as "the prince of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), the ground was cursed (Genesis 3:3), the serpent lost his legs (Genesis 1:14), mankind would reproduce in pain (Genesis 3:16), animals would kill each other, and death would reign (Romans 5:12). All hope for a return to Edenic conditions was lost without the intervention of God Himself, manifest in the flesh, who would nail himself to a cross for our sins and be raised from the dead for our justification. This sacrifice for the sins of the world, first prophesied in Genesis 3:15, would inaugurate the blessed hope of the believer—"new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13). Only then, will the groaning of creation cease—"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6, KJV). Jesus Christ, the maker of heaven and earth, is the only one who can fix the mess this world is in. He will return with the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30, 26:54; Mark 13:26, 14:62) and restore what mankind never has been nor ever will be able to restore because of sin—"The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, KJV). Therefore, despite the ploys of secular environmentalism, the earth cannot be fixed by sinful men. All efforts to the contrary are pipe dreams from cloudland. While some such as Lynn White may blame Christians for the "raping and plundering" of the earth (B.P., 72-73), the real blame falls upon sin, a state of unrighteousness that tainted all of creation. A biblically-based concept of creation care, therefore, recognizes that the groaning of the earth is inevitable. Only Jesus Christ can remedy what recycling, composting, pollution controls, bicycles, Clean Air

Bills, political lobbying, eco-terrorism, and endangered species lists cannot nor ever will be able to do.

Not only must the ecologically conscious Bible-believer understand the ramifications of sin, he must be able to rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15). In other words, one must “distinguish the periods and the Scriptures will harmonize” (Larkin, 31). Since the beginning of creation, God has dealt with mankind in different ways so as to demonstrate that under any circumstance, left to himself, man would not choose God (e.g. innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the future millennial kingdom). Since the cross, man has been under the dispensation of grace with conscience and human government also bearing witness to the truth. This will not change until Christ himself returns to set up his earthly millennial kingdom. Even then, in the presence of a conquering king who rules with an iron hand, men will still reject God (Revelation 20). The point of all this is to illustrate that what once applied under the dispensation of Edenic innocence (i.e. before sin entered the world) no longer applies to mankind today. So, Bouma-Prediger’s semantic twaddle about the creation mandate in Genesis 1:28 is meaningless in light of the further revelation of Genesis 9:1-3, a passage he conveniently forgets to consider. God’s “first endangered species act” (B.P., 100) actually says: “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things” (Genesis 9:2-3, KJV). A rightly divided word of truth reveals the moral legitimacy of mankind’s responsible use of the earth. It also reveals that man cannot destroy the earth with his technological advances. Final destruction will be carried out by the finger of the Almighty (II Peter 3:7).



### Pillar #3—Pre-Millennial Eschatology

One of the problems with Steven Bouma-Prediger's concept of "creation care" is that his eschatological tone is post-millennial and naively optimistic. Across the board, his faith and optimism in human effort is easily detectable. It is apparent that he sees environmental consciousness amongst "Christians" as the answer to the earth's environmental problems (the extent of which are questionable at best). In other words, things will get better and better until the Kingdom of God is ushered in by the good deeds of his "children." Such an outlook flies directly in the face of Scripture passages such as Luke 13:20-21; I Timothy 4:1-5; II Timothy 3:1-13; II Peter 3:3, etc. Moreover, those that have held such an "optimistic" outlook in the past (i.e. the Roman Catholic Church) believed that it was the church's responsibility to usher in the Kingdom of God even to the point of force, resulting in the systematic butchering of fifty million Bible-believing Christians from A.D. 500-1500 who rejected the false heresies of popish Romanism. Equating the Kingdom of Heaven (literal) with the Kingdom of God (spiritual) may perpetuate optimism and zeal for ministry, but it inevitably leads to the religious sanction of politics, structure, format, procedure, leadership hierarchy, and force (if need be) to make the world a better place. History teaches that such post-millennialism creates a slippery slope that ends with killing in the name of Christ. This fact alone renders Bouma-Prediger's outlook suspicious from the outset.

I do not express such negativity to discourage intense efforts at evangelism, church growth, reformation, and environmental care; but biblically, I do not expect things to get better; they will wax worse and worse so that only Christ Jesus can return to set things straight. This is pre-millennial eschatology and the plain sense of Holy Scripture. Despite Bouma-Prediger's babbling about the New Revised Standard Version's reading in II Peter 3:10, a reading that goes

against all other versions and the overwhelming majority of historical evidence, II Peter 3:3-13 teaches that the present heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the earth will be melted away with fervent heat. While standing upon a dubious reading in one phrase of one verse, Bouma-Prediger conveniently forgets to discuss II Peter 3:7, 11-13. The days of this earth are numbered, and though we should demonstrate respect and responsibility toward the present creation, we cannot change the inevitable. The Bible-believer has no business casting his lots with the false utopianism of unregenerate humanists, “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water” (II Peter 3:5).

#### Pillar #4—The Believer’s Pilgrim Status

The Bible-believer who seeks to develop a biblical concept of creation care must never forget his status as a pilgrim in this present world. This is not our home; our blessed hope is a new heaven and a new earth where “thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (Isaiah 60:20, KJV). This new earth will far surpass that of the present time. As one Christian songwriter put it, “In six days you created everything, but you’ve been working on heaven two-thousand years” (Green, Vol. 1, 212-213).

As strangers and pilgrims, models for imitation do not include the animal rights activists, tree-huggers, the Environmental Protection Agency, or the Sierra Club but those faithful men and women of God who “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13, KJV). Strangers and pilgrims do not despair over the present status of this world. Rather, they heed the exhortation of I Peter 2:11-12: “Dearly

beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (KJV).

#### Pillar #5—Spiritual Discernment

The Bible commands believers: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1, KJV). This, of course, applies when one considers the plethora of doom and gloom hysteria that exists with regard to the present state of the earth. To accept such statistics blindly, as Bouma-Prediger does (B.P., 39-66), is naïve to say the least. Take population growth, for example—something Bouma-Prediger makes a big deal over. All the sober-minded Christian has to do is a little math. There are approximately six billion people in the world today. If every single person were given two acres of land, then the entire world population would fit into a space a little less than the size of the state of Texas. Besides, what is Bouma-Prediger’s answer to overpopulation? Abortion? Euthanasia? Limiting the number of children a family can have? These are the world’s answers. Other junk science rallies sensationalism to the cause of disappearing forests, a depleting ozone layer, and endangered species. A lot of Christians, like Bouma-Prediger, show little spiritual discernment (resulting from an ignorance of the entire Bible that is absolutely appalling) and buy into such causes without ever pausing to consider the logical conclusions of the data presented and the common sense observable facts that refute such data. With regard to the ozone layer, there is plenty of lucid evidence to show that the hole over Antarctica is a natural occurrence (Limbaugh, 154-155). Moreover, one volcanic eruption, like that of Mt. Pinatubo in the Philippines, spews out more than a thousand times the amount of

“ozone-depleting” chemicals into the atmospheres than man has done in his entire history (Limbaugh, 154-155). And we are supposed to believe that sport utility vehicles are more powerful than a volcanic eruption? Better yet, am I supposed to believe that “half of the world’s forests that once covered the earth are now gone” (Bouma-Prediger, 47) when I have personally observed trees as far as the eye can see in places like Washington and Oregon, the center of America’s logging industry? In fact, there are more trees in America today than there were when the Declaration of Independence was signed. Unlike then, firefighters today are able to put out naturally occurring fires that once burned areas the size of some of our smaller U.S. states (Limbaugh, 165). All in all, Bible-believers must be sober-minded when it comes to the statistics of environmental junk science just like they are to be sober-minded when it comes to science based on the *theory* of evolution. “The fingerprints of junk science are all over the environmental movement. It is their lifeblood” (Limbaugh, 163). Yet, the lifeblood of the environmentally conscious believer flows from a fountain drawn from Immanuel’s veins. Our hope is in the Word of God—“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Revelation 21:6, KJV). Much more environmental junk science could be exposed at this juncture, but one must move on. Like the Apostle John, “I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee” (III John 1:13, KJV).

Not only is much of worldly environmentalism constructed upon junk science, but it swims in ulterior motives. The Bible-believing Christian must show a measure of spiritual discernment, for, “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (II Timothy 3:13, KJV). The Bible predicts that a one world order will be established under the Antichrist prior to the Second Coming of Jesus. We see much of this transition occurring today

before our very eyes. Secular environmentalism plays into this entire scheme (Grady, 511-513). According to a report issued by a think-tank of intellectual bigwigs commissioned by the United States Department of Defense in 1963, other than the threat of war (something beginning to diminish at the time), the most effective fear tactic for enslaving the masses to the bureaucratic infringements of their own government was pollution of the environment. An excerpt from this controversial *Iron Mountain Report* reads:

When it comes to postulating a credible substitute for war...the “alternate enemy” must imply a more immediate, tangible, and directly felt threat of destruction. It must justify the need for taking and paying a “blood price” in wide areas of human concern. In this respect, the possible substitute enemies noted earlier would be insufficient. One exception might be the environmental-pollution model, if the danger to society it posed was genuinely imminent...It may be, for instance, that gross pollution of the environment can eventually replace the possibility of mass destruction by nuclear weapons as the principal apparent threat to the survival of the species. Poisoning of the air, and of the principal sources of food and water supply, is already well advanced, and at first glance would seem promising in this respect; it constitutes a threat that can be dealt with only through social organization and political power...However unlikely some of the possibly alternative enemies we have mentioned may seem, we must emphasize that one must be found of credible quality and magnitude, if a transition of peace is ever to come about without social disintegration. It is more probable, in our judgment, that such a threat will have to be invented (Griffin, 523).

Something bigger and more devious is at work than spotted owls, redwoods trees, and sucker fish. Christians must be sober and vigilant (I Peter 5:8) while refusing to fall prey to tactics of fear that seek to undermine individual liberties and human development with intrusive government. After all, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25, KJV). For the Bible-believer, there is nothing to fear. We know where the earth has been and where it is going. Despite what the scientists, political liberals, and environmental eco-terrorists may say, we have the saint-used, time-tested, infallible, inerrant, perfect, preserved Words of God and the Absolute Monarch of *all* Books. As one author succinctly states things,

There are spots and blemishes in the most admired productions of human genius. But the more the Scriptures are searched, the more minutely they are studied, the more their perfection appears; new beauties are brought into light every day; and the discoveries of science, the researches of the learned, and the labours of infidels, all alike conspire to illustrate the wonderful harmony of all the parts, and the Divine beauty that clothes the whole (Hislop, 1).

The way to develop spiritual discernment that many Christians lack in the area of environmental “wisdom” is to follow the example of the Bereans in Acts 17: “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11, KJV). As for Bouma-Prediger, he should have paid more attention to the Bible than he did to the advice of atheists like Karl Marx, Frederich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud (B.P., 88), the babblings on virtue of a sexual pervert—Aristotle (B.P., 138-140), and the theological declarations of Roman Catholic heretics like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (B.P., 16, 38).

#### Pillar #6—Moral Consistency

Another important pillar upon which a biblically-based concept of environmental care must be based is moral consistency. It is a sad fact that the great majority of environmental activists who fight tooth and nail for spotted owls in Washington, garbage fish in Klamath Falls, Oregon, and an overpopulation of caribou in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge think it is acceptable to murder unborn children and euthanize those deemed “unfit for society.” Such people “believe in controlling the human population through the use of abortion [and euthanasia]. Yet, they recoil at a similar means of controlling pigeons. What rank hypocrisy” (Limbaugh, 110-111). There is no place for this moral inconsistency in the life of an environmentally conscious believer. At the very least, he better fight for the rights of unborn children as much as he fights for the rights of any animal. As Keith Green, a very environmentally conscious Christian, once put to music: “I find it hard to turn away the murdered unborn children. Yes, times have changed, but still God warns: You shall not take a life. I want to save a life today. I want to keep one alive for my father, who will avenge the blood of weak and helpless ones someday, whose lives are spilled

out like water, lambs to the slaughter, and each one his hand-made by Jesus” (Green, Vol. 2, 5-7).

Accepting the foundational premises of evolution while claiming to purport a theology of creation care is also morally and biblically inconsistent. Bouma-Prediger’s example reminds me of the importance of Paul’s exhortation in Ephesians 4:14: “That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (KJV). Moral consistency, on the other hand, implores Bible-believers to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15, KJV).

#### Pillar #7—Subservience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Last, but not least, a biblically-based vision for creation care must be subservient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Bouma-Prediger’s attempt to “environmentalize” Christianity, he, in essence, places the concept of creation care on the same level as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is demonstrated by statements like: “Authentic Christian faith requires ecological obedience. To care for the earth is integral to Christian faith” (B.P., 14); “Indeed, if Jesus did not die for white-tailed deer, redheaded woodpeckers, blue whalers, and green Belizean rain forests, then he did not die for you and me (B.P., 124); “Care for the earth is an integral feature of authentic Christian discipleship. It is not the gospel in its entirety, but the gospel is not the gospel without it (B.P., 135); etc. Besides stepping dangerously close to rank heresy with such statements, Bouma-Prediger adds something to the Great Commission that simply is not there. Jesus did not command his followers to recycle, rally against hunting, and put loggers and hunters out of business. He commanded them to preach the Gospel to every nation (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark

16:15). This is top priority—“yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel” (I Corinthians 9:16, KJV). Everything else is trivial in a life and world that is transitory and fleeting (I Thessalonians 5:3; James 4:14). Bouma-Prediger’s rethinking of the Gospel in ecological terms (B.P., 118) is unbiblical perversion. I am reminded of Paul’s words in Galatians 1:7-9: “But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (KJV).

### BIBLICAL REASONS FOR CREATION CARE

Having discussed seven biblical pillars that should undergird a Christian vision for creation care, a question is therefore begged: Should the Bible-believer go out of his way to care for something that previously fell, presently groans, and will prospectively desist? The answer is a resounding YES! But, such conscience should not arise from the intrinsic value of a creation tainted by sin, the concept of animal rights, or a fear that mankind might destroy the world. Rather, it should stem from at least two reasons of far greater eternal value.

#### Reason #1—Creation is General Revelation

First and foremost, creation, along with history and human conscience, is general revelation—“that knowledge of God derived from the light of natural things” (Sargent, 15). Such proclaims the existence of God, the fullness of the Godhead, the power of the Almighty, the finiteness of all men, and man’s need for a relationship with God (Psalm 8:1, 19:1-6, 104:24; Isaiah 40:12,26; Romans 1:18-20). General revelation cannot save a man because it is inadequate on two grounds. First, creation has been affected by the entrance of sin; the witness is therefore marred and blurred and serves as a monument to God’s curse upon sin (Genesis 3:17;



Romans 8:22). Secondly, man himself has also been affected by sin, to the extent that he is not able to completely comprehend the evidences afforded by the Creator in nature. Nonetheless, enough of a witness remains to condemn mankind and point him to God. Many a soul has actively sought after and found the Gospel of Jesus Christ through special revelation (i.e. the Bible) after having responded to the general revelation of God inherent in creation. After all, what man can *honestly* behold the giant sequoia, a desertscape of Joshua trees, a maze of Himalayan giants, the azure beauty of Crater Lake, the vast expanse of the Grand Canyon, the Aurora Borealis, and the gentle wilderness of the Sierra-Nevada without acknowledging the fingerprints of an all-powerful Creator? Those that reject such revelation deceive themselves. For these reasons, we, as Christians, should want to preserve creation as much as is practicably possible for future generations. For some, it may serve to point them to the Word of God. To haphazardly destroy the natural wonders of the earth is to haphazardly destroy a monumental witness that cannot be replaced.

### Reason #2—The Wonders of Creation Can Help Facilitate Spiritual Growth

While providing general revelation for the unbeliever, creation can also facilitate spiritual growth in the life of a believer. Even Jesus recognized this, for he often sought to commune with the Father alone on a mountain or in a desert place. Personally speaking, the greatest feeding and fellowship times I have had with God and in the Word of God occurred in places like the Galilean seashore, Mount Everest Base Camp, Arches National Park, the summit of Mount Rainier, a deserted island in the Gulf of Thailand, and the snowscape of Mt. Lassen. It would be a shame to deprive other believers of such opportunities to be found amongst the wonders of creation. What amazing joy it is to know:

For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what *is* his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, *is* his name (Amos 4:13, KJV).

*Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name (Amos 5:8, KJV).

*It is* he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name (Amos 9:6, KJV).

Even more amazing is the fact that the very Creator who formed the mountains, sketched the seas, and hung the earth in space lives in the hearts of those who place their faith in his atoning work—“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13, KJV).

### GAINING AN APPRECIATION FOR THE CREATION

It is unfortunate that few Christians appreciate the witness of creation as they should. In addition to exhibiting an appalling ignorance of the Bible, lukewarm believers in this Laodicean day and time are too cozy in their comfort zones to step out and experience the blessings that creation, though tainted by sin, still has to offer. The best way to gain a healthy vision for creation care is simply to encounter creation, to experience it. The “how-tos” will then become apparent. Moreover, perhaps, the lukewarm believer will come to recognize that God has called him to things far greater than a secure future with a monotonous horizon. Chris McCandless, a twenty-four year old unsaved idealist who died in the wilderness of Alaska, after disconnecting himself from a greedy society he despised, once wrote something that should ring true for the Christian, who has the very answer to meaning for which McCandless was searching, but never found.

So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, conservatism, all of which may appear to give one peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more damaging to the adventurous spirit within a man than a secure future. The very basic core of a man’s living spirit is his passion for adventure. The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun. If you want to get more out of life . . . you must lose your inclination for monotonous security and adopt a helter-skelter style of life that will at first appear to you to be

crazy. But once you become accustomed to such a life, you will see its full meaning and its incredible beauty . . . Don't settle down and sit in one place. Move around, be nomadic, make each day a new horizon . . . You are wrong if you think joy emanates only or principally from human relationships. God has placed it all around us. It is in everything and anything we might experience. We just have to have the courage to turn against our habitual lifestyle and engage in unconditional living (Krakauer, 93-95).

## CONCLUSION

There is no specific prescription or checklist for biblical creation care. When one undergirds such with the seven biblical pillars previously discussed, comprehends biblical reasons for creation care, and seeks to gain appreciation through the ever-changing horizon of a life consecrated to Gospel service, one's responsibilities will be made plain. While the unregenerate environmentalists despair over doom and gloom hysteria and the pantheistic tree-huggers shout praise to the mountains, the Bible-believer can proclaim without apology his refuge in the One who made the trees and the mountains. After all, he possesses the answers others are seeking for in the wrong places.

*Look out your window, see the Earth.  
Where did it come from? Who gave it birth?  
Where did it come from? Where will it go?  
Don't you wish you had the answers? Well, I know.*

*See how the rain falls. Who made the sky?  
It's never ending and you wonder why.  
Where did it come from? Where will it go? Where will it go?  
Don't you wish you had the answers? Well, I know.*

*Just look out past the stars. Look to the One who put them there.  
He, He made them all and he gave them to us, to us to share.  
Yes, he made them all, and He's gonna take them all back some day.*

*Don't you just wonder, what lies ahead?  
There's peace in knowing what Jesus said.  
Where did you come from? Where will you go? Where will you go?  
Don't you wish you had the answers? Don't you wish you had the answers?  
Don't you wish you had the answers? Well, I know (Green, 230-236).*

As for those who “worship and serve the creature more than the Creator who is blessed for ever” (Romans 1:25, KJV), beware lest the Creator give thee over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient (Romans 1:28). The present creation previously fell, presently

groans, and will desist, yet it bears witness, a glimpse of that which is to come. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

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