

A Creature among Creatures or Lord of Creation?

The Vocation of Dominion in Christian Theology

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The apologetic context of the doctrine of creation in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is the supposed ecological crisis of modern civilization.¹ Lynn White Jr. articulated the classic critique of Christianity as the driving force behind the modern ecological crisis, saying that Christianity bears “a huge burden of guilt.”² White linked the rise of ecologically destructive science and technology to the values of Christianity.

The basic argument linking tyranny over and exploitation of nature with Christianity may be identified as the “mastery hypothesis.”³ The argument is generally made along three major lines: (1) Christianity is said to have killed off humanity’s wonder and awe of nature by desacralizing nature; (2) it promotes an anthropocentrism that legitimates human rule and dominion over nature; and (3) it relegates the physical world to a lower status and value than that which is spirit.⁴ Our concern shall be with the second of these charges—the “dominion mandate.”

The environmental movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has almost uniformly seen human impact on nature as negative. For some, humanity is a “cancer of the earth,” which, if left unchecked, will consume and kill the naturally healthy organism that is the terrestrial biosphere.⁵ Unlike other animals, which establish a natural equilibrium with their environments, many environmentalists see humanity as a virus in the body of Mother Earth.⁶ The natural solution to which this imagery points is the eradication of the disease.

For others, the problem is not so much the existence of humanity *per se* but the dominion project that humanity has, particularly in the Western world, undertaken. Their assertion is that if the goal of human dominion over nature can be

rejected, then humanity can take its place as part of a healthy whole. Deep ecology attempts to undercut the concept of dominion by denying a unique, hierarchically superior position for humanity. It affirms an “ecosphere egalitarianism” in which everything, including humanity, is interrelated and has “equal intrinsic value.”⁷

Jürgen Moltmann has taken up this theme in his understanding of humanity and creation. For Moltmann, humanity must first be understood as part of creation, within nature, as *imago mundi*, the image of the world.⁸ To be a human being is first and foremost to be “a creature in the fellowship of creation.” As the image of the world, the human person is a microcosm of the world and can only exist and be understood within that community. Moltmann insists that the central teaching of the Old Testament account of the creation of humanity is that the human being is a creature within creation.⁹

The Doctrine of Dominion

Scripture, however, teaches that humanity has a special, hierarchically superior place in creation. As the *imago Dei*, humanity has been called to exercise dominion over creation as a gift of God (Gen. 1:26–30; 9:1–7). Despite man’s apparent frailty, God has given humanity supremacy in creation (Ps. 8:3–8). Acknowledging humanity’s kingly role and how it has been perverted is critical to understanding the value of humanity as the *imago Dei* and the vocation of humanity in creation.

God Has Granted Humanity Dominion over Nonhuman Creation

Against the view that man is merely a creature among creatures, the Scripture teaches that God has granted humanity dominion over God’s nonhuman creation. God granted “rule” over nature to humanity and called upon man to “subdue” the earth (Gen. 1:26, 28). Ruling is the function of royalty (cf. 1 Kings 4:24; Ps. 8:5–6; 72:8; 110:2; Isa. 14:2; Ezek. 34:4) and yields a definition of dominion that has traditionally been understood to entail authority and the right to command obedience. The first-century *Epistle of Barnabas* affirms: “‘And let them increase and multiply and rule over the fishes.’ Who is it who is now able to rule over the beasts or fishes or the birds of heaven? We should understand that to rule implies authority, so that one may give commandments and have dominion.”¹⁰

Twentieth-century commentators typically see this dominion as being an implication of the *imago Dei* in humanity, part of the royal role or function of humanity in creation.¹¹ It is in virtue of God’s will and power in creating man that

humanity has dominion. This contrasts sharply with the vision of pagan mythology in which humanity (or a group of gods) gains power over creation as an act of rebellion against the Creator(s).¹² God has granted humanity mastery—humanity takes up the role of “master within the created universe” by the grace of God.¹³

The emphasis in Genesis 1 is placed on human dominion over the animals but also includes the rest of creation.¹⁴ Dominion over the animals is highlighted as both domestic and wild animals come under humanity’s authority (Ps. 8:8–9).¹⁵ Yet, plants also are given over to humanity for food (Gen. 1:26–30). Everything has been given over to man for his use.¹⁶

The dominion of man was first exercised in Eden, where God placed Adam to till and keep the garden he had planted (Gen. 2:15). Even in the original Paradise, human authority to intervene in nature is affirmed (till). However, this authority is also conditioned by the idea of keep[ing]. The implication is that the garden planted by God displays a divinely established order and harmony that Adam was to maintain. The command to till the garden does imply the benefit of food for Adam and Eve, but this is not the sole purpose of their work. Human authority over creation begins with conserving a God-given exemplar of creaturely harmony and beauty in Eden.¹⁷

The dominion mandate of Genesis 1, applied in the garden by the commands of Genesis 2:15, nonetheless does not reflect a static nor merely conservationist agenda. The dominion mandate to rule the earth indicates a dynamic and progressive call that begins with tending the garden and moves outward through the rest of the world (fill the earth) to subdue it. Cal Beisner correctly notes that Eden was a discrete section of God’s creation “in the east” (Gen. 2:8).¹⁸ Rivers flowed from it to other lands (Havilah, Cush, and Assyria [Gen. 2:10–14]). Eden was also bordered by the lands to which Adam and Eve were expelled (Gen. 3:23–24), and it had an entrance that could be guarded by an angel with a flaming sword (Gen. 3:24).

The geographical distinction between Eden and the rest of creation, along with differences in commands between Genesis 1 and 2, implies that earth was not yet a “garden planet” but rather that the garden-paradise was to be expanded by human work as humanity “fill[ed] the earth.” God’s command to till and keep the garden was complemented by his command to rule and subdue the rest of the earth. The dominion mandate of Genesis 1 thus appears to be a command to transform the world outside of Eden into conformity with the God-given paradigm of the garden.¹⁹ The vocation of humanity then, is precisely to intervene in otherwise “untouched, pristine nature.” Though God’s creation is certainly good (Gen. 1:4), God has graciously chosen to call humanity as collaborators in causing that creation to achieve the full flowering of its potential beauty and bounty.

The idea of a garden suggests the beauty of harmony and order as the primary result God intended for human dominion of the earth. Yet, Adam and Eve were also placed in the garden so that they might benefit from the food it produced (Gen. 2:16, cf. Gen. 1:29). This idea is also implied in the idea of tilling, which one does precisely in order to produce crops and in greater quantity than would otherwise occur naturally.

Animals also served to benefit humanity. Although none were found to be a fully suitable helper for Adam (Gen. 2:18–20), Adam and Eve together would have presumably benefited from the labor of animals in tilling the soil, as their descendants did.²⁰ Even after the Fall, humanity began to acquire the benefits of technology and skills that served to increase the beauty (lyre and pipe, Gen. 4:21), and the bounty of the earth (tents and the keeping of livestock, Gen. 4:20; the development of bronze and iron tools, Gen. 4:22).²¹

If humanity's dominion mandate is correctly understood as a commission to bring the earth outside of Eden into harmony with the beauty and bounty of the garden, then it reflects and extends the work of the Creator. God created the world *ex nihilo* and brought order to that which was in chaos (Gen. 1:2–3). In this way, God made the earth beautiful and bountiful for the life of the creatures he placed in it, including humanity. The human vocation of dominion calls people to become creators, enhancing the harmony (beauty) and productivity of the earth. As the Cornwall Alliance's "Renewed Call to Truth" puts it, "people more fully express this creative aspect of His image as they make more and more out of less and less."²²

This understanding of the dominion mandate also makes sense of God's command to humanity to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Human dominion over the earth is exercised and extended not primarily through technological innovation but through procreation.²³ In practical terms, one person (or one couple) can only till and keep so much ground. The more people there are, the more ground can (and will need to be) tilled and kept.

In light of the God-given pattern of the garden, as well as the explicit dominion mandate itself, the dominion of humanity over creation is constrained by God's superior rule. "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it" (Ps. 24:1), but under God's absolute ownership of all creation, "the earth He has given to the sons of men" (Ps. 115:16 NASB). God remains the ultimate master of creation but has delegated authority to humanity as his representative in creation.²⁴ The submission of human dominion over creation to the superior will of God (as revealed by the garden of Eden) points to the concept of humanity as caretakers or stewards of God's creation.²⁵ The Mosaic law presupposes this concept when it legislates

care for animals (Ex. 23:5, 12; Num. 22:32–33; Deut. 5:14; 22:1, 3–4; 22:6–7, 10; 25:4), trees (Deut. 20:19–20), and land (Lev. 25:2, 4; 26:34, 43).²⁶

Human Dominion Has Been Impaired by the Fall and the Curse

The divine intent in the dominion mandate calls humanity to be stewards of God's good creation, expanding the borders of the garden of Eden by subduing more and more of the earth until all is brought into the full harmony and productivity of the God-given pattern in Eden. Yet, the force of the environmentalist objection to the Christian assertion of a dominion mandate lies in the ecologically destructive impact that humanity has clearly and repeatedly had on the earth.²⁷ The environmentalists' claim is that when people are free to pursue their own interests, individually through entrepreneurship or collectively in corporations, then it seems they inevitably have a negative impact on the environment.²⁸

Scripture explains the perversion of the dominion mandate as a consequence of humanity's rebellion against God and God's judgment of that rebellion. In the Fall, humanity submitted to a creature (the snake) and disobeyed God's command not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 3:1–7). Humanity's rejection of the sovereign rule of God was judged by God with the curse (Gen. 3:14–19, cf 5:28–29; Rom. 8:20–22). The ground now requires toil and sweat in order to produce for humanity, and it produces thorns and thistles more readily than food (Gen. 3:17–19). Nature rebels against human dominion in a way not dissimilar to humanity's rebellion against God's dominion.²⁹ This judgment is extended to the animal kingdom in the wake of the Noahic flood (Gen. 9:2).

The curse also imposed consequences directly on humanity that significantly impaired human ability to exercise the dominion mandate appropriately. When humanity was exiled from the garden of Eden, man lost the paradigm for harmony and bounty that would otherwise have served as a model for subduing and ruling the rest of the earth (Gen. 3:22–24). Exile also ended man's direct access to God who once walked in the garden in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8). The lack of immediate access to God deprived humanity of the benefit of divine guidance, which mitigates the limited ability of finite minds to judge the wisdom of competing options in ruling the earth.³⁰ Human acts will do damage to creation out of ignorance. Furthermore, the depravity of the human heart and the perversion of human reason (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 1:18) means that human dominion over nature will often be harmful through negligence or malice.

Although the doctrine of the Fall and the curse would seem to be a substantial point of agreement between Christianity and the environmental movement, there is actually a critical difference in perspective. For the environmentalist, negative human impact on the environment is virtually inevitable. The ideal is “pristine nature,” untouched by human intervention. The mere existence of humanity seems to be the problem. For Scripture, however, humanity’s negative effect on the environment is not inherent in humanity as such. Humanity has inherent dignity and value as the *imago Dei*, and God designed the world to benefit from a benevolent human dominion. The key to the impairment of this dominion lies in the sinfulness of humanity and the judgment under which God has placed all creation as a result of that sin.

Dominion Is Being Restored According to the Already-But-Not-Yet Paradigm

The late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century environmental perspective effectively constitutes a rejection of the dominion mandate as appropriate to humanity’s place and work in the world. Some evangelical authors have taken up this position by adopting a nature-knows-best attitude and affirming that “nature does not need our interventions or (for that matter) us.”³¹ There are several serious problems with this perspective. First, denial of the divine mandate to rule the earth is itself an act of sinful rebellion against God (as is a refusal to fill the earth). Moreover, it is naïve to think that upwards of six billion people can live on earth without intervening in nature in some way! Indeed, it is precisely this fact that has led some notable environmental activists to hope for drastic reductions in the human population of the earth. For example, Dr. Eric Pianka, an ecologist at the University of Texas (Austin), and the 2006 Texas Distinguished Scientist acknowledged: “I actually think the world will be much better when there’s only 10 or 20 percent of us left.”³² Clearly, this cannot be an option for a genuinely Christian position on the value of humanity and human dominion.

Another perspective that amounts to a rejection of the dominion mandate is the stereotypical ecological attitude ascribed to the premillennial evangelical. This let-it-all-burn attitude is represented by a quote attributed to former Regan-administration Secretary of the Interior, James Watt. In testimony before Congress, Watt is supposed to have said: “After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.”³³

It is difficult to find a notable evangelical who holds this view, however, including James Watt. Rather, the attitude of evangelicals is better reflected by what Watt actually said in his testimony: “I do not know how many future generations

we can count on before the Lord returns, whatever it is, we have to manage with a skill to leave the resources needed for future generations.³⁴ What Watt articulated is a classically stewardship-oriented perspective on human responsibility for nature. While differing widely in their understanding of the personal- and public-policy implications of the concept of stewardship, evangelicals appeal to both biblical authority and pragmatic economic considerations as a basis for the good stewardship of creation.³⁵

In spite of the Fall and the curse, the dominion mandate is still in effect. God reaffirmed humanity's dominion in the midst of the curse that greatly impairs its practical application (Gen. 3:17–19 still has Adam tilling the ground to produce food). Both dominion and procreation are reaffirmed in the new, more hostile context of the postdiluvian world.³⁶ All of what Genesis 1 affirms about humanity's kingly role in creation is reaffirmed by Psalm 8.³⁷ Yet, despite these strong affirmations, full dominion has not yet been restored or attained.

The classically modern approach to achieving and/or restoring man's dominion over nature was articulated by Sir Francis Bacon.³⁸ Bacon shared a fascination for the development and exercise of human power with other Enlightenment writers. However, Bacon's unique contribution was an agenda that affirmed science as the path to power.³⁹ His dominant theme was "knowledge is power."⁴⁰

Bacon proposed a science that aimed at the production of inventions that would go beyond minor adaptations to ultimately affect the course of nature. The goal was to develop a technology that would have the power to "conquer and subdue" nature.⁴¹ Scientists would become the benefactors of humanity, "the propagator[s] of man's empire over the universe."⁴² Science had value as the source of "that knowledge whose dignity is maintained by works of utility and power."⁴³

Bacon defended his view of the purpose of science by connecting it to God's blessing humanity with dominion over nature. Christian theology has consistently affirmed that human dominion over creation had been lost, or significantly marred, with the fall of Adam and Eve. On this basis, Bacon drew a brilliant parallel between the function of the church and the function of science. The role of the church was to lead humanity back to the goal of original righteousness and innocence while the role of science was to aid humanity in regaining some measure of the lost promise of dominion. "For man by the fall fell at the same time from his state of innocency and from his dominion over creation. Both of these losses however can even in this life be in some part repaired; the former by religion and faith, the latter by arts [technology] and science."⁴⁴

Bacon's agenda has some four hundred years of scientific and technological advancement to commend it, along with all the benefits that humanity has accrued. Yet, it is precisely the great ecological disasters made possible by this

increased knowledge and technology that form the foundation for the environmentalist critique of the “mastery hypothesis.”⁴⁵ Herein lies the fatal flaw of Bacon’s proposal for restoration of human dominion over creation. To the extent that humanity remains twisted by sin, the curse will continue to apply—creation will remain in rebellion against humanity and human intervention in nature will be perverted by sin. The very fact that the same fundamental insights and discoveries can yield both wonderful benefits and ever more powerful possibilities for destruction demonstrates that the character of those who wield dominion lies at the crux of the issue.

If the key to understanding the perversion of human dominion is an appreciation of the impact of the Fall and the curse, then the core of the problem is clearly a spiritual issue—sin and judgment. For this problem, the redemption found in Christ is the only solution. Scripture indicates that Christ’s atoning work secured benefit not only for humanity but also for creation (cf. Rom. 8:18–25; Col. 1:15–20; Rev. 21; see also Isa. 65:17–25).⁴⁶ However, as with humanity, these benefits are only experienced partially now. Their full manifestation awaits the coming of the eschatological age.

Justin Martyr affirmed that worthiness to rule over creation with God was tied to righteousness in humanity.⁴⁷ Insofar as humanity is in rebellion against God’s dominion (sin, unrighteousness) so will creation be in rebellion against man’s dominion (the curse). Insofar as humanity is rightly related to God (righteousness), so will creation be properly submitted to man.

This vision of righteous dominion became a hermeneutical lens for both intertestamental rabbis and Christian interpreters. The rabbis found Adam’s authority to name the creatures, Noah’s gathering of the animals into the ark, Samson’s use of the foxes in judging the Philistines, and Daniel’s survival of the lion’s den to be examples of the peace that exceptionally righteous individuals could have with nature.⁴⁸ Christian interpreters saw much the same thing in Paul’s encounter with the viper on Malta, in the life of Saint Anthony, and in the fellowship with the animals attributed to Francis of Assisi.⁴⁹ Some measure of harmony with nature is possible in this life if only for the most Christlike of saints. When the sons of God come into the fullness of their glorious freedom from sin, then will the groaning creation be fully liberated from the curse also (Rom. 8:18–25).

Beneficial and appropriate dominion is grounded in the righteousness of the one(s) exercising the dominion mandate. While science and technology certainly aid human dominion, they are mere instruments capable of being used for ill as easily as for good. The appropriate exercise of the dominion mandate to subdue and rule the earth grows from the righteous stewardship of that plot of dirt under our most immediate control—ourselves (cf. Gen. 2:7).

Ultimately, addressing environmental problems, especially those caused by human beings, requires not just the multiplication, redirection, limitation, or expanded use of technologies, but a renovation of the human heart that can only be accomplished by the work of the Spirit through the Gospel of salvation from sin and its consequences.⁵⁰

Conclusion: Dominion and the *Imago*

The widespread perception of a long history of ecological damage by humanity creates an apologetic context that calls the Christian vision of dominion into serious question. Nevertheless, Scripture accounts for the current strife and destruction in nature by reference both to sin and judgment—the Fall and the curse. The problem with human dominion over nature is not humanity as such; the problem is fallen, sinful humanity. The answer to this problem is not rejection of human dominion over nature, nor rejection of the value of humanity entailed by the *imago Dei*. The answer is not, at its most fundamental level, the development of yet more technological innovations. Rather, the likelihood that human dominion will have positive results increases to the degree that dominion is wielded by increasingly virtuous, increasingly Christlike individuals, and by communities shaped by the Christian vision of service and stewardship.

The connection between imaging God righteously as *imago Christi* and the human vocation of dominion over creation lays an important foundation for a Christian theology of work. The dominion mandate is universal, it was given to humanity as such and remains in effect for humanity as a whole, both Christian and non-Christian. Because a theology of work will inevitably be grounded in the dominion mandate, theologians will be tempted to construct a natural theology or universal theology of work devoid of a Christological center, appealing to a non-Christologically determined understanding of the *imago Dei*. If the argument of this article is valid, however, then dominion cannot be fully and appropriately exercised under God apart from redemption in Christ and the development of sanctification (Christlikeness).

The work of the Christian in the vocation of dominion is not spiritually distinct from the work of the Christian in evangelism and discipleship. The world of work and the world of the church are not ultimately separable spheres of Christian life, nor is work merely an instrument by which church ministry, missions, and personal evangelism are made possible.⁵¹ The dominion mandate is to humanity's relationship to creation as the Great Commission is to the Church's relationship to humanity. Both callings have inherent dignity as a fundamental mandate of God that structures human vocation; the one with respect to creation, the other

with respect to humanity.⁵² Each helps to define what it is to live Christianly in the world. Both are callings that apply to all Christians, whether their paychecks come from a corporation or a church.

Notes

1. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, The Gifford Lectures 1984–1985, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 20. Note: The extent (and even existence) of a worldwide ecological crisis, usually discussed in terms of anthropogenic global warming is coming under increasing scrutiny and debate. It is not my purpose here to pursue that debate, much less to affirm the actual existence of catastrophic global warming or any other humanity-caused worldwide ecological crisis. Instead, I affirm that the *perception* of such a crisis does indeed form the apologetic context in which Christians speaking of creation-ethics must operate.
2. Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7.
3. Cameron Wybrow, *The Bible, Baconism, and Mastery over Nature: The Old Testament and Its Modern Misreading* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 6.
4. David Kinsely, *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Englewood, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1995), 103.
5. Douglas Looney, “Protection or Provocateur?,” *Sports Illustrated*, May 27, 1991.
6. Paul Watson, “On the Precedence of Natural Law,” *Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation* 3 (1988): 82.
7. Tongjin Yang, “Towards An Egalitarian Global Environmental Ethics,” in *Environmental Ethics and International Policy*, ed. Henk A. M. J. Ten Have (New York: UNESCO, 2006): 24.
8. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 31, 51.
9. *Ibid.*, 186–87.
10. *Epistle of Barnabas* 6:18.
11. Paul Sands, “The *Imago Dei* as Vocation,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2010): 28–41.
12. Arthur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library, ed. G. Ernest Wright, et. al., trans. Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 144–45.

13. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19, ed. David Hubbard and Glen Barker (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 108.
14. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library, ed. G. Ernest Wright, et. al., trans. Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 57.
15. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 108; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion S.J. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 159. Westermann argues that dominion can only be exercised over the living, thus only the mention of animals here, not the whole earth. This does not mean, however, that the rest of creation is withdrawn from human disposition.
16. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Hildon C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 183.
17. “God does not create the garden to supply man, rather he creates man to manage and keep order and harmony in the garden that God created for man.” See Richard Young, *Healing the Earth: A Theocentric Perspective on Environmental Problems and Their Solutions* (Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1994), 163.
18. E. Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids: Acton Institute; Eerdmans, 1997), 13.
19. Cf. James Jordon, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood, Tenn.: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988), 148.
20. Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, The New American Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 400.
21. Note that the development of technology and skills, though presented as good things in Genesis 4, are relativized by three factors. First, it is the descendents of Cain who are credited with their development. Second, these developments lead to the furtherance of their sinful pride. Third, by contrast, the development of true religion and/piety is credited to the line of Seth (Gen. 3:17–26).
22. Craig Mitchell, et al., “Chapter 1: Theology” in *A Renewed Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection for the Poor: An Evangelical Examination of the Theology, Science, and Economics of Global Warming*, ed. Cal Beisner (Washington, D.C.: Cornwall Alliance, 2009), 8, accessed 11/12/2010 at <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/articles/read/a-renewed-call-to-truth-prudence-and-protection-of-the-poor/>. The “Renewed Call to Truth” goes on to point out that,


We can transform raw materials into resources through ingenuity and hard work, making more resources than we consume, so that each generation can pass on to the next more material blessings than it received, and—through godly subduing and ruling of the Earth—can actually improve the environment. The well-documented phenomenon of declining inflation-adjusted and

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wage-indexed prices of all extractive resources (mineral, plant, and animal) running right alongside increasing population, affluence, and technology contradicts the environmentalist view and confirms this Biblical view.

23. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 399. Note the point is not that technological innovation is irrelevant or inappropriate to human dominion over creation but rather that technological innovation is not the primary expression of this dominion. New technologies are fruits of human capital accrued through the collaboration and increased learning made possible by larger and larger pools of innovators, entrepreneurs, and so forth.
24. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 108; von Rad, 58.
25. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 399.
26. Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 17.
27. To cite incidents such as 3-Mile Island, Chernobyl, the Union Carbide disaster in India, and the recent BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is only to glimpse the tip of a Titanic iceberg of ecological disasters resulting from human intervention in nature.
28. Cf. Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1971), 39.
29. Mitchell, “Chapter 1: Theology,” 13.
30. Cf. *Ibid.*
31. Vincint Rossi, “Theocentrism: The Cornerstone of Christian Ecology,” in *Ecology and Life: Accepting Our Environmental Responsibility*, ed. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Issues of Christian Conscience Series, ed. Vernon Grounds (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1988), 158–59; Lionel Basney, *An Earth-Careful Way of Life: Christian Stewardship and the Environmental Crisis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 39.
32. Cathy Young, “Environmentalism and the Apocalypse,” *Boston Globe*, April 17, 2006, A15. This statement is almost as stunning for its casual misanthropy as for the implication that its author would welcome the death of as many as 5.4 billion human beings!
33. David Neff, “Second Coming Ecology: We Care for the Environment Precisely Because God Will Create a New Earth,” *Christianity Today*, July 2008, accessed 11/12/2010 at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/july/23.35.html>.
34. *Ibid.*
35. See Benjamin B. Phillips, “Getting into Hot Water: Evangelicals and Global Warming,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 315–35.
36. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 398, 400.
37. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 185.

38. Francis Bacon (1561–1626), was an anti-Aristotelian English philosopher who argued that the only knowledge of value to humanity was that which was rooted empirically in the natural world. His greatest work was the *Instauratio Magna*, of which only two parts were finished, *Novum Organum* and *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. His work and ideas on the methods and goals of science came to serve as the paradigm of the new science of the Enlightenment and modernity. Cf. Charles Whitney, *Francis Bacon and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), esp. 1–22.
39. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume*, vol. 3 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), 75.
40. *Ibid.*, 73.
41. Bacon, “Description of the Intellectual Globe,” in *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 5, ed. John M. Robertson (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 506.
42. R. W. Church, *Bacon* (New York: Harper, 1902), 67.
43. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume*, 75.
44. Bacon, “The New Organon,” in *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 4, ed. John M. Robertson (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 247–48.
45. While it is the case that there are significant ecological disasters that have been made possible because of advancing human technology, the environmentalist critique fails to recognize that the overall effect of advancing technology has been beneficial to the environment. One indicator of this correlation between poverty and environmental damage identified by Jack Hollander, *The Real Environmental Crisis: Poverty, Not Affluence, Is the Environment’s Number One Enemy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
46. Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 23 (see n. 42 for a lengthy list of evangelical sources making this point).
47. Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 1:10.
48. Kenneth Jobling, “And Have Dominion ...” *The Interpretation of Old Testament Texts Concerning Man’s Rule Over the Creation (Genesis 1:26, 28, 9:1–2, Psalm 8:7–9) from 200 B.C. to the Time of the Council of Nicea*, (Ph.D. diss.: Union Theological Seminary, 1972), 133.
49. *Ibid.*, 134.
50. Mitchell, “Chapter 1: Theology,” 13.
51. Certainly, working to earn money does enable one to do spiritually significant things such as support one’s family, tithe, and give offerings through the local church and other ministries, as well as provide a context in which evangelism can happen. The



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point here is that work possesses not only this kind of instrumental value but also inherent dignity as fulfilling the dominion mandate laid down at the beginning of creation.

52. The dominion mandate has the significance of being temporally prior to the Great Commission. Yet fulfillment of the Great Commission is the necessary precondition in a fallen world for the transformation of sinners into Christlike saints who will be the kind of people who will exercise the dominion mandate righteously. Just as physical procreation is an important part of fulfilling the dominion mandate, spiritual regeneration (rebirth!) becomes the way in which the population of the righteous comes to “fill the earth.”