

The Environmental Crisis: A Search For A Christian Answer

Environmentalists have been alarmed for some time. Rivers and lakes have become polluted. Many animal species have become nearly extinct. An offshore drilling accident that polluted 800 square miles of the Pacific coast triggered a wave of indignation all over the U.S.

Deep concern has been expressed about the oil tankers off the B.C. coast. What will happen to the environment if a huge tanker collides and sinks? Some marine biologists claim that, unless we act now, the current accelerating pace of ocean pollution will put an end to significant life in the sea in 50 years or less.

A man in California erected a tombstone at the ocean-side, and on it he has carved this epitaph:

The oceans born - (he gives hypothetical date)

The oceans died -- A.D. 1979 The Lord gave; man hath taken away;

Cursed be the name of man.

The ecology crisis is with us. Answers are being sought. Alvin Toffler pleads for a movement for responsible technology. But there is no "neutral" technology. Each technocrat views the ecology crisis from his own stance.

Christians should be involved in the seeking of solutions. Christianity is not only interested in the saving of souls - of getting to heaven. Christians should exhibit a substantial healing here and now between man and nature.

The Bible does not support the exploitation of nature. The God of the Scriptures is the Creator of Nature and Man. The world is not ours. It is God's World. Man is the steward of God's creation.

Our biggest problem lies with man's stewardship. The environmental crisis will not be solved as long as the almighty dollar is the ruler of all things.

The problem won't be solved as long as the world faces a dog eat dog attitude and greedy men are raping nature. The energy that sustains us is in an increasingly short supply. The current energy crisis proves this point. Only at the expense of the environment can more be produced. What should be done?

The Christian community should not abdicate its responsibility to the world. We have to get away from the notion that God is only interested in the worship services on Sunday. Of course, we must worship as a church. But too long Christians have divided life into the sacred and the secular.

Bible reading, hymn singing, church attendance and other such acts are considered as the only ones pleasing to God. They are sacred. Over against these sacred acts are the

secular ones. They include all the ordinary activities of life which we share with all of humanity: eating, sleeping, working, looking after the needs of our body.

But the sacred-secular antithesis has no foundation in Scripture. The apostle Paul said: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever, ye do, do all to the glory of God."

All of life should be dedicated to God. Christians should view the world Christianly. Christianity has a view of life and world. Christians are to think and to act like Christians whether they are in Parliament or at university. Christians are always under the norms of Scripture, whether in the classroom or at home.

Viewing the world as Christian, we accept the fundamental Fact that God made man and world. He has made the stones, the stars, the seas, the animals, the trees. It is interesting to note that after the 16th century Reformation, Dutch artists began to paint nature, no longer feeling the necessity to restrict themselves to religious subjects. The artists realized that nature had worth in itself. It was God's world.

Christians should never act as destroyers. We should treat nature with overwhelming respect. A Christian does not look at nature as something to be tramped upon, but as God's very own creation to be loved and cared for. A tree is not just a tree. It is God's tree. As a creature of God it has real value.

The seas, the rivers, the lakes should be kept pure as they are not ours. We are stewards over them. We have a responsibility towards our environment. We need the will and the determination to see that God's earth will be preserved. We should insist that less profit be accepted by not exploiting nature.

The ecology crisis will not be solved as long as hunger for more and more profits determine the behaviour of men with their organizations and corporations.

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June, 1973