

Staff Work

10-29-2015

Why Should Ecology Matter to a Christian?

Derek Buteyn

Dordt College, derek.buteyn@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/staff_work



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Natural Resources and Conservation Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Buteyn, D. (2015). Why Should Ecology Matter to a Christian?. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/staff_work/18

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by Dordt Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Staff Work by an authorized administrator of Dordt Digital Collections. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

Why Should Ecology Matter to a Christian?

Abstract

"The goodness of creation is more than a pleasing aesthetic. It doesn't just provide value to us because we enjoy it. It is inherently valuable; in every rock, tree, and living creature, truth is spoken of the Creator."

Posting about living responsibly within creation from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/why-should-ecology-matter-to-a-christian/>

Keywords

In All Things, ecology, creation, earth

Disciplines

Christianity | Natural Resources and Conservation

Why Should Ecology Matter to a Christian?

 [all in allthings.org/why-should-ecology-matter-to-a-christian/](http://allinallthings.org/why-should-ecology-matter-to-a-christian/)

Derek Buteyn

On Christmas Eve in 1968, Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders became the first humans to travel out of low earth orbit. Their mission involved traveling to the moon and orbiting it 10 times, then returning to earth as preparation for the upcoming lunar landing. As the three astronauts orbited the moon, they viewed an earthrise, which was broadcast on live television and was the most watched broadcast at that time. As the earth famously rose above the horizon of the surface of the moon, the crewmembers took turns reading from the beginning of Genesis 1, ending with the line “And God saw that it was good”.

Those words of scripture form the basis for my view toward the care of creation. Simply because God saw that nature itself, before anything else was created, was good, I see it as good as well. From the vantage point of the Apollo 8 space capsule, I am sure that the astronauts recognized the same goodness God saw as he gazed upon his newly formed creation. I’ve certainly never had the opportunity to view the earth from a space capsule, but when I intentionally spend time in creation, I’m overcome with the feeling that it is good. In those moments, what I’m seeing and feeling is a reflection of the Creator himself, who is the source of everything good.

The goodness of creation is more than a pleasing aesthetic. It doesn’t just provide value to us because we enjoy it. It is inherently valuable; in every rock, tree, and living creature, truth is spoken of the Creator. It doesn’t simply provide color and beauty in an otherwise drab world; it *is* color and beauty, because the beauty of God is bursting from every molecule of creation. In his book *Between Heaven and Earth*, Fred Van Dyke addresses the intrinsic value of nature:

“The six-times repeated phrase of Genesis 1:1-25 should be understood in its context to affirm that all things God created are good in and of themselves. We can know this to be a correct interpretation of the statement because God needs nothing and thus can have no instrumental use for anything that he has made, and because human beings, at the time the valuation is declared, do not exist, nor will they be asked for their assessment of the creation after God creates them. This intrinsic value is located in the object itself.”

It is safe to say the most Christians believe that creation and nature is good, that there is intrinsic value within nature itself. Yet, what is difficult is developing our understanding of our personal responsibility towards it. Truth necessitates a response, but figuring out what this looks like on a practical level has been the subject of much discussion and debate. Rather than alongside an agenda of a political party, what if we saw environmentalism through the lens of a Christian worldview? If the gospel message declares that Christ’s atonement has brought redemption and reconciliation to all things, including the creation, then the resurrection of Jesus enables us to be agents of restoration, taking part in the work to make whole what is broken.

Unfortunately, when we are drawn into a discussion that looks at environmentalism on such a large scale, we miss the opportunities to be stewards of creation that are right in front of us on a daily basis. This isn’t to say that I have the complete formula or I am a perfectly responsible steward of creation. However, I try to keep my eyes open to opportunities that allow me to live as a steward, and examine ways I am living environmentally irresponsibly.

I’ve taken advantage of opportunities to live environmentally on a small scale, which adds up to have a

larger impact. These are only a few suggestions of the things that I make an effort to do; there are certainly more concrete ways we are able to live responsibly toward the creation we've been given.

- **Ride your bike** instead of using your car to run short errands. Many communities are promoting safe cycling on roads and investing in infrastructure to make cycling more feasible.
- **Use re-useable grocery bags** instead of plastic bags.
- **Buy locally grown/sourced foods.** It supports the local economy and requires less transportation.
- **Sign up for online banking and billing.** Most institutions offer worth-while incentives for participating.
- **Make a point to turn off lights** that you are not using.
- **Unplug small appliances and phone chargers** if they're not in use. Even when you're not using them, they continue to draw energy.
- **Use cold water to wash your laundry,** and hang it out to dry instead of using a dryer.
- **Participate in hunting and conservation efforts.** Conservation is an important aspect of environmentalism and helps habitats and ecosystems thrive.
- **Understand your impact.** It's easy to throw our garbage away and forget about it, or to purchase our groceries without thinking of where they came from. When we choose to be informed, our small life-style changes will have a significant impact on the quality of our environment.