

Reference: VARIOUSChurch: GRACE Date: 8/10/2011

## Christian and the Environment 1

Purpose: To show how theology is a practical toolbox to help us approach issues Biblically. To do this by developing a position on the environment

### 1. Introduction

What should the believer do about the environment?

What should the church do?

We need a Biblical view on environmental issues

Does Bible have anything to say on the environment?

Should we expect it to? Why?

What verses tell us that we should?

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

**WCF 1:6** The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Are there any reasonable deductions we can add?

If the Scriptures are complete

If they tell us all we need to know for life and faith

We must conclude the Bible contains all we need to know to conduct ourselves in a way pleasing to God in this matter.

How else shall we know God's will and do it in this area?

If it is not in the Bible, where shall we find it?

In what way will the Bible help us?

Can we turn up a verse that talks of it?

Will there be a proof text on greenhouse gases?

No – then how do we approach this kind of issue?

Stick a pin in the Bible and seek guidance?

No - we derive principles from Scripture and apply them

This study will be a worked example of that

1) What is the Problem?

2) What principles from the Bible apply

3) Construct them into a Biblical framework

4) Do it!

### 2. What are the Problems?

Let's define the problem first.

#### 2.1. *Symptoms*

Hole in the ozone layer

Greenhouse gases, deforestation

Climate change

Global warming

Melting of polar ice caps - sea levels rise

Extinction of species - habitat destruction

Water shortages

#### 2.2. *Causes*

Man's activities - emissions of GHGs

"Peak Oil"

Population Pressures

Developing economies

"Mother nature"

"Gaia"

#### 2.3. *Prognosis (untreated)*

Crisis, Disaster, Catastrophe

Planet earth dies

#### 2.4. *Treatment*

Montreal Protocol - stop using CFCs as propellants

recycling

Reducing the emissions of Greenhouse gases

Renewable energy exploitation  
Carbon footprinting  
Food miles  
Eat locally produced food  
Eat organic  
Sustainable Agriculture  
Hotel towels, sheets

### 3. What Should Believers, Church Do?

OK - we have defined the problem  
What do we think about it?  
Most scientists believe these things are true  
Some Christians say “we should do good, this is something good – let’s do this!”  
Unquestioning – everyone says its good  
Shall we follow suit?  
We could just jump in to the weeds and start doing things  
Is that a good idea?  
Is it an easy thing to do?  
What is a better approach  
How shall we tackle such a complex issue as this?  
How shall we figure out a Biblical approach?  
We come back to the idea of principles  
Where shall we look for principles to guide us?  
Bible, obviously  
May be hard to keep all the contents in our minds  
While we review environmental issues  
Are there any books that might help?  
Books where key Bible teachings are stated and arranged?  
Systematic Theologies  
What is one of our key doctrinal standards?  
Westminster Confession  
This is basically a systematic theology.  
It contains tools we can use for this project  
It will help us determine a Biblical approach to environmental issues.

### 4. Choose your doctrines!

Look at chapter headings in the Confession  
Let's decide which ones might particularly help us  
Which ones intersect with matters of the environment?

CHAPTER 1: OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

CHAPTER 2: OF GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY

CHAPTER 3: OF GOD’S ETERNAL DECREE

CHAPTER 4: OF CREATION

CHAPTER 5: OF PROVIDENCE

CHAPTER 6: OF THE FALL OF MAN

CHAPTER 7: OF GOD’S COVENANT WITH MAN

CHAPTER 8: OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

CHAPTER 9: OF FREE WILL

CHAPTER 10: OF EFFECTUAL CALLING

CHAPTER 11: OF JUSTIFICATION

CHAPTER 12: OF ADOPTION

CHAPTER 13: OF SANCTIFICATION

CHAPTER 14: OF SAVING FAITH

CHAPTER 15: OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

CHAPTER 16: OF GOOD WORKS

CHAPTER 17: OF THE PERSEVERENCE OF THE SAINTS

CHAPTER 18: OF ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION

CHAPTER 19: OF THE LAW OF GOD

CHAPTER 20: OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER 21: OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY

CHAPTER 22: OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

CHAPTER 23: OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATES

CHAPTER 24: OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

CHAPTER 25: OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER 26: OF COMMUNION OF SAINTS

CHAPTER 27: OF THE SACRAMENTS

CHAPTER 28: OF BAPTISM

CHAPTER 29: OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

CHAPTER 30: OF CHURCH CENSURES

CHAPTER 31: OF SYNODS AND COUNCILS

CHAPTER 32: OF THE STATE OF MEN AFTER  
DEATH, AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE  
DEAD

CHAPTER 33: OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

**5. Which doctrines will most help us here?**

- Decree
- Providence
- Creation
- The Fall
- Redemption – teaching taken from 7-18
- Final State

**6. Conclusions**

Next studies, we will look at each of these doctrines.

We will seek to explain them briefly

Then apply them to the environment, see what they teach us

Next time – God’s Decree and the Environment