

A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift

by
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People Must Believe the Environment is Deteriorating and Do Something about It

According to many scientists, the planet earth is about 4.5 billion years old but Homo sapiens has been on the earth for only about 200,000 years. All of this was created by God, and He subsequently created Adam and Eve, the first humans with souls, about 6,500 years ago. The population of humans started to grow and reached about 150 million around the time of Jesus Christ. God created this earth to provide all the necessities (food, shelter, clothing, water, etc.) for the human population as well as for plants and animals.

With this great environment, the population of all species continued to grow, and about 1800 years later, the human population reached one billion. But it only took about 130 years to add another billion people on the earth. In addition more living species were added, again to make the environment more fertile for everyone and everything.

What has happened since with the human population? We have all been on this earth an infinitesimal small period of time, but just in my lifetime the population has gone from a little over two billion people to almost eight billion. In other words, about 5.7 billion people have been added to this earth just in my lifetime, and we are adding 10 million people every six and a half weeks. The big question for all of us is whether God's creation can provide for all of these people and more to come. Scientists are projecting we will reach eight billion within two years and nine billion about 14 years later.

One of the most pressing environmental issues is climate change. In 1988, James Hansen alerted the country, and the rest of the world, that the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere has been rising since the industrial revolution. It was relatively stable at 280 parts per million (ppm), but he warned us that if it goes above 350 ppm, we will be in trouble. Well it hit 350 ppm in 1995, and today it is around 421 ppm. This is why we have been confronted with major storms, rising seas, droughts and other climate problems.

Another major issue is the depletion of our natural resources. This includes everything that God created on this earth to sustain life, things such as fresh water, air, living organisms such as fish, vegetation, the oceans, the forests to provide wood while sequestering carbon dioxide, the various forms of energy, and many other resources. We have been consuming these natural resources faster than the earth can regenerate them. A metric provided by the Global Footprint Network is Earth Overshoot Day. This is defined as the day in the year that the world will have consumed all the natural resources that would be generated in that calendar year. Earth Overshoot Day has become earlier and earlier every year and was on July 29, 2019 two years ago. This meant in 2019 we were consuming the equivalent of about 1.8 earths. But when the

Covid pandemic hit us, we became more efficient with the natural resources and for the first time, the date went backwards to August 22, 2020. This was a message from God who is warning us that we are destroying His earth, and He proved to us that we don't have to consume so much in order to have a decent life.

A third major environmental issue is the depletion of fresh water around the world. The quantity of water on this earth at the time of Christ is the same as what we have today, just its form may be slightly different. However, today we have 50 times more people. There are many very large cities in the world that are facing a shortage of water. The water quality and quantity problem is also very severe in areas with small towns because of new technologies like fracking for oil and gas which consumes large quantities of water while contaminating other sources.

A recent Gallup study indicates that in the past 22 years the number of Americans who belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque has fallen from 70% to 47%. Does this mean that less Americans are concerned about God's gift, the environment? Whether or not any American, or anyone else in the world, believes that this earth was created by God for all people should not matter. We must all do what is necessary to preserve this environment for the future generations. Most of us who are currently living will not be affected by the declining environment, but the younger people, future generations, and all other living creatures will be affected negatively.

Just as the protection of the environment should not be a religious issue, it should also not be a political issue. Whether you are a Democrat, a Republican or align with the Green Party, this should not matter. We should all be doing whatever possible to protect the environment, and this should be a message adopted by people from all over the world.