



Conservation and Environment by Lloyd Tiegs (September-October, 2000)

WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORDS: Environment, Conservation?

Does the word “conservation” give you a comfortable feeling?
Does the word, “environment” give you a mixed feeling?

Conservation brings to my mind thoughts of: clean water, trees, clean air. It brings to mind the Conservation Department of the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago which works together with the DNR to count species of fish and other life in a stream to see if there is a change over time.

On the other hand when I hear the word “environment” I think of: Bridges and roads that can’t be built because it is the habitat of a snail. Trees that can’t be cut because of a spotted owl. Spikes driven into trees to injure and kill loggers in order to discourage loggers from cutting trees. Forest fires burn thousands of acres because there are not enough breaks in the forest cleared by loggers. Hundreds of mink left loose from a research center in Madison, Wisconsin to be killed on the highway. (The reason given that they should be free.)



The spotted owl brings to mind a story that was on Paul Harvey News. I believe it was in the state of Washington. The DNR had attached radio transmitters to a number of spotted owls. They would then follow the owls to where they lived. They wanted to protect them. One day they picked up a signal of an owl on their radio receivers. They followed it to a bar. Instead of just walking in and asking to look around. They got a search warrant and burst in with guns drawn. Instead of an owl they found a pinball machine that was giving off an identical signal. They became the butt of a lot of jokes. The leader of the DNR group said, “The snickering has to stop”.

Doesn't environment seem to have a religious overtone? Doesn't it remind you of “Pantheism”? Let's take a look at some of their ideas: “PANTHEISM is the belief that the universe is divine and nature is sacred. It fuses religion and science...It provides the most solid basis for environmental ethics...It is a religion that requires no faith other than common sense...” DEA is indispensable...emergence of individuals with genes better adapted...room for new species...prevent overpopulation...we should not fear death because our bodies become a part of nature. (From: <http://members.aol.com/pantheism/dath.htm>)

The new term “Scientific Pantheism” holds to the following: “...accepts this life as our only life, and this earth as our only paradise...(It) reconciles spirituality and rationality, religion and science. “ “...pantheism means: all is god, In essence, pantheism holds that the Universe as a whole should be regarded with religious reverence, and that there is nothing that truly merits the name divinity other than the Universe and Nature. (From: “World Pantheist Movement” <http://www.harrison.dircon.co.uk/wpm/join.htm>).

With the ideas of pantheism in mind it is no wonder that the Christian is a bit uncomfortable with the term “environment” which often includes those ideas.

Also in the mix is evolution, because I believe you will find a large percentage of those who “believe in the environment” also believe in evolution. The Darwin idea is, “Survival of the fittest.” The Darwin idea really is the opposite of conservation. It means to destroy to stay on top. This really is in contradiction to the belief of pantheism.

I used the term, “Believe in the environment” because with many well-meaning people it is more than conservation it is pantheism. Ask many children about environment. Look in newspaper accounts and you get the feeling of a religious respect that we have when we talk about the God of creation.

God says they “...*worship and serve the creation more than the Creator.*” (Romans 1:25)

God owns the world. He created it. He gave man the job of stewardship. (Genesis 1&2) In Revelation 11:18 He says, “...and should destroy them which destroy the earth.” We indeed are to be concerned about pollution and wanton destruction of parts of creation.

Conservation, environment, and ecology are good terms if used in connection with a respect for the gifts which God gives us in His creation. He gives us permission to use plants and animals for food. (Genesis 1:29, 1 Timothy 4:4, Genesis 18:1,7,8, Luke 1:15) We are to learn from the: ants, eagles, fish (Job 12:7-10). God had a plan for the universe which He put into action on the first day of time by creating all the elements. In the next 5 days we see the plan unfold with all of creation being interrelated and mankind as the crown of that creation. With the law of gravity and all the other systems in place the universe could function as a well-tuned machine.

Sin brought death and decay to the human body and all parts of the universe. Mankind brought disorder to the universe. God solved the problem of sin with the Savior. He gives man the ability to restore some of the balance to creation. When trees are overpopulated we can harvest them. When deer are causing accidents we can reduce their population.

We are to help to maintain a balance between human needs on the one hand and a pristine ecology on the other. Our goal should be: what serves mankind best in the long run rather than focus only on short term gains. We should not want any of the living species to become extinct. Plants and animals are here to serve us; if we destroy them we are the loser. Since the fall of Adam and Eve “all creation still groans under sin.” There will never be a perfect balance; but we can work in that direction.



We need to keep in mind that God is the creator. “Nature is not our Mother”. We worship the Triune God who created the universe in 6 days; not the creation which can create nothing. *LSI*