

*Supply*

In this Creation story we read that God created those things over which humans are said to have dominion before the creation of human life, and they are called good even before human life is added to them, which seems to suggest that non-human creation has value in the eyes of the Creator independent of its use to human life. God saw that it was good, that it was valuable, that it had value independent of the existence of human life. This is a way of reading the Creation story which needs to be emphasized. The fact that it has not been so emphasized is not so much the fault of the story itself as it is of its various interpreters down through the years.

Likewise, it is quite out of context to notice only the dominion of humanity without noticing the dominion of God and his intentions for the dominion of humanity. There is a unique role for human life in creation insofar as humans are able to understand and explain the rest of creation in a way that is not possible for other creatures. The power which this gives to humanity over the rest of creation is certainly a form of dominion, but it is not the case that this dominion could ever have rightly been interpreted as a licence to see the whole world as a mere instrument of human goals.

Thus, it is possible to admit that the concept of man's dominion over nature has found support in biblical teachings while at the same time suggesting that this dominion is more appropriately understood as a form of stewardship rather than exploitation. Human life is responsible, not only for itself but, as the image bearer of the same God who created and loved the rest of creation, human life is responsible for the well-being of non-human creation as well. The separation of human life from nature which human responsibility implies is rightly criticized by those who believe that we need to begin again to see ourselves as part of nature, as part of a larger whole with which we must live in harmony if we are both to survive and to be more fully human. Human vanity, aided and abetted by advances in technology, has led us to imagine that by dint of scientific and technological achievement in everything from medicine to pesticides, and now to genetic engineering, we could put ourselves beyond the place where we would have need of conforming to given natural realities.

This has been a mistake, but it would also be a mistake to imagine that somehow we can throw off our own nature and abdicate our humanity by simply leaving nature to itself. Even organic farmers have to weed the garden. We need to find a view of nature and ourselves which enables us to have a proper relationship which does justice to human responsibility for creation and for others, and to nature's own intrinsic worth as another aspect of the world intended by the Creator.

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Nevertheless, it is true that the focus on human life and its fulfilment, which is characteristic of biblical religion, has tended to separate man from his environment in a way that has made possible the despoliation and depletion of that which was entrusted to the stewardship of humanity. A new view of our dominion over nature is needed, not just to save nature but to

save ourselves, for our dominion over nature, however interpreted, is not total and we threaten our own survival as we ignore the extent to which it is also true that in our relation with nature, nature has some dominion over us.

We need a view of the environment which sees human life as included, albeit in a special way, in the realm of nature and in which the idea of stewardship takes it meaning from a variety of places. This includes the traditional views of aboriginal peoples toward creation but also from what those of us who are Christians learn about true humanity in Christ, the servant King.

Human dominion is a form of service to all creation and to our fellow human beings. This is where I suggest we have the beginning of a view adequate to the ecological crisis which we now face and a view which should provide the framework for our debate today. Within that framework we will see that for too long we have been dominated by the false dichotomy of jobs versus the environment. While I emphasize that it is not necessarily the case that jobs and the environment are in conflict, let me say to those who are still captive to that false dichotomy that even when they are sometimes in conflict, it is a question of doing the right thing and making the right decision with respect to questions of inter-generational morality and what kind of future and planet we leave to those who come after us.

I remind the Hon. Member for Surrey—White Rock—North Delta (Mr. Friesen), whom I do not see as an antagonist but as one who has an interest in biblical matters, that one of the complaints against St. Paul in Rome was that Christianity was putting people out of jobs. There was the complaint that people who made their living from making graven images were put out of work by the arrival of this new religion called Christianity. But St. Paul did not say that anything that does away with jobs must be bad so he will abandon the entire evangelical project. He said that the right thing must be done and the problem of employment can be addressed at the same time while certainly not drawing back from that which he thinks is right simply because it may endanger jobs.

In any event, that problem does not exist with South Moresby because more than enough provision has been made in the proposals put forward by the federal Government to the British Columbia Government in terms of financial compensation and alternative areas to be logged. We are not talking about a conflict between the environment and jobs.

The Brundtland Commission repeatedly raises the question of sustainable development. We are talking about a need to finally accede that whatever new economic development opportunities exist either in Canada or in the developing countries, they must be forms of economic development which respect the absolute and vital need to pass on a sustainable environment to future generations. This not only involves a question of aesthetics so that people with money can visit South Moresby and enjoy the scenery. It concerns an integral part of the planetary biosphere.