



SHOULD CHRISTIANS GO GREEN?

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Part I

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INTRODUCTION

With an increasing influence, the color green has become much more than one of the seven colors of the rainbow as it has also been adopted as the color of recognition by the global environmental movement that is influencing numerous areas of our daily lives. As most American's are well aware, terms such as *the environment*, *carbon-footprint*, *global warming*, *over population*, *eco friendly*, *climate change*, and even the evangelical environmental movement *eco-evangelism* have become common terms that are used to describe the general environmental concerns of the Green Movement (also referred to as the Environmental Movement). Not surprisingly, the Green Movement – and its various factions – are rapidly becoming more ordinary in conversation, global politics, and influence in the American culture.

Some common examples of changes that can be attributed to the environmental movement are:

- A steady and increasing focus on climate change
- A shift from non-sustainable to sustainable energy resources
- Earth day as a recognized global calendar day (April 22, 2015)
- Increasing media attention (see the March 2015 issue of National Geographic)
- Alleged depletion of the ozone layer
- Earth Summit global conferences
- Mandated governmental gas mileage and emission standards for vehicles

- Governmental restrictions on manufacturing processes and products
- Realtor's advertising their services as "eco-friendly"
- Population control (global overpopulation)
- Reduction of carbon emissions
- Perception of "Earth In The Balance" or the "Plight of Planet Earth"
- Some evangelical Christians adopting Eco-evangelism

To further illustrate the influence of the Green Movement in an area that most people are not aware of, let's briefly consider the affect of *reduced carbon footprint* on building construction by going to Google and entering "Big Wood Chicago" and find "Big Wood: Building Sustainable High-Rises in Wood." These articles chronicle the tentative construction of a mixed-use university complex in Chicago's South Loop neighborhood that will replace the common building materials of steel and concrete with wood. The advertised advantages are based on familiar Green terminology:

- Sequestering pollutants from our cities
- Reducing man-made carbon emissions
- Minimizing high energy production and recycle costs
- Reducing the building industry's excesses (astronomical carbon emissions)
- Planting trees for the project will extract toxins from the soil as well as carbon dioxide from Chicago's air

As the Green Movement continues to gain influence, political strength, and expands its influence on every day life, we should consider the Christian response to current environmental concerns, particularly since *mother earth* has – in many cases – attained the status of a deity and resultant worship by numerous organizations and people (including some evangelical Christians). Additionally, as some in the Green Movement are against conservative Christian principles, should the Christian community be anti-environment and/or are there beneficial perspectives and advantages to the Green Movement?

With these thoughts in mind, let's first consider Secular Green Movement Perspectives and then the Biblical Perspective to the Green Movement.

SECULAR GREEN MOVEMENT PERSPECTIVES

Although there are numerous benefits resulting from environmental concerns, there has also been a primary emphasis on minimizing the importance of God and maximizing the importance of the earth and its resources as well as the inclusion of various radical factions. To better understand the Green Movement, let's look at a brief summary definition of the Green Movement, common terminologies used in this movement (in no particular order), and then summarize the Secular Green Movement.

SUMMARY DEFINITION

The Green Movement, environmental movement, or ecology movement – also including conservation and green politics – is a diverse scientific, social and political movement for addressing environmental issues. Environmentalists advocate the sustainable management of resources and stewardship of the environment through changes in public policy and individual behavior. In its recognition of humanity as a participant in (not enemy of) ecosystems, the movement is centered on ecology, health, and human rights. The radical movement faction is defined and galvanized by its concerns of nuclear proliferation, global warming, climate change, wetlands preservation, the keystone pipeline, hydraulic fracturing, fisheries, and species extension.

COMMON SECULAR TERMINOLOGIES

- **Environmentalism**

A broad philosophy, ideology and social movement regarding concerns for the environmental protection and improvement of the health of the environment. Environmentalism and its numerous concerns are ordinarily represented by the color Green

- **Anti-environmentalism**

Opposes environmentalism and believes that the Earth is less fragile than the environmentalists maintain, and portrays environmentalism as overreacting to the human contribution to climate change or opposing human advancement

- **Radical Environmentalism**

A grassroots branch of the larger environmental movement that emerged from an ecocentric-based frustration with the co-option of mainstream environmentalism and is the ideology behind the radical environment movement. The movement is typified by leaderless resistance organizations such as Earth First, Greenpeace, Earth Liberation Front, and the Earth Liberation Army. The three primary branches of radical environmentalism are (1) the Greens, (2) the deep ecologists, and (3) the animal rights movement

- **Green Politics**

A political ideology that aims to create an ecologically sustainable society rooted in environmentalism. In addition to ecological issues, Green politics is concerned with civil liberties, social justice and tends to support progressivism. The party's platform is largely considered left in the political spectrum. The Green party began taking shape in the western world in the late 1970's. Since then Green political parties have developed and established themselves in many countries around the world

- **Green Party**
The Green Party of the United States is a Green political party in the America that was founded in 1984 as a federation of state Green parties and initially gained public attention from Ralph Nader. The party promotes environmental and social justice, gender equality and anti-racism
- **Green Jobs**
Defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as jobs that are either (1) jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources, or (2) jobs in which worker's duties involve making their establishment production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources
- **Animal Rights Movement**
Sometimes called the animal liberation movement, animal personhood, or animal advocacy movement, is a social movement that seeks an end to the rigid moral and legal distinction drawn between human and non-human animals, an end to the status of animals as property, and an end to their use in the research within food, clothing, and entertainment industries
- **Eco-terrorism**
A controversial term used to refer to acts of violence committed in support of ecological or environmental causes, against persons or their property. Eco-terrorism is defined by the FBI as *"the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against people or property by an environmentally oriented, subnational group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature."* Eco-terrorists are credited with 200 million dollars in property damage between 2003 and 2008. Tree spiking and arson are common examples
- **Deep Ecology**
The primary belief that the living environment as a whole should be respected and regarded as having certain inalienable legal rights to live and flourish, independent of its useful benefits for human use. The movement describes itself as "deep" because it regards itself as looking more deeply into the actual reality of humanity's relationship with the natural world and arriving at more profound conclusions than that of prevailing views
- **Ecology**
The branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings
- **Eco-liberation**
Eco-liberation is broadly defined as the process of setting our home (earth) free and is summarized by the formula of Biocentrism + Deep Ecology + Anti-

Oppression + Solidarity = Eco-Liberation. This ideology is supported by the organization Earth First

- **Biodiversity**

The degree of variation of life. It is a measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems (the variety of all living things)

- **Earth in the Balance**

A 1992 book written by former Vice President Al Gore that describes the world's alleged ecological predicament and a range of policies to deal with the most pressing problems

- **An Inconvenient Truth**

A 2006 Academy award winning documentary film about former United States Vice President Al Gore's campaign to educate citizens about global warming. The film was credited for "raising international public awareness of climate change and reenergizing the environmental movement"

SECULAR GREEN MOVEMENT SUMMARY

For a brief history of environmentalism in America, we can go back to the late 19th century and begin with Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, the beginning of the establishment of the Sierra Club, and the establishment of National Parks (Yellowstone). The early 20th Century saw the start of the Wilderness Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the passing of a Federal Water Pollution Act and Air Pollution Control Act. However, the catalyst for the modern environmental movement is generally attributed to the 1962 book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson that highlighted the purported detrimental effects on the environment by the indiscriminate use of pesticides (DDT).

After *Silent Spring*, environmental legislation quickly followed with the Clean Air and Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, and other similar legislation. Continuing with an accelerating emphasis on environmentalism, *Nature* magazine published an article in 1985 with purported evidences of an ozone hole over the Antarctic. As a result, Congress was warned about consequences of global warming and a depleting ozone layer in 1988 and established an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). By 1990, 76% of Americans called themselves "environmentalists" and was followed by the Academy Award winning documentary film about former United States Vice President Al Gore's campaign to educate citizens about global warming. The film was credited for "raising international public awareness of climate change and reenergizing the environmental movement."

Today, the modern environmental movement can be viewed as a contrast of positive and negative results. From a positive perspective, it is a fact that the

environment in America is cleaner today as compared to 100 years ago with cleaner water, air with less pollution and food with reduced levels of carcinogens. However, despite the many benefits the environmental movement has been responsible for, the negative viewpoint is a result of multiple dominant adverse weaknesses that have been instrumental in significantly changing the focus and direction of the original environmental movement to a crusade that is best characterized as a radical movement. The current Green or radical movement is not primarily concerned about reducing pollution and saving the spotted owl but using the environment – particularly climate change – for increased global governance to promote their agenda. Unfortunately, this antagonistic and prejudiced agenda begins in public schools where children receive an aggressive, evolution-based approach to enviro-care, energy use, population control, food supply, anti-God perspectives, and continues with a constant echo outside of schools from the media and Hollywood (several examples are The Greens that is a website for kids focused on looking after the planet, Avatar, etc.).

Typically, there are three primary divisions of radical environmentalism that are best characterized as follows:

The Greens

The Greens – or Green politics – can best be defined as focused, politically motivated and sophisticated, progressive, and are largely considered left in the political spectrum. The movement has become a home for hardline socialists that has resulted in the nickname of “watermelon environmentalists” – green on the outside and red on the inside. Common agendas are global warming (climate change), the ozone hole, acid rain, elimination of most forms of energy such as coal/oil/ hydroelectric/nuclear, the removal of dams, green communities, and so on. The common denominator is redistribution of global wealth and a central focus for the world’s economy.

Deep Ecologists

Deep ecologists believe that all organisms are equal in inherent worth. The translation of that sentence is *a human life has no more value than the life of any animal*. Therefore, as nature is alleged as being in decline, humans are also alleged to be the root cause – or a cancer/intruder – on the environment. This group favors radical confrontation and is represented by such groups as Earth First and Greenpeace.

Animal Rights Movement

The animal rights movement believes that all of life is equal and no form of life is superior to another. A key word to the movement is *speciesism* that stands for a prejudice or discrimination based on species or discrimination against animals.

When comparing humans and animals, speciesism is often condemned as the same sort of bigotry as racism or sexism.

From a practical secular viewpoint, it is imperative to distinguish conservationism from radical environmentalism, as they are diametrically opposed in their ideology. Conservationism is a balanced and measured type of environmentalism that rejects all excessive damage to the earth and/or nature and is further committed to the *preventable* and *excessive* depletion of natural resources. However, it does seek to balance the progress of mankind and industry in an environmentally responsible manner even though there may be an occasional exploitation of natural resources.

Radical environmentalism is highlighted by an ideology that incorporates some or all of the following tenets:

- A world that places nature above human life and man is viewed as an intruder
- Any human action that alters the environment is viewed as immoral
- A hostility to capitalism and a preference for socialism as an economic goal
- Articles of faith that are typically not based on scientific scrutiny
- A constant drumbeat of the destruction of earth and/or its natural resources by mankind's industrial activities
- An increasing focus on "green jobs and commercialization"
- A reduction of private-property rights of people

Part II

March 24, 2015

SECULAR EVANGELISTIC GREEN MOVEMENT PERSPECTIVES

With the preceding overview of secular green environmentalism, let's turn our attention to the religious side of modern radical environmentalism – the evangelistic green movement and its various viewpoints. Due to the global advances and increasing popularity of radical environmentalism, it should not be surprising that the National and World Council of Churches have ties to radical environmental organizations. Nonetheless, what is surprising is the rapid incorporation of many Christian clergy and evangelicals who have embraced radical environmentalism. To consider and evaluate this paradox, let's consider the following facets within the evangelistic environmental movement:

- Common evangelistic environmental terminologies
- The history of the evangelistic environmental movement
- The dominion mandate
- Is global warming legitimate

- How Christians should approach this issue

COMMON EVANGELISTIC TERMINOLOGIES

- **Evangelical Environmentalism**
The evangelical environmental movement is committed to the authority of the Bible but are imbedded in the idea that humanity is engaging in sinfulness and disobedience to God by ignoring the mandate to “tend and keep” the land in which they were originally placed (the Garden of Eden). The movement is best known for its focus of addressing *climate action* from a stated biblical based theological perspective
- **National Association of Evangelicals**
A non-profit association that is working to encourage lawmakers to pass a law that would put restrictions on *carbon dioxide emissions* in the United States
- **Evangelical Climate Initiative**
A campaign by American church leaders and organizers to promote market based mechanisms to diminish global warming. This discussion has the endorsement of the National Association of Evangelicals that represents 45,000 churches and 30 million congregants in the United States. Also, 86 religious leaders who have called global warming/climate change a real and urgent moral problem have signed the Evangelical Climate Initiative
- **Eco-evangelism**
The axioms for this perspective are “Serving God, Saving the Planet,” and “Drawing on Science and Religion, and Building a Bridge Between Environmentalists and Mainstream Christians.” The home biblical verse is taken from Numbers 35:33-34 – “*You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell*”
- **Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN)**
A ministry dedicated to the care of God’s creation. EEN believes that creation care is truly a matter of life and that pollution harms the vulnerable, especially children and the unborn
- **Restoring Eden**
Established in 2001, a Christian grassroots environmental ministry that works with people to be a voice for the environment and all those who depend on it. Their axiom is stated as “Tree-Hugging, Jesus Loving, and Neighbor-Serving Christians”
- **Green Pontiff**
The term “Green Pontiff was first applied to Benedict XVI for advocating environmental protection. However, the Green Pontiff term has also recently been applied to Pope Francis for using his pulpit to actively shape public

discourse on environmentalism. Pope Francis has recently stated – “*One of the greatest challenges of our time. This is our sin, exploiting the earth*”

HISTORY OF THE EVANGELISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

The evangelical environmentalism movement in the United States began in 2006 by 86 notable evangelical Christian leaders when they launched the Evangelical Climate Initiative. This was a campaign for environmental reform and called on all Christians to support legislation that would reduce carbon dioxide emissions in an effort to stem global warming/climate change. The movement typically incorporates the following stated characteristics:

- Committed to the authority of the Bible
- Based in the premise that humanity is engaging in sinfulness and disobedience to God by ignoring the mandate to “tend and keep” the land as found in Genesis 1:28
- A belief there is a moral obligation to minimize climatic influences and also generate support in adapting change
- Accentuating biblical mandates that focus on humanity’s role as first a steward and then a subsequent responsibility for the care of God’s creation
- Emphasis on human caused global warming/climate change that will have severe consequences to this planet and its inhabitants

Today, the evangelistic environmental movement has become more visible with multiple web-sites that are easily accessed, Christian media commentators, an increasing number of vocal Christian pastors in high-profile leadership positions, and high profile organizations such as the Cornwall Alliance with their popular program “Resisting the Green Dragon.”

THE DOMINION MANDATE

In Genesis 1 and 9, the Bible indicates that mankind has dominion on earth, meaning that mankind has been given a special authority and rule over the creatures and the Creation. This viewpoint is so widely accepted that it is known as the Dominion Mandate although it is not specifically named or defined in scripture. The dominion mandate is popular among evangelistic environmentalists from the perspective that humanity is engaging in sinfulness and disobedience to God by ignoring the mandate to “tend and keep” the land as found in Genesis 1:28. As a result, Bible-believing Christians can be misleadingly accused of being anti-environment and/or anti-earth as a result of the dominion mandate when God gave Adam and Eve (mankind) *dominion* over the earth in Genesis 1:28 and at the end of the creation week to Noah and his family in Genesis 9:1-2 after the Flood.

For clarity, let's take a few moments and look at the biblical *dominion mandate* verses from the creation week and post flood time periods as found in Genesis (NKJ version) and then expand on three key dominion terms:

*(1) "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (2) Then God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; **fill the earth and subdue it**; have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Genesis 1:27-28

*(1) "So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. (2) And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are **given into your hand**."*

Genesis 9:1-2

Fill the earth and subdue it:

God, having just created the universe, created His representative (dominion) and representation (image and likeness). Man would fill the earth and oversee its operation. Subdue does not suggest a wanton and unruly condition for the creation because God pronounced it "good." Rather, it speaks of a productive ordering of the earth and its inhabitants to yield its riches and accomplish God's purposes. Additionally, "fill the earth" means that mankind has a primary place on the earth – he is not an intruder – and does not equate to overpopulation.

Dominion:

This defined man's unique relation to creation. Man was God's representative in ruling over the creation. The command to rule separated him from the rest of living creation and also defined his relationship as above the rest of creation (see Psalm 8:6-8 – "*You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen – even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas*").

Although mankind is charged with the responsibility to be wise stewards, this command does not place animal and plant welfare above human priority and needs. A reversal of human and animal-plant priorities along with adverse pollution of the air, waters and land would be contrary to dominion and would be defined as exploitation. In concert with dominion and good stewardship, Christians should have a priority of using the environment for the benefit of mankind and God's glory.

Given into your hand:

This phrase – as found in Genesis 9:2 – does not allow for animal exploitation. Instead, it is referring to a change from mankind not allowed to eat meat prior to

the flood (Genesis 1:30) to post flood chronology of being able to eat animals for sustenance.

From the preceding overview of the dominion mandate as found in Genesis chapters 1 and 9, it is clear from a biblical perspective that God created the universe and mankind as his representatives to fill the earth, oversee its operation, and use its resources for the benefit of mankind. Mankind is also defined as above the rest of creation which is also repeated in Psalm 8:6-8. However, with the responsibility of the dominion mandate also comes the accountability of being wise and prudent stewards of God's creation. In this case, wise stewardship integrates the biblical importance of mankind with truth as applied to global warming/climate change and the current environmental movement.

IS GLOBAL WARMING LEGITIMATE?

Before we examine this subject, let's first define global warming and climate change as follows:

Global Warming

Refers to a clear and continuing rise in the average temperature of the earth's climate system.

Climate Change

A significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over long periods of time, regardless of the cause. Fluctuations over periods shorter than a few decades (such as El Nino, etc.) do not represent climate change within this definition.

Although there is a difference in the previous two definitions, *environmental perceptions* have resulted in climate change currently becoming synonymous with global warming as there are some similarities between the two. However, let's keep these two terms separate for simplicity and focus on the term *global warming* as an umbrella for the balance of this discussion

Although the environmental movement has many facets such as animal rights, overpopulation concerns, declining forests and concerns over nuclear arms proliferation, the primary focus and most frequently repeated concern by environmentalists (and also evangelistic environmentalists) is global warming due to a perception that the earth's climate is fragile, humans are responsible for hazardous climatic changes, and abrupt corrective action is essential to reverse the current trend. However, conservative Christians typically view global warming from a worldview that is based on the viewpoint that the earth and its climate were designed and created by God but who cursed the ground in

Genesis 1:17 – *“Cursed is the ground for your sake – after Adam and Eve’s sin and who will ultimately destroy this earth by fire in 2 Peter 3:7 – “But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”* The secular mainstream divergent viewpoint is typically comprised of people who have a worldview based on the universe – and earth – being the result of accidental and random processes from nothing (evolution) and are therefore concerned about protecting the longevity of this earth as long as possible.

With these thoughts in mind, let's examine some basic global warming scientific principles and evaluate current experimental climate data by asking the following questions:

- Is the global temperature rising?
- Is carbon dioxide the primary cause of global warming?
- Is mankind responsible for global warming?

IS THE GLOBAL TEMPERATURE RISING?

The brief answer to this predominant question is *yes!* However, to put this answer in its proper context, consider the following facts:

- Worldwide temperature measurements were not made prior to 1880AD but have been made based on scientific data that is presumed to be accurate
- Temperature measurements have only been systematically recorded since 1880AD at land-based weather stations
- Since 1978, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellites have been used to *infer* the temperature of the atmosphere at various altitudes as well as sea and land surface temperatures. Weather satellites do not measure temperatures directly but measure radiances in various wavelength bands
- As a reference for this discussion, the annual average temperature for the globe between 1961 and 1990 was around 57.2-degrees F
- In 2014, the approximate global temperature was 58.5-degrees F (57.2 + 1.3)

Refer to Figure 1¹

- Although it is important to remember that science cannot categorically state what happened during the past 2,000 years, it is known that there have been cyclical warm and cold periods during the past 2,000 years as evidenced by the Roman-Medieval Warm Period and the Dark Age-Little Ice age Cold Periods

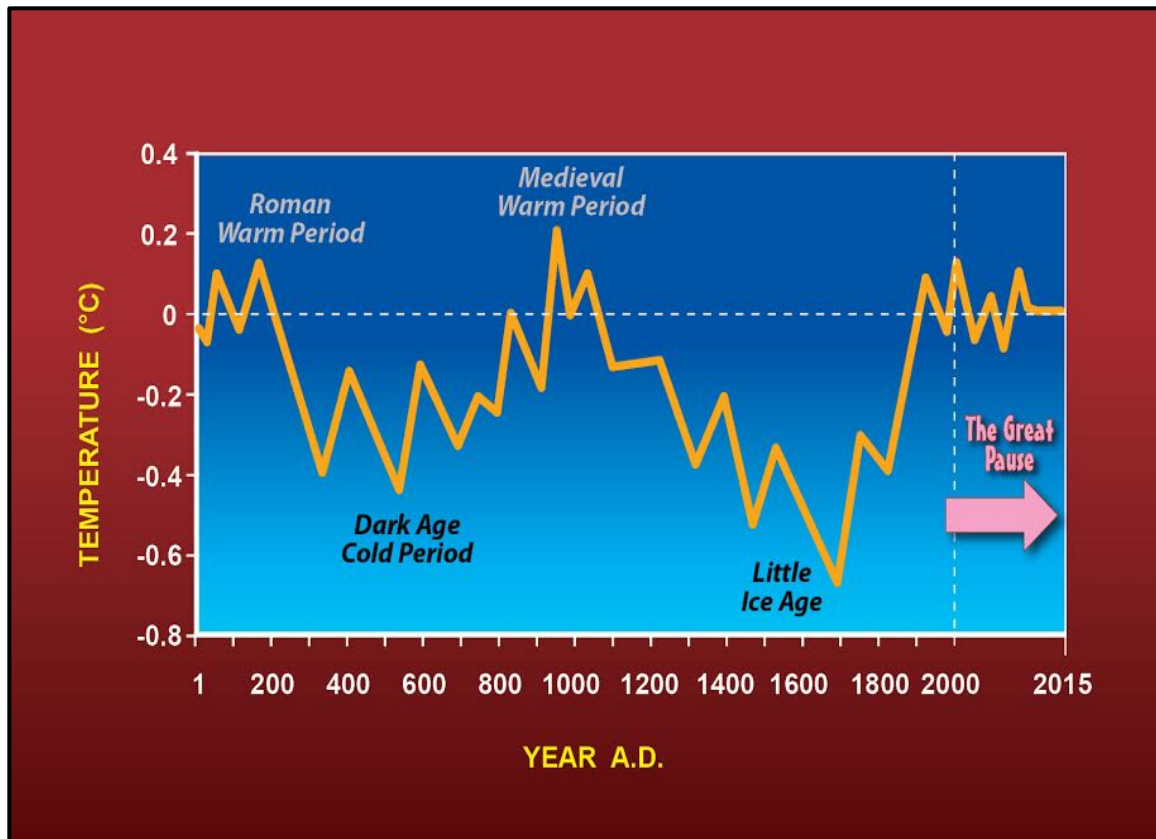


Figure 1

- Measurements indicate that there has been a 1.3 F rise in temperature since 1880AD (remember the temperature scale on the left portion of the graph is in tenths of degrees Celsius)
- Overall, the global temperature has been *slowly* rising since the Little Ice Age (defined by NASA as 1550AD to 1850AD)
- As evidenced by RSS (Remote Sensing Systems) satellite measurements, there has been no global warming since 1996 to the present (over 18 years). This is referred to as “*The Great Pause*”
- The overall global temperature trend over the past 400 years is up. However, it is impossible to forecast a temperature rise or fall over the next 400 years

IS CARBON DIOXIDE THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF GLOBAL WARMING?

This question is the focal point within the global warming debate. Information from the environmental advocates such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), centers on the belief that human-generated greenhouse gases are the principal cause of global warming as evidenced by their latest report as follows:

“Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by economic and population growth, and are now higher than ever. This

has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Their effects, together with those of other anthropogenic drivers, have been detected throughout the climate system and are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century”

Based on the previous quote from the IPCC, let's make three general observations. First, the phrase “extremely likely” indicates the IPCC is less than 100% confident in their conclusions. Second, it is impossible for science to know what levels of carbon dioxide were present 800,000 years ago or even 5,000 years ago. Third, the IPCC states that anthropogenic (environmental pollution and pollutants originating in human activity) drivers such as carbon dioxide that has been caused by mankind were the dominant cause of observed warming since the mid-20th century (1950). If that was true, how are the Roman and Medieval Warm Periods clarified by IPCC statements as it is unlikely that humans caused these warming cycles by burning fossil fuels. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1, it is apparent that human activity over the past 2,000 years had minimal or no correlation with global temperatures.

Refer to Figure 2²

As an additional point of clarification based on the premise that human pollution by carbon dioxide is the most cited cause of an increase in global warming, refer to Figure 2. As previously mentioned, scientists were not able to *accurately* measure the amount of carbon dioxide over the past alleged 800,000 years but have *estimated* the amount of carbon dioxide over the past 1,000 years by measuring air trapped in ice layers in Antarctica. Comparing the carbon dioxide estimates in Figure 1 with the temperature estimates in Figure 2, there is a noticeable lack of correlation between carbon dioxide and temperature! Let's look at several examples:

- In Figure 1, the global temperature is aggressively declining from 1,000 AD to 1,700AD while carbon dioxide concentrations during the same period in Figure 2 hardly changes
- In Figures 1 and 2, the global temperature rise that begins around 1,700AD actually precedes the rise of carbon dioxide concentrations in Figure 2

The data in Figures 1 and 2 do not support the viewpoint of a correlation of rising carbon dioxide concentrations proceeding and/or causing rising global temperatures. Additionally, it is a scientific fact that the temperature of the earth has only varied about 1.3-degrees F over the past 2,000 years and has been relatively stable for the past 18 years (The Great Pause).

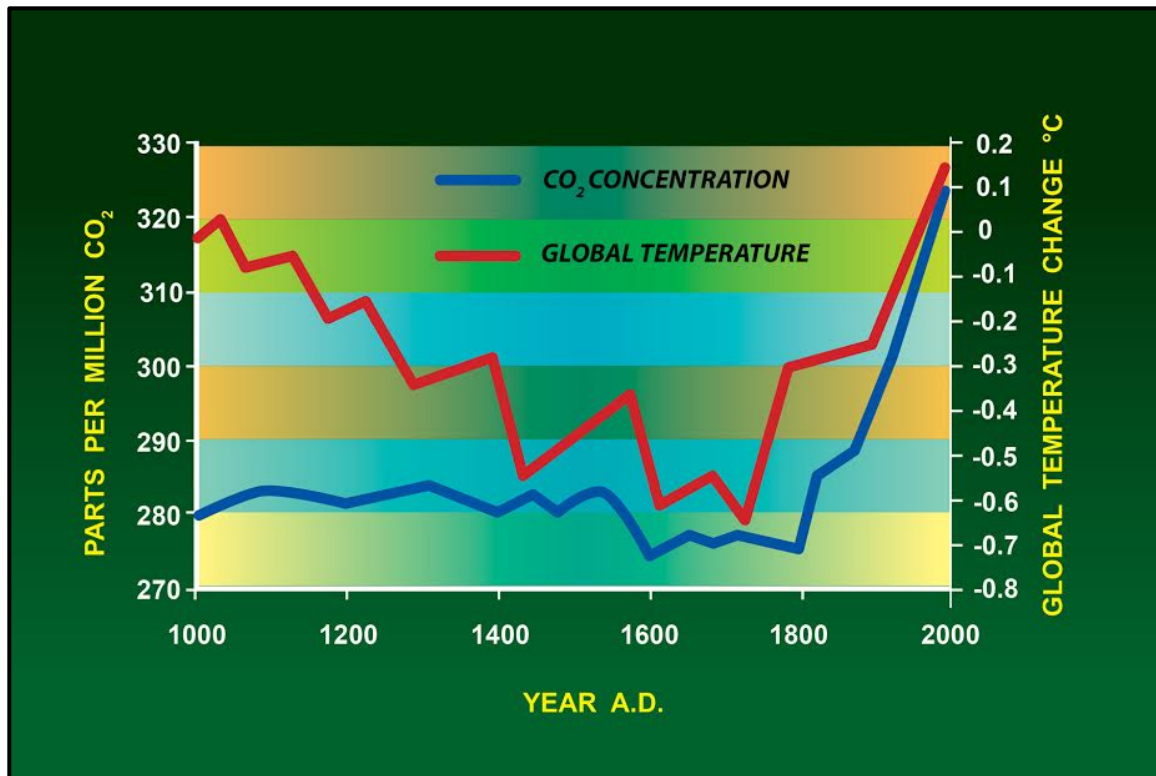


Figure 2

IS MANKIND RESPONSIBLE FOR GLOBAL WARMING?

In the previous sections we have discussed the current *alleged* environmental viewpoints that mankind is responsible for carbon dioxide pollution and both are predominately linked to the cause of global warming. However – and with the assistance of Figures 1 and 2 – scientific evidence points to the fact that carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere are not responsible for the dominant cause of increasing global temperatures. This was clearly illustrated during the Roman and Medieval Warm Periods that were hundreds of years before mankind burned “fossil fuels.”

So, if the earth’s temperature has been relatively stable for at least 2,000 years with an overall 1.3-degree variance, then what is the primary cause of today’s rising global temperature? Lets consider the following observations:

- Science will readily admit the subject of weather and climate are still not fully understood
- As evidenced by Figure 1, it is clear that global temperatures are cyclical and not linear
- Scripture indicates that the global flood as delineated in Genesis dramatically changed/alterd the earth’s climate and topography (which most secular scientists reject). Ocean sediments indicate that the movement of plate tectonics during the flood heated the oceans at least 36-degrees (over current

temperatures). After the flood, temperatures dramatically dropped which caused the earth to enter an Ice Age. After the Ice Age, temperatures have fluctuated by about 1.3-degrees F. As an example, 900AD to 1100AD was considered a “warm period” and was then followed by a “little ice age” during 1400AD to 1700AD when the overall temperature dropped from +0.1-degree C to about -0.8-degree C (during this time, glaciers advanced, whereas now they are receding)

- A noteworthy natural cause of varying temperatures is a change in “*total solar irradiance*” from the sun. Since the advent of satellites measuring solar radiation since 1978, it has been verified that sunshine is not constant (as once thought) and occurs in cycles such as the 11-year cycle, 22-year cycle, and a long period cycle that can last several hundred years. Obviously, these fluctuations are cyclical and are a direct result of cycles in the suns radiation levels (as the earth receives more energy/heat from the sun, the oceans will warm and release more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and less carbon dioxide will be released as temperatures cool)
- Based on the Roman and Medieval Warm Periods, today’s temperature is not unprecedented and is better explained as a cyclical global weather pattern

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS APPROACH THIS ISSUE?

To address the various issues within the broad category of modern environmentalism and global warming, lets briefly consider the following three questions:

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS VIEW GREEN ENVIRONMENTALISM?

First, there is a significant difference between the biblical view of mankind’s environmental responsibilities and the current political environmental movement, particularly radical environmentalism. An understanding of these two views will solidify the foundation and worldview that a Christian will use to evaluate biblical principles and environmentalism.

The Bible states in Genesis 1:28 that the earth and everything in it was given to mankind by God to rule, subdue, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. Nevertheless, Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8:6-8 indicates that God gave mankind a place above all creatures and commanded mankind to exercise stewardship over the earth. This does not mean that the earth and its various inhabitants should be placed above the priority of mankind.

Lastly, it is important to remember that the universe and earth are not permanent commodities – nor were they ever intended to be. The modern environmental movement is focused on endlessly conserving and preserving this earth. 2 Peter 3:10 specifies that the earth and all that God has created will be

destroyed by fire. Although we should be good stewards of God's creation, we should not be focused on reversing the roles of nature and mankind and trying to preserve an earth that will not last any longer than God's ultimate plan.

IS THE CONCEPT OF MOTHER NATURE BIBLICAL?

Mother Nature – sometimes known as Mother Earth or Earth-Mother – is a common personification of nature that focuses on the life-giving and nurturing aspects of nature by embodying it in the form of a mother that is unique and apart from God. The earliest written account of Mother Nature can be traced back to ancient Greek transcripts dated to around 12 B.C. Today, the term Mother Nature acts as a catchall terminology for global warming and climate change, environmentalism, and is responsible for various types of global catastrophic events such as earthquakes, floods, wildfires and other similar events.

However, the Bible makes it clear God alone controls the forces of nature (Jeremiah 10:12-13) and rules heaven and earth (Daniel 4:25). Moreover, Acts 14:17 states that nature is the creation of God and He alone sustains and protects it. As a result, the idea of Mother Earth is not a biblical perspective.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS VIEW GLOBAL WARMING AND/OR CLIMATE CHANGE?

Although these two terms are similar and can be used to define the same viewpoint, it is interesting that the phrase *climate change* is currently replacing global warming as the catchall phrase for environmentalism. This shift in terminology began after 2009 as a result of the Climate Gate 1.0 scandal that resulted from emails that were anonymously released that highlighted the following three themes:

- Prominent scientists central to the global warming debate were taking measures to conceal pertinent underlying data
- These scientists viewed global warming as a “political cause” rather than a balanced scientific inquiry
- Many of these scientists frankly admitted to each other that much of the science is weak and dependent on deliberate manipulation of facts and data

Interestingly, in 2011 Climate Gate 2.0 surfaced with similar assertions that ignited Climate Gate 1.0. Therefore, a careful look at the science behind global warming indicates that there is a great deal of claims, counterclaims, valid scientific data, controversy and a general disagreement over what facts are valid and unsubstantiated science. As summarized in this discussion, we know the following primary points to be accurate:

- The current average temperature of the earth is slowly rising

- The earth has gone through significant cyclical temperature changes in the past
- Many sources believe that current global temperature changes are the result of human anthropological pollution
- These temperature changes were obviously not caused by human anthropological pollution
- Some environmentalists have taken a radical approach to “saving mother earth” at the expense of placing mankind in a secondary role
- Environmentalism can be very beneficial if kept in its proper context

How then should a Christian view global warming? A Christian should view it skeptically, critically, and in it’s proper context with biblical scripture. Additionally, Christians (as well as secularists) should respect the earth and environment and not be associated with wanton destruction of our resources. In all cases, the primary focus should be on worshipping the creator, not the creation!

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