

Chapter 8

CARING FOR CREATION

OVERVIEW: A survey of environmental ethics, each ethic claiming to present a basis for acceptable human conduct toward the natural world. Emphasis will be upon a Scriptural ethic which rests on the concept of stewardship of God's Creation.

BLUEPRINT: This assignment takes us briefly to Chapter 8, pages 158-164 which includes Sections 8-L and 8-M. Section 8-M ends by outlining the major scriptural principles related to "environmental stewardship."

VOCABULARY: Define each of the following:

- environmental ethics                  dominion                  stewardship                  pragmatic-utilitarian ethic
- ethical bases for caring: biocentrism, ecocentrism, pantheism, anthropocentrism

LECTURE PREP:

1. Do you think there are legitimate reasons for concern about the environment? \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ Uncertain at this time.
2. What are the major issues that many associate with environmental concerns?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

LECTURE EMPHASIS: We will discuss "Reasons for Caring" about the planet on which we live, both scientific (e.g. ecological) and scriptural, in conjunction with a videotape entitled "Keeping the Earth." See viewing guide, next pages.

Based upon your response to "LECTURE PREP." questions above, what are reasons Christians should be concerned about the environment? [Come prepared to share your responses.]

- A. Scientific (ecological) reasons:
- B. Scriptural (theological) reasons:

NETWORK: Visit "BIO 100 Web Links" Page, and click on 'Aldo Leopold' under Assignment #9/10 to read some background on this great contributor to the development of "environmental ethics" and author of *A Sand County Almanac* which includes the short essay, *Odysey*.

## VIDEO: "Keeping the Earth" -- Discussion Questions - Part I

### HOW THE VIDEO WILL INFLUENCE US:

1. **IMAGES:** Which visual images in the video impacted you, and why?

2. **EXPERTS --** Which speaker more closely represented your views, and why?

<b>Ismar Schorsch, Jewish Theol. Seminary</b> <b>Jean Sindab, National Council of Churches</b> <b>Calvin DeWitt, AuSable Instit. of Env. Studies</b> <b>Drew Christiansen, U.S. Catholic Conference</b>	<b>Edward O. Wilson, Harvard Biologist</b> <b>Paul Gorman, Nat. Relig. Part. for Environ.</b> <b>Henry Kendall, Union of Concerned Scientists</b> <b>Jane Lubchenco, Am. Assn. for Adv. of Sci.</b>
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### WHO IS MAN?

3. What thoughts went through your mind when you saw the cathedral scene?

4. In the video, Michal Smart speaks of mankind as a unique combination of the dust of the earth and the breath of God. Humans have a God-likeness and a "creatureliness". What, if anything, sets humans apart from the other creatures *biologically? Spiritually?*

### WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

5. If stewardship involves *ruling* (dominion, Gen 1:28) over creation by *servicing* it (Gen. 2:15), how does this ruling/servicing dichotomy work out in practicality? According to Dr. DeWitt, what is *con-servation*?

## VIDEO: Keeping the Earth -- Discussion Questions - Part II

### SCIENTISTS CONCERNED:

6. What is the primary cause of *extinction* of species?

### THEOLOGICAL PERCEPTIONS:

7. **FLOOD:** From the account of Noah's ark, what value does God place on each kind of creature?
  
8. **GOD'S "TWO BOOKS":** In the video, it was said that every time a creature is lost, it is like tearing a page out of Scripture because creatures are part of God's communication to us. Do you agree? Explain your position. [Note: Elsewhere, Michal Smart says that all creation is a chorus of praise to God and every voice is needed in that choir. Is this an accurate statement? Why or why not?]
  
9. **SABBATH CONCEPT:** What does God teach us by a Sabbath for man and creation? (Leviticus 25:2,4)

### ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM:

10. According to the video, what is the remedy for the environmental crisis?
  
11. What disciplines besides natural sciences and theology should be addressing environmental issues?
  
12. What *institutions* have a major influence on how the creation is managed?

**APPLICATION:** What reasons are given for caring for the creation? What actions can/will you take?

## WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT ? — Resource Page

### A. ANTHROPOCENTRIC ETHIC -- Human -centered

> **RESOURCES and CREATURES EXIST FOR HUMAN EXPLOITATION**

- > **RESULT:**
- a. **Conserve because of FEAR of consequences**
  - b. **CAUSES DEBATE -- are we really running out?**

### B. NON-ANTHROPOCENTRIC – attempts to extend ethic beyond “human centered”

1. **BIOCENTRIC** – other creatures have the same rights as humans; e.g. PETA
2. **ECOCENTRIC** – each species and their biotic communities have value and right to protection because they share an evolutionary heritage
3. **PANTHEISTIC** – belief system that claims that all organisms have value because they share a “unity” with each other and with God

### C. PRAGMATIC-UTILITARIAN – a compromise based upon “practical realities”

- > May be sympathetic toward “environmental movement” pending more pressing priorities
- > Environment can be sustained by technological innovation and allow unlimited growth
- > Humans and certain animals have intrinsic moral standing; deserve our respect and care.

### D. BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP – four principles out of a **THEOCENTRIC** ethic:

1. **EARTHKEEPING** – “dominion” (Gen. 1:28) by “serving” (Gen. 2:15)
2. **FRUITFULNESS**
  - a. **God blessed...all creatures should flourish (Gen. 1:22)**
  - b. **Harvest...but “leave the mother” (Deut. 22:6)**

**APPLICATION:** Basis for managing “renewable resources” (soil, water, etc.)

3. **SABBATH**
  - a. **An opportunity to practice limiting our demand for resources?**
  - b. **Scripture: Exodus 20:8, Leviticus 25:4**
4. **CONTENTMENT** – **I Timothy 6:6-8**

**INSTRUCTIONS/POLICIES** on completion and submission of this quiz are the same as earlier quizzes.

Write the UPPER CASE letter of the correct answer in the correspondingly numbered answer box.

1. Which of the following classifications includes all of the others as subgroups?  
 A. consumers    B.. herbivores    C. heterotrophs    D. decomposers    E. carnivores
  
2. The metabolic process that distinguishes most autotrophs from heterotrophs is  
 A. digestion    B.. respiration    C. reproduction    D. photosynthesis    E. responsiveness to light
  
3. Which of the following elements can heterotrophs acquire directly from the reservoir without dependence upon the autotrophs?  
 A. Carbon    B.. Calcium    C. Sulfur    D. Nitrogen
  
4. A field diameter of 3 mm for the 4X objective would change to a field diameter of \_\_\_\_\_mm for a 12X objective on the same microscope.  
 A. 1 mm    B. B. 1.25 mm    C. 2.5 mm    D. 9 mm    E. insufficient data
  
5. Which environmental ethic or belief system listed in the choices below is expressed in the statement *Every existent being, from atom to galaxy, is rooted in the same universal, life-creating Reality. Thus, every creature and its environment deserves our reverence and care.*  
 A. Biocentrism    B. Ecocentrism    C. Pantheism    D. Anthropocentrism    E. Theocentrism
  
6. Which environmental ethic or belief system listed in the choices under number 5. is expressed in the statement, *A human action is acceptable as long as it does not harm species or diminish the biodiversity of the habitats in question.*
  
7. Which environmental ethic or belief system listed in the choices under number 5. is expressed in the statement by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), “even the "lowliest" being is an individual with a great desire to live his or her own life—something we should remember before we cage and experiment on them.” Kathy Guillermo, <http://www.peta.org/liv/c/47.html>

Answers	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
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**SHORT ANSWER:** State two distinct actions you could take either on the Cedarville University campus or at your home to help reduce the increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_