

Environmental issues

Christian approaches

Keywords

- **Secular** = non-religious attitudes.
- **Sacred** = any religious attitude.
- **Stewardship** = taking care of the environment due to a religious belief.
- **Conservation** = maintaining and protecting the environment.
- **Dominion** = a religious term for dominating or controlling something.

Stewardship vs dominion

- Example of dominion in Genesis 2, when the animals are brought to Adam to be named, which gives humans power over animals. Richard Bauckham argues that this example supports the view that God has given humans the role of carers for the environment.
- Many Christians believe that humans were created by God in order to care for the rest of creation, because we have been made in God's image.
- For some, dominion means responsible stewardship.
- St. Francis of Assisi taught that man must love and protect the whole of creation because nature is God's creation. Therefore by being close to nature, this means being close to the creator.

Implications for Christians

- **Evangelical** - the idea of "creation care" (preventing any activities that harm God's creation).
- **Church of England** - we are responsible for carefully managing the environment.
- **Catholic** - the role of humankind is to maintain God's creation.

Conservation

- Deals with how to allocate, protect and use resources sustainably.
- Protecting future generations.

Challenges to the Christian approach

- Lynn Townsend White said that Christianity is to blame for environmental issues.
- This is because the Bible asserts man's dominion over nature and establishes an **anthropocentric** (centred on humanity) worldview that sees animals as subservient to humanity.
- This implies that creatures are soulless and inferior to humans.
- White doesn't suggest that a secular approach is necessarily better and she acknowledges that Christianity and Ecology are compatible.

However...