

Problematic Christian Theology

1) Human Lordship over the Earth

Genesis 1: 26 -28

*26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over [a]all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 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 [b]moves on the earth."*

The Human being **dominate** and **subdue** the Nature World

- Power over relationship with Nature World
- Power over model resonates other Patriarchal power relationship in Scripture
- Humanity is seen as distinct from the rest of Creation → Protection of the Earth, Respect for the Earth

2) "End of the World" theology

If we read these passage

ISAIAH 24:3 *The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the Lord has spoken this word.*

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 [a]perdition of ungodly men.*

MATTHEW 24: 40 - 41 *Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.*

Eco-theology responses

1. Human Lordship theology

Lordship of Christ is revealed in servanthood (CARING)

Genesis 2: 15 *Then the Lord God took [a]the man and put him in the garden of Eden to [b]tend and keep it.*

God invites us to be Earth keepers rather than Earth dominators

Humanity as part of the "Community of Creation"

- job - putting us in our place
- **Psalm 104** → List of the elements of Creation
- **Matthew 6: 25 - 33** *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one ^[a]cubit to his ^[b]stature?*

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not ^[a]arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Learning about sustainable living from the natural world

2. End of the world theology

The Earth is included in God’s salvation plan

Colossians 1: 20 *and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

Ephesians 1: 9-10 *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, ^[a]both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*

Heaven breaks into our present

“Your kingdom come, on Earth as it is in Heaven”

Other eco-theology themes

3. The **Trinity** as a model for sustainable relationship

OLD MODEL - POWER OVER

- dominion
- exploitation
- unending growth

NEW MODEL - TRINITARIAN

- Interconnectedness

- b) Equality - Equity
- c) distributive power / energy → spread evenly
- d) sacredness of all
- e) the common good of all

4. Sufficiency / Enoughness

2 Corinthians 9: 8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

(Autarkia → greek word which means sufficiency)

Lord's prayer → Give us today our daily bread e.g manna from heaven

5. Balance (is achieved through RECOVERY)

Sabbath laws

- a) Fallow Year - exploitation of the soil (resources)
- b) Day of rest - soil can recover his goodness

JUBILEE LAWS

- 1) Debt cancellation
- 2) Restoration of land property
- 3) Freeing of slaves

Information about Simon Topping

Simon Topping is a Methodist **minister** and faith leader based in Hucclecote in Gloucester, England, known for his campaign work in favour of ending world poverty, and he has a special interest in the relationship between faith and economic justice. He is married to Jane and they have three sons.

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