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ECONOMICS AND CULTURE



Growing pains in the romance lands

A balanced view of the
Great Lakes

Property rights and
conservation

A conversation about the best
policies for the environment

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sarah Stanley MANAGING EDITOR

For our first issue of 2018, the R&L editorial board wanted to put together a very special “green” issue. We traveled across the country and talked to many experts to bring you essays, interviews, reviews and more, focusing on the environment, good stewardship and the importance of property rights.

For the cover story, Director of Communications John and I ventured to Bozeman, Montana, and Yellowstone National Park. In “Growing pains in the Romance Lands,” Couretas describes the difficulties of preserving land while also allowing for businesses to grow and new communities to be built. In an accompanying feature, “Betting the ranch”, Couretas profiles John and Ramona Baden, who put their Montana ranch into a conservation easement rather than cashing it in.

Last year, I visited Washington state where I spoke with Todd Myers, director of the Center for the Environment at the Washington Policy Center. We discuss everything from dolphin-safe tuna, leaded gasoline and the importance of where people who care about the environment actually live. You can find all that in “A conversation about the best policies for the environment.”

For our transatlantic sections, you can find an essay from Bishop Dominique Rey about why our language is so important when discussing environmental concerns in “Going back to the grammar of creation.” Philip Booth talks about Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’* and what it’s missing. “*Laudato Si’*” would have been a more rounded document if it had considered the importance of private property for the protection of the environment,” Booth argues.

Bruce Edward Walker reviews *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* and discusses why these bodies of water are so important to us in the midwest.

Featured in our “green” liberal tradition is Aldo Leopold, the “father of ecology.” Leopold truly practiced what he preached and used his own land to test conservation and restoration efforts. He spoke about the importance of “individual responsibility for the health of the land” and the importance of private property rights for the good of the land.



Cover Photo: “Mammoth Hot Springs overlooking Yellowstone Park” by John Couretas (Owned by Acton Institute)

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Wisdom on the environment

Robert Sirico

ACTON INSTITUTE

The biblical starting point for any discussion of the nature of religious environmental stewardship must begin with the witness of the Book of Genesis: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it 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’” (Gen. 1:27-28 NRSV). In our modern times, however, this biblical vision of the relationship between God, man and nature is muddled by two false views. The one sees the natural world as the source of all value, humanity as an intruder and God, if he exists at all, as so immanent in the natural order that he ceases to be distinguishable from it. The other places humanity as the source of all values, the natural order as merely instrumental to his arms and God as often irrelevant.

Genesis presents a radically different picture of how the world is put together. In this account, God is the source of all values – in truth, he is the source of everything, calling it into being out of nothing by his powerful word. Humankind is part of this order essentially and, what is more, by the virtue of his created nature is placed at the head of creation as its steward. Yet this stewardship can never be arbitrary or anthropocentric, as the old canard goes, for this notion implies that humankind rules creation in God’s stead and must do so according to his divine will.

I hope we can advance the important contemporary con-

versation about environmental stewardship, helping us all see our moral and religious responsibilities in keeping and tilling the garden that is our world.

Blame sin for environmental problems

Kishore Jayabalan

ACTON ROME

I appreciated and welcomed Pope Francis’s encyclical, *Laudato si’*, which challenges us to re-examine how we treat the earth and each other. These are nonnegotiables for Catholics, and there is much we can do to improve our everyday conduct. I must admit to disappointment when it comes to the pope’s overwhelming attribution of environmental and social damage to market economics, however. He seems to blame markets, overconsumption and especially finance, rather than human sin, for all our environmental problems.

His partial analysis neglects what markets and finance have historically done to provide cleaner air and water and greater food security for millions of people the world over. We know that environmental damage is much worse when no one is responsible for their own property and when they can’t plan for their own future by way of insurance or commodity futures. Economics has actually helped well-intentioned people achieve the goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development, even as much work remains to be done. Any system reflects the character of those who act in it, so personal and social ethics remain fundamental.

I am therefore curious as to what the Holy Father would want us to do in this much-criticized global economy. We can certainly become enslaved to technology and material possessions,

as the pope says, and should find ways to avoid it. But simply consuming less often ends up hurting the poor who would like to do business with us. Would making everyone materially poorer make us spiritually richer? Perhaps for some, but not for those who lack the basic necessities of life. Would saving and investing, rather than consuming, be a better way to help the poor? I would like to think the pope wants us to become more mindful and intentional in what we do and to live with a spirit of detachment as we engage the very marketplaces he seems to condemn.

The temptation of faux asceticism

Andrew P. Morris

Fr. Michael Butler

ACTON COMMENTARY

How does a Christian integrate the Church’s ascetical traditions into their interactions with God’s creation? First, we must resist the temptation to impose our asceticism on others, as the value of the ascetical practices lie in the voluntary denial of consumption as a means of growing closer to God. Using the power of the state to compel asceticism in others would thus be counterproductive in a spiritual sense. Moreover, we must distinguish our own practice of asceticism from efforts to deny others the benefits of God-given human creativity; we cannot force asceticism onto others.

Second, we must avoid shifting the costs and burdens of our own asceticism onto others. Lobbying for subsidies and mandates for corn-based ethanol that leads to higher food prices, at tremendous cost to the world’s poor, is a particularly pernicious example of *faux* asceticism in which the warm feelings of doing good among

the wealthy are primarily paid for by the poorest. For example, a Tufts University study estimated that U.S. corn ethanol mandates cost Mexico \$1.5 to \$3 billion through increased food prices from 2006 to 2011. Similarly, the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy imposes tremendous costs on the poor in developing countries by denying them markets for their agricultural products through subsidies to European farmers in the name of promoting sustainable agriculture.

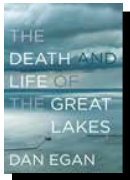
Third, we must resist the temptation to seek to subsidize our own consumption. Providing ourselves with subsidized goods and services, such as fuels, food and electricity, not only encourages overconsumption of those goods and services – thus leading us away from both good stewardship and opportunities to practice asceticism – but also causes damage to God’s creation. The vast, federally subsidized water projects in the western United States and the World Bank’s tragic record of supporting destructive “infrastructure” projects, such as dams in developing countries, are two examples. No less damaging is the common practice in oil-producing nations of subsidizing consumption of fossil fuels – Venezuela’s four cents per gallon of gasoline is similarly a destructive practice.

Nature has a right to be transformed and uplifted, spiritualized and revived. And humankind has an obligation to serve that right, to love nature, not for our sake alone, but for its own sake, and not just for the utility it can provide. But such a realization requires of us an attitude toward the natural world that does not preclude stewardship of the world and its resources to meet human needs but goes beyond it to the fulfillment and perfection of creation for its own sake.

A balanced view of the Great Lakes

A review of *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* by Dan Egan (W.W. Norton & Company 2017)

Bruce Edward Walker



It's been several months since we young-Hemingway wannabes in Michigan put away our rods and reels, cleaned our lines and continuously embellished the length and weights of

the prey we caught – and especially the ones that got away. It's a cycle we have learned to live with. There have been good years, great years and sometimes years when we couldn't get a trout to take a worm much less a dry fly. Then there are also those pesky invasive plant and aquatic species.

The Great Lakes surrounding Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and New York (and, yes, Canada) are no different. Fluctuations of water levels and invasive species over the past century have threatened the vibrancy of an ecosystem estimated to contain 20 percent of the world's fresh water – and, thus, the largest source of surface water on the planet. Additionally, the lakes boast more than 10,000 miles of shoreline.

Unforeseen consequences of human activity and downright poor stewardship of the watershed combined with naturally occurring cycles over the course of the Great Lakes' history are only portions of the story Dan Egan tells in *The Death and*

Life of the Great Lakes. But, as Egan carefully explains, for all the dunderheaded human mistakes performed to the detriment of the Great Lakes, human ingenuity also eventually corrected them. There's a reason it's not called the life and death of the Great Lakes.

After a brief but informative geological history of the lake system, Egan (who grew up in Michigan and currently resides in Wisconsin) also discusses the first European explorers to chart the territory. Jacques Cartier failed to blaze a trail through the turbulent upstream waters of the St. Lawrence River. Later French explorers soon succeeded where Cartier failed by portaging their birch bark canoes miles around the rapids.

Egan then dons his investigative journalist's cap to recount numerous human boondoggles that were not only ecological but also economic disasters. The first is the dredging of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The upper Great Lakes (Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie and Superior) rise 600 feet above the water level of the Atlantic Ocean, from which they flow over the Niagara Falls to Lake Ontario into the St. Lawrence River to the ocean.

This difficulty was circumvented partially when the British built a canal in the late 18th century to supply troops stationed near Montreal. This canal, writes

Egan, was a technological marvel despite spanning a length barely the size of a football field and containing only three navigation locks. The Lachine Rapids were bypassed in 1825 by an eight-mile long canal that featured seven locks that raised boats 45 feet from one waterway to the next. The beneficial economic impact was felt immediately: 2,000 voyages annually carried 24,000 tons of goods between Montreal and Lake Ontario throughout the 1830s.

Similarly, the opening of the Erie Canal connected the eponymous lake with the Hudson River – 363 miles from Albany to New York – in 1825. The economic advantages to the United States didn't escape notice in Canada, which followed suit with the Welland Canal and St. Lawrence Locks. However, demand outpaced capacity and a single 633-foot ship carrying 15,000 tons of wheat was too large to pass the by-now antiquated locks on the St. Lawrence River.

Hence, the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway began in earnest in 1955, with the intention of creating a true international waterway from Duluth, Minnesota, to all points east. The point of comparison, of course, was the tremendous economic opportunities realized by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. What was true in the Mideast nearly a



century earlier was woefully false in North America. From the start, the Seaway faced overwhelming competition from innovations in the trucking industry, which resulted in trucking cargo in shipping containers costing manufacturers 16 cents per ton compared to waterway costs of \$5.83 per ton.

The economic promises of the St. Lawrence Seaway that justified the squandering of taxpayer dollars essentially in the service of crony capitalism (and hampered by the same) was just the beginning. According to Egan:

“The overriding, overwhelming regret is that we built it [the Seaway] too small,” the late U.S. congressman from Minnesota, Jim Oberstar, a longtime Seaway booster, once told me. “The railroads didn’t want to see larger-sized locks in the St. Lawrence Seaway that would compete with the railroads, and the East Coast ports didn’t want to see competition from the Great Lakes, and together they combined to limit the size of the Seaway locks.”

Those ships that did pass through the Seaway to the Great Lakes brought with them invasive species, including zebra

and quagga mussels and gobies. When those species were released with the ships’ ballast water, they spread botulism that killed native bird populations, including eagles and herons.

Alewives and sea lamprey introduced into the Great Lakes decimated the lake trout population. Sea lamprey migrated into the lakes through the canals built in the 19th century. By 1949, biologists predicted the bloodsucking parasite would irreversibly destroy the Great Lakes’ stock of lake trout – and therefore a previously lucrative sport and commercial fishing industry.

Researching the spawning habits of the lamprey, Vernon Applegate discovered they mated in rivers and streams. He performed what is “considered by today’s scientists to have been the biological equivalent of a moon shot” by conducting laboratory experiments with poisons that might kill the lamprey but not other wildlife. While not entirely eradicated, the lamprey threat was abated significantly.

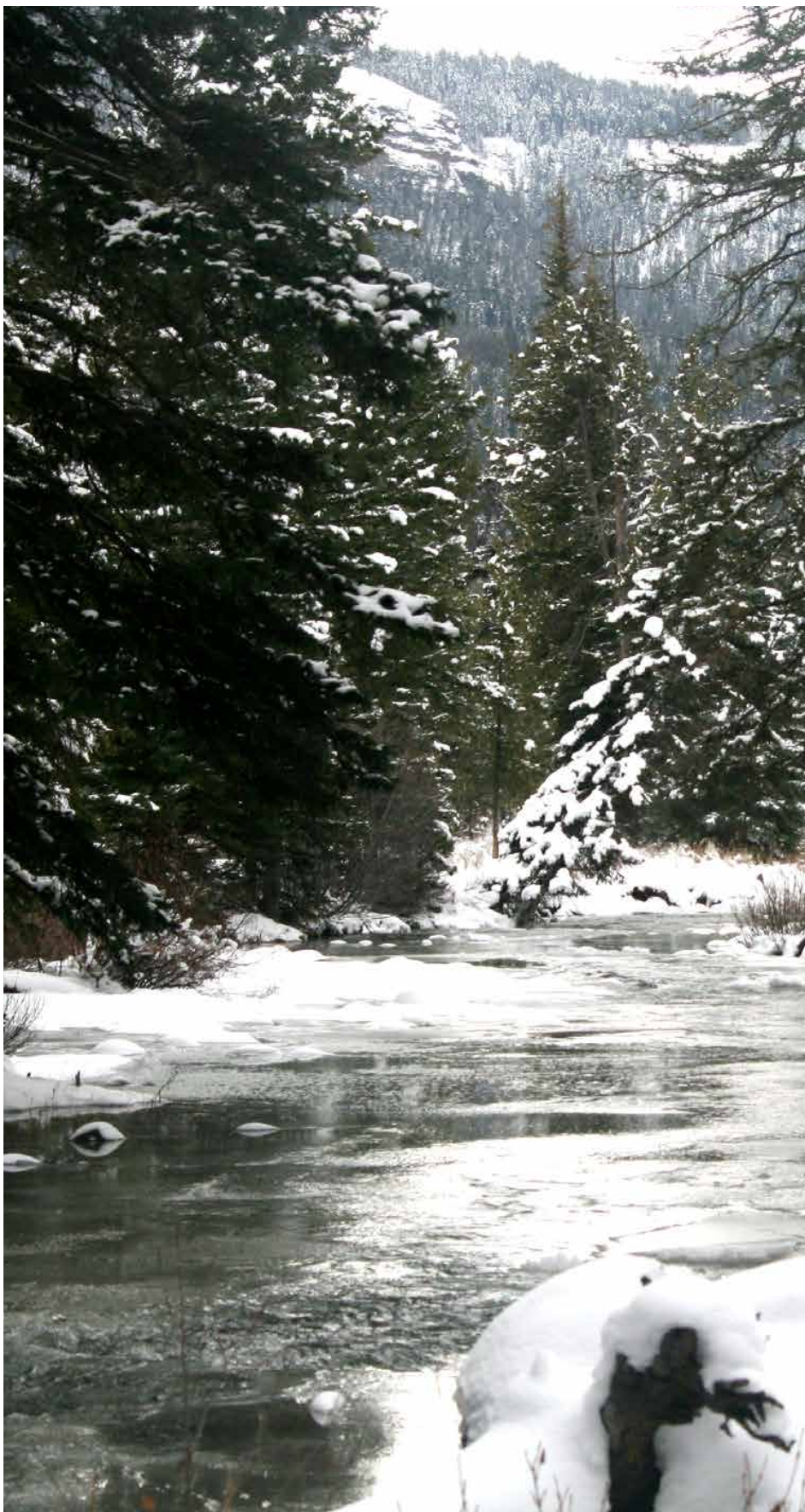
When mounds of rotting alewives (essentially herring adapted to living in fresh water) began turning up on the Great Lakes’ beaches, it was determined necessary to introduce a predator into the ecosystem. Thanks to the research by the book’s second hero, Howard Tanner,

newly introduced coho and chinook salmon not only gobbled up alewives by the ton but also kick-started what eventually amounted to a rebirth of the Midwest’s sport-fishing industry in the 1960s. Tanner himself does not attribute the reduction of alewives to the introduction of non-native salmon predators, however, noting that there weren’t enough salmon in the Great Lakes in 1967 to make a dent in the alewife population.

The alewife decline eventually led to much smaller populations of salmon, and the boom years of salmon fishing in the late 1960s and into the late 1980s diminished. Egan notes, however, that Great Lakes’ whitefish numbers are rebounding due to natural evolution that allows the fish to adequately digest mussels and gobies, another invasive species of fish.

Other contemporary threats to the Great Lakes include Asian carp and, according to Egan, water levels that ping-ponged between a record low in 2013 and a record high in 2017. His remarkable book makes clear, however, that for all the carelessness, ignorance and naivete of the human race, we can also act as pretty darned good stewards of God’s creation.

Bruce Edward Walker, a Michigan-based writer, writes frequently on the arts and other topics for the Acton Institute. [R&L](#)



ESSAY

Growing pains in the romance lands

"Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest." Aldo Leopold, in "The River of the Mother of God."

John Couretas

In December, several dozen people gathered for conversation and drinks in Bozeman, Montana, to discuss a long-simmering controversy over urban growth in this incredibly scenic corner of the American West. The event, which drew mostly younger men and women with a penchant for community engagement, was hosted by the Gallatin Valley Land Trust, an organization that is working to conserve land from rapid development in and around this city of 45,000 people an hour's drive from Yellowstone National Park.

"There's a worry that people would just come for the jobs and not be invested in the community," says Penelope Pierce, executive director of the organization. "I always marvel at how smart and curious and engaged they are."

At the meeting, Pierce heard good things about what comes with economic growth: more cultural choices, a better restaurant scene, greater ethnic diversity and not least, more jobs and better wages. But there are also misgivings about what growth is doing to housing affordability, urban sprawl and a lack of planning. Against this, there are tensions about the "close the door behind you" sentiment of residents to newcomers.

Photo: "Pebble Creek" by John Couretas. Owned by Acton Institute

How Bozeman resolves these tensions – or fails to resolve them – may indicate something about the strength of anti-sprawl movements, with their one-size-fits-all regulations on housing and land use, against free-market approaches that affirm property rights and neighborhood input. And how it plays out has national import as more and more Americans migrate to growing communities in the South and West.

Bozeman, and surrounding communities in the Gallatin Valley, are “magnets for people with high human capital,” says John Baden, a long time Montana rancher and chairman of the Foundation for Research on Economics & the Environment, a free-market organization in Bozeman. The city is the sort of place that draws people with high educational attainments and wealth because they choose to live near great natural beauty but also have access to cultural pursuits. Bozeman is a lifestyle choice for many.

Montana, perhaps the most remote state in the lower 48, with developed land comprising less than 2 percent of its vast territory, has always been attractive for recreation and scenic beauty. But that remoteness – and its harsh winters – was offputting to many. Now, with high-speed internet and better air links, that’s not such a deterrent. “Technology has reduced the cost of distance by a huge amount,” Baden says.

The rate of growth is what’s driving much of the anxiety. From 2000 to 2015, Montanans’ total personal income grew by 49 percent, according to an analysis by Headwaters Economics in Bozeman. But the job and income growth haven’t by and large been driven by the sectors that built the West – ranching, mining, lumber and related activities. Some 85 percent of the growth, according to Headwaters, has come from service sector industries, such as health care, outdoor recreation, real estate and tech.

The western half of Montana has grown the fastest, with five counties racking up more than three fourths of job growth: Gallatin (Bozeman), Lewis, Flathead, Missoula and Yellowstone. Overall, counties with a higher share of federal lands (read: wildlife and recreation) tend to outperform counties with less federal land. An estimated 31 percent of Montana is under management by federal agencies.

What’s happening in Bozeman is consistent with long-term trends in migration between states, with millions of people

continuing to cross state lines for new places to live – mostly in the South and West. From 2010 to 2017, nationally the number was 4.3 million, according to a new analysis by Wendell Cox, published by the Center for Opportunity Urbanism in Houston. In the West, some of the biggest magnets are Montana, Idaho, Nevada and Utah.

One typical response to rapid urban growth in recent decades is the passage of anti-sprawl or growth-control laws by local communities. These use a variety of regulatory approaches, including setting boundaries for development, promoting housing density versus single family homes and putting the brakes on road expansion to discourage light vehicle traffic. If you see your city streets suddenly constricted with bike lanes, pedestrian walkways and ditch-like “bioretention islands” in medians, you’re being prodded by planners to take the bus.

Nearly 20 years ago, a group of academics and free-market think tank fellows gathered on a ranch near Big Sky, Montana, just outside Bozeman, and issued a set of principles to counter the dozens of anti-sprawl regulations that had been passed in the 1990s. The most fundamental principle the group promulgated in the Lone Mountain Compact was that “absent a material threat to other individuals or the community,” people should be allowed to live and work where and how they like. “Prescriptive, centralized plans that attempt to determine the detailed outcome of community form and function should be avoided,” the Compact declared. “Such ‘comprehensive’ plans interfere with the dynamic, adaptive and evolutionary nature of neighborhoods and cities.”

One of the twists about Bozeman and other areas of the West is that there are vast tracts of open land. This is irresistible to real estate developers who see the migration patterns of wealthy boomers looking for a postcard-

perfect setting for a log cabin mansion. But in the West, there are often overlapping jurisdictions for public land management and competing interests in the private sector that make any coherent approach to land use very tricky.

The Greater Yellowstone region is a particularly interesting management problem because of the multiple legal jurisdictions that come into play. This includes two national parks, seven national forests, twenty two counties across three states and multiple other assorted entities, including a good deal of high-value private land.

One unique aspect is the vast store of research and scientific inquiry that Yellowstone and the surrounding region has built up over decades, says Jerry D. Johnson, a professor in the political science department at Montana State University in Bozeman, and an expert on the political economy of public lands and national park management.

“Within this context we have tried political leaders of all types and experimented with various policies, such as local option sales tax, local option zoning, affordable housing, conservation easements and the like,” he says. “The glaring gap in the region is that no one seems very interested in systematically examining the spectrum of policy to make some evaluation.”

Although there is currently much support among Bozeman residents for “affordable housing” programs, Johnson is not particularly enthusiastic. “My personal feeling is that such programs are largely misplaced, although I get the emotional appeal,” he says. “Better to encourage living in a less desirable location in the hope that those locations will eventually become Bozeman-like through application of social energy and pent-up demand for similar amenities.”

What is needed, he says, are engaged non-profits that continually press for land conserva-

tion and preservation of habitat corridors as well as recognition that growth in the region is driven by “our location and amenities.” Highly focused strategic projects,

“One of the twists about Bozeman and other areas of the West is that there are vast tracts of open land. This is irresistible to real estate developers who see the migration patterns of wealthy boomers ...”

Johnson says, can protect “high-value spots,” including large ranches, wetlands and winter ranges.

One way to preserve these high-value lands – and respect property rights – is through the work of the Gallatin Valley Land Trust and other groups like it (see accompanying article, “Betting the ranch”). The Montana Association of Land Trusts in Helena estimates that land trusts, public agencies and landowners “have worked to conserve over two million acres of private land since 1976, and the current pace of land conservation continues to be strong in Montana.”

Gallatin Valley Land Trust works with private landowners to protect ranches and other private property for future agricultural, wildlife and recreational use through voluntary conservation easements. Once under the legal protection of a conservation agreement through the trust, the landowner retains ownership and can continue to live on the land. If the property owner sells the land or passes it on to family members, the easement transfers with it “in perpetuity.”

Pierce, the trust’s executive director, says the easements are a “way to balance growth.” These are purely voluntary and have “nothing to do with regulations.” The easements are also a way for landowners to keep ranches and other lands in family ownership without breaking up property and selling piecemeal holdings to cover estate taxes.

That generational view is important for many who view conservation in a religious context. In a 2013 Acton Institute commentary on Christians and property rights, Rev. Gregory Jensen says “it is through the wise and prudent use of our property that we are able to give ourselves over in love to the next generation and so give them the possibility of likewise transcending a purely material way of life through an act of self-donation.” Rev. Jensen quotes the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, who observed that “if it were not for the intentional and voluntary handing down of what has been acquired, we should have only a physical succession of generations, the latter repeating the life of the former, as is the case with animals.”

On environmental policy issues, rancher and economist John Baden distinguishes between two main sectors: “sludge” (pollution and policies designed to fix these problems) and “romance lands”

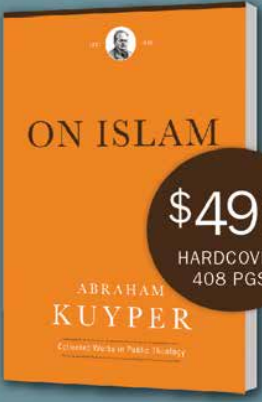
(parks, wilderness and wildlife, range, forests and water. The sort of stuff you see on nature calendars). In a commentary he wrote last year, Baden observed that as Americans become “remarkably wealthy,” they also raise their own educational levels and are more aware of environmental issues. Unfortunately, as common as this conservation ethic is, it is “rarely deep.”

“Quite naturally, many people with high human capital are attracted to our romance lands and become its sentinels and monitors,” Baden writes. “The great majority of them support conservation and preservation and none of them arrive to mine, log or dam. Rather, they come to explore, experience and consort in natural settings and with civil people who share their culture.”

The vast majority of American citizens support the conservation of public lands and believe only government ownership will provide it, Baden adds. But he points to the increasing attraction of public private cooperative arrangements by conservationists to protect land and wildlife. These may become more important as federal budgets are stressed by entitlements and funding for parks and other conservation efforts are constrained. He explains it this way:

In the political arena, entitlements trump ecology, welfare beats wildlands. Ultimately, some environmental and conservation groups will explore having some wildlife refuges, forests, parks and monuments become public fiduciary trusts, organizations independent of government management. This evolutionary move would help realize the Progressive Era ideal of protecting our romance lands from the predation of special interests. They relentlessly operate in both the governmental and private sectors. Fiduciary trusts offer well-tested means to protect the treasures of our romance lands.

How Bozeman residents reconcile the preservation of ranch lands and romance lands in the Greater Yellowstone region with the human need for housing, space and economic growth remains to be seen. The choices they make will shape what kind of community they want today, and for generations to come. **R&L**



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ALDO LEOPOLD (1887–1948)

Sarah Stanley

“A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land.”

Aldo Leopold was a writer, teacher, conservationist and forester. Considered the father of ecology, he lived what he preached and led the way for long-term, intelligent conservation. Leopold was born in Burlington, Iowa, on January 11, 1887. He spent his youth sketching, observing and writing about the world around him. He continued this interest with a Yale degree in forestry and started his career with the U.S. Forest Service. By 1924 he had moved to Madison, Wisconsin, to study ecology and understand more about conservation; while there he held the chair position in game management at the University of Wisconsin.

In 1935, Leopold and his wife, Estella, acquired an overgrown and abandoned farm in Sauk County near Baraboo, Wisconsin. This land inspired Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, a collection of essays which were not published until after his death. This property had been over farmed and logged for many decades. Curious whether the land could be restored, Leopold and his family spent time living in “the shack,” a small cabin on the property. The Leopold family began planting trees and restoring the land. Carefully documenting his restorative efforts, Leopold concluded that overused land could indeed be brought back to life with enough care and work.

Leopold fought for conservation but was not impressed by government intervention. He considered it a Band-Aid.



He didn't believe that the government buying up lots of land would work in the long run. “We tried to get conservation by buying land, by subsidizing desirable land changes in land use, and by passing restrictive laws,” Leopold writes. “The last method largely failed; the other two have produced some small samples of success.” He was a vocal supporter of private conservation, understanding that landowners needed a monetary reason to change attitudes toward conservation. “The evolution of a land ethic is an intellectual as well as emotional process,” Leopold explains in *A Sand County Almanac*. “Conserva-

tion is paved with good intentions which prove to be futile, or even dangerous, because they are devoid of critical understanding either of the land, or of the economic land-use.”

After years of work studying and protecting the land, Leopold died of a heart attack on April 21, 1948.

Today, the Leopold Memorial Reserve, 1,500 private acres of land that includes the original farm restored by Leopold and his family, is managed by the Sand Castle Foundation. This foundation is a private, nonprofit organization that began nearly two decades after Leopold's death. The land is used for experiments in restoration, much like those that Leopold himself conducted. Besides Leopold's original property, the foundation acquired land through agreements with surrounding landowners. The original landowners retain titles to their land but agree to avoid any action that could harm the natural habitats. They follow various guidelines set by the foundation.

This foundation prides itself on being “the nation's leading voice for private land conservation.” The foundation's work echoes that of Leopold's: “We believe private landowners have the ability to apply conservation on their land in a way that benefits their business *and* the environment, and that collaboration, not litigation, leads to the most enduring environmental improvements.” The foundation is also dedicated to educating the masses on the importance of land stewardship. It schedules tours, seminars and school visits to the reserve. Leopold's legacy lives on through the foundation's work.

Going back to the grammar of creation

Bishop Dominique Rey



The primacy of God, which Pope Benedict XVI made a priority of his pontificate, reminds us that reality is intelligible and human reason must be used – reason that is able to recognize the *logos*, the objective reason that manifests itself in nature.

According to the saying *fides quaerens intellectum*, the faith, far from hindering reason, encourages it to wonder about the world, because the rationality of creation is the first message of the Creator to his creature. The proper order of creation, its *logos*, is the reflection within itself of the divine Logos, the Creator Spirit.

The earth and everything it contains reflects the beauty and glory of God. “It is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a grammar which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation,” Pope Benedict writes in *Caritas in Veritate*.

Some radical environmental movements clearly derive their inspiration from a pagan pantheism, which leads to a deification of nature. Reason is subdued and abdicates its role and dignity. In fact, as Pope Benedict affirmed, “The victory of reason over unreason is also a goal of the Christian life.”

The contemporary ideology of ecologicalism turns nature into a cult – not nature as humanized by humankind, our knowledge and work, but rather an entity that existed before him and can exist without people. The planet is viewed as a divine spiritual being

– the famous earth-mother goddess Gaia, which we address through various channels, telluric forces and vital forces. The determination to become one with the cosmos, to lose all distinction, leads to a rejection of reason and critical thinking, which supposedly are the forces guilty of harming the planet. Thus, unreason triumphs; people celebrate instinct, emotion, intuition and ultimately irrationality.

Recover the meanings of the words

If we are to see clearly the extremes to which this trend can lead, Christians must be capable of noting its influence and recognizing its outlines. In this connection, it is crucial today to denounce the ideological background that informs certain terminologies. Regarding ecology, it is difficult, for instance, to subscribe to all the assumptions of the *Earth Charter Initiative*, an international declaration to spell out the principles of protection of the environment and of human development. Promulgated by UNESCO in March 2000, the charter’s preamble states that “humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life.” Humanity should thus recognize the rights of nature and submit itself to the *ecological imperative*. With this perspective, we see how the earth ends up being *deified* and humanity *desecrated*.

According to the ancient adage *vera vocabula rerum amisimus* (“we have lost the true meaning of words”), our vocabulary is not neutral. Should Christians simply adopt the new language, which seems to have been designed *ad hoc*, and risk that the Christian message may come across as unspecific and with no originality? Surely, the language of the Gospel escapes all conformism! Certainly, the Church has a message about the environment. She has reflected upon creation and its meaning, and henceforth about its relation to God. There are more than a few nuances that underlie the different meanings between expressions such as “saving the planet” and “respect for creation,” and between “sustainable development” and “integral human development.”

Our unique position within creation

The ecological crisis stems also from an anthropological crisis. Humanity mis-

judges our true identity and therefore our place in relation to God and other creatures. They are for humankind, and humankind is for God.

The biblical point of view on creation is clearly *anthropocentric*: People are the jewel of creation, because God has created us in his image and likeness. This creature is a person, a being who relates, who is able to know and love God. We also belong to the order of creation, as we too received life. The Bible introduces us to a personable God who enters into a relationship with his creatures. This relationship implies a being that is distinct from the only being capable of destroying nature. Such is our essential place in the cosmos.

Humanity is not just one species among others. As we read in the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution in the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, we are "the only creature on earth which God willed for Himself" and for no other reason. Humans are not God, but they are created in his own image. It follows that "in human beings, there is a kind of epiphany of God."

The biblical point of view is thus also highly theocentric. God is at the origin and the end of all and creates something *capable of knowing* and existing for him. In Genesis, we see that God creates a *biodiversity* in the image of his own wealth, in a work of separation and ornamentation that builds a clear distinction between the kingdoms (mineral, vegetable and animal) according to the days while ordering them to one another. Then humankind comes at the end (sixth day) and receives special treatment. Moreover, we are designed to stay and rest *with* God on the seventh day.

It is impossible to conceive an authentic ecology other than one that is centered upon humankind and not simply upon the earth. Hence, the protection of nature requires the protection of humanity. "A true ecology can only be human. It is not only respectful of nature but also of all people and all of humanity in all our dimensions." We can *never* consider nature as more important than the human person.

This essay was excerpted and adapted from Bishop Rey's book, Catholicism, Ecology, and the Environment: A Bishop's Reflection (Acton 2014).

Dominique Rey is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon in France. R&L

TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW

Freedom versus a new state 'religion'

Review of *Green Tyranny: Exposing the Totalitarian Roots of the Climate Industrial Complex* (Encounter Book 2017).

Wolfgang Müller

The subtitle of Rupert Darwall's book about "the totalitarian roots of the climate industrial complex" seems designed to appeal to readers who are skeptical about current environmentalist policies. While his book definitely proves the thesis implicit in its title, it is far more than a handbook for "skeptics." *Green Tyranny* is a must-read for every person who cherishes freedom and wants to know how environmentalism could become so powerful that, in some countries, it seems like a new state religion.

The author intended this book to complement his earlier work, *The Age of Global Warming*, which was critical of policies and initiatives aimed at fighting climate change. In *Green Tyranny*, he wanted to focus on continental Europe in general, and Sweden and Germany, in particular. In the preface, we learn how Darwall sees Germany:

German culture harbors an irrational, nihilistic reaction against industrialization, evident before and



during the Nazi era. It disappeared after Hitler's defeat and only bubbled up again in the terrorism and anti-nuclear protests of the 1970s and the formation of the Green Party in 1980.

As a German, I must rate his judgment of my nation quite accurate.

By choosing Sweden as an example, he picked the ideal showcase of a Western country where the government significantly managed to shape public opinion about environmentalism over the decades. But even more interesting is the role of Sweden's politicians, especially during the 1960s and 70s, who were critical in setting up various UN organizations that lead, among others, to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Darwall presents a wealth of details to explain how a powerful Green/Left network managed to occupy key political positions in Europe and the U.S. and to establish (or gain control of) institutions that give them unquestioned authority over the subject. Learning about this development, it is particularly frustrating to read how

these institutions were often created by financing from very wealthy donors.

He also explains how the onslaught on freedom happens openly (if unnoticed by the media and general public) by highlighting a crisis of global proportions – such as man-made climate change – which requires solutions that “normal democracies” aren’t able to provide. They must be settled by a council of experts that acts outside the democratic process.

It is surprising to read that over time almost all political parties did their share in promoting the Green interventionist agenda. If not the entire party, then some senior politician would do so, even in a conservative or classic liberal (libertarian) party. For instance, he writes: “The use of NGOs as shock troops to overwhelm business opposition to environmental protection had been envisaged by a top German government bureaucrat, Günter Hartkopf, in a 1986 address to his civil servant colleagues.” It is crucial to know that Hartkopf was a member of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), Germany’s classical liberal party.

Darwall also examines individual policies designed to stave off climate change.

In the case of Germany, with its “*Energiewende*,” the effort to decarbonize the economy, he proves that even after billions of dollars in government spending and ever-rising electricity costs for consumers, Germany’s CO2 emissions remain basically the same. Meanwhile, the grid’s stability has continuously deteriorated. Despite its obvious absence of success, Germany relies more heavily on wind farms and photovoltaic solar power systems. Darwall concludes that numerous issues pushed by the Greens were merely publicity stunts, resulting mainly in higher costs, less growth and diminished freedom.

Darwall is adamant when he regards environmentalism as a serious threat to freedom and cites alarming examples of how the Green agenda managed to influence not only politics but also public opinion and industrial policy. Darwall links a number of Green ideas in Germany, like the use of wind turbines for power generation, back to the Nazis – a connection which, while definitely interesting, is of secondary importance for me. The general anti-freedom sentiment that infuses transatlantic environmentalism is Darwall’s overall theme, and it is exactly

this threat he demonstrates perfectly in his book.

While Darwall’s book does not claim to be academic literature, it comes with almost 50 pages of endnotes, which will encourage diligent readers to dig deeper into the subject. As with any book, he could have written even more on specific topics, e.g., the origin of the Club of Rome and the role of Aurelio Peccei, whom he mentions once. Knowing that every book could be longer, and not every reader appreciates books approaching Randian dimensions, I am very happy with the books current length.

It is rare to read a book on a topic that one is very familiar with and yet learn so many new facts and details. *Green Tyranny* is this kind of book, and I am convinced that it contains a wealth of information for readers at almost every level of expertise on the subject.

Considering the importance of this book for understanding the situation we face today, I hope that, at a minimum, a German version will be published soon.

Wolfgang Müller is executive director of the Institute for Free Enterprise in Berlin. [R&L](#)

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Property rights and conservation: The missing theme of *Laudato si'*

Philip Booth



The recent papal encyclical *Laudato si'* would have been a more rounded document if it had considered the importance of private property for the protection of the environment.

A stark example of how the lack of private-property rights can have an impact on the environment is given by the dramatic difference between forest cover on the two sides of the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. There is a distinct difference between the ecology of the two areas. As the United Nations puts it, “Environmental degradation in the worst affected parts of the Haitian border zone is almost completely irreversible, due to a near total loss of vegetation cover and productive topsoil across wide areas.” The Haitian side of the border is subject to almost complete loss of environmental resources. The same United Nations document reports that Haiti has 4 percent forest cover in contrast to 41 percent in the Dominican Republic.

Private ownership and the institutions that surround it provide the incentives for sustainability. Under private ownership, the value of a piece of land at anytime will reflect the present value of all that can be yielded from the land in the indefinite future. The costs of damaging land in private ownership are huge because those costs can relate to all possible lost future production and not just to lost production over a year or two. Furthermore, land will not be nurtured and people will not invest in the land if they believe it is going to be polluted or plundered by others. Private-property rights will often (though not always) need to be protected by good governance, good courts systems and so on that can be provided by governments (quoting from *Centesimus annus*). However, the absence of private-property rights

properly enforced – not their presence – can be the problem when it comes to environmental protection. As Sebastien Marchand puts it, “[I]nstitutions such as property rights influence the importance of opportunity costs generated by deforestation. Therefore creating appropriate institutions allows for the reduction of uncertainty in exchange and results in reduced transaction and production costs of long-term activities, such as sustainable forestry. The poor quality of institutions in developing countries may thus constitute a major impediment for forest conservation.”

In effect, the Haitian side of the border is a huge, ungoverned and unowned commons. Haiti has been for much of the recent past a failed state (ranked eleventh in the Foreign Policy Fragile States Index) and has a terrible record of corruption (175 out of 182 in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index). In relation to Haiti, the 2016 Heritage Index of Economic Freedom states that “clear titles to property are virtually non-existent.” By no means is the Dominican Republic perfect, but it ranks about halfway up the latter index when it comes to the protection of property rights.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic are a particularly interesting contrast because of their proximity to each other. However, there is abundant evidence that the lessons from this example can be generalized. For example, Claudio Araujo and his colleagues argue that “insecure property rights in land drive deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.” The authors demonstrate a causal relationship that arises through several channels. Their results are strong and lead to the conclusion that an exogenous escalation in property rights in security brings a significant increase in the rate of deforestation.

Interestingly, another paper that draws the same conclusions relates the problem of the lack of secure property rights to past imperial activity. David Novoa concludes, “[S]tronger property rights encourage less deforestation controlling for a number of variables.” He also argues that former British colonies have significantly better deforestation records (i.e., less deforestation) than former Spanish colonies. He believes that this result may have arisen because different colonial regimes had a different impact on the long-term security of property rights. Novoa argues that British regimes established local ownership of the forest so that local people (pioneers) had direct control over forest resources. “Thus, the British Colonial system provided incentives for joint maximization of the net present value of timber and nontimber forest products. In addition, the system promoted the internalization of external benefits that did not accrue to the owner of the land such as conservation of the soil or prevention of floods. Therefore, forest land use value tended to be comparatively higher than [in] a system of ill-defined property rights, consequently encouraging less deforestation.”

To make matters worse, because trees are often government-owned resources on private land, the private owners of the land have no incentive to manage them, and the owners take every opportunity possible to clear the forest so that the land can be used for private productive purposes. In this situation, the trees are utterly without value to the owners and cannot be managed sustainably.

This problem of a lack of well-defined and enforced property rights leading to environmental degradation is repeated in relation to a wide range of environmental resources in many different circumstances.

With respect to the statement in *Laudato si'* that “[t]he natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone. If we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all,” the general position held by Aquinas, the late Scholastics and the early social encyclicals would be that by allowing people to make something their own, that

something is more likely to be administered for the good of all. This principle is so crucial in relation to environmental goods and so widely discussed among economists examining environmental problems that it should have been an important subject of discussion in *Laudato si'*.

Many other aspects of the relationship between property rights and the environment are important and, though not necessarily appropriate for discussion within an encyclical, might form a research agenda for Catholic scholars going forward. For example, where there are well-defined owners of an environmental resource in a regime characterized by good governance and juridical systems, individuals or corporations are less likely to damage property they do not own. In a regime of well-protected private-property rights, damage to one's neighbor's property will lead to prosecution or a requirement for compensation. This will not be the case where environmental resources are effectively unowned, as indicated by the rainforest examples given earlier.

There are broader ways, too, in which a regime of strong private rights in the context of good governance can help protect the environment. First, a country with good governance, effective rule of law and enforcement of private property in general is more likely to be able to protect effectively those environmental goods where limits do need to be put on commercial exploitation for the purposes of environmental protection. A state that performs well the task of enforcing property rights is more likely to be able to regulate the use of private property if that is deemed nec-

essary, because such regulation requires uncorrupt and efficient legal systems, law enforcement and administration.

analysis of Brazil by Sam Lawson suggests that such illegal forest destruction included deforestation in areas where those involved did not have land title as well as the flouting of regulations designed to limit deforestation. This example also illustrates the difficulty of resorting to government control of property in the name of environmental protection when private ownership is deemed to have failed. If the legal systems for the protection and regulation of private property are not effective, it is highly unlikely that the state will be able to manage resources effectively and escape serious problems caused by corruption and other features of bad governance.

It is also worth noting that economies broadly based on the principles of economic freedom and private property are more likely to prosper. And as countries become more prosperous, they tend not only to adopt technologies that are less resource intensive per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) but also to value environmental goods more. When a community has a choice between eating and deforestation, eating wins. In more technical terms, a clean environment is an income elastic good. One example of this effect relates to the emission of pollutants. In the United States, emissions, as measured by an index of six major air pollutants, have fallen by 65 percent per head since 1980. Indeed, no nation with an annual GDP per capita of more than \$4,600 per annum had net forest loss in the period from 2000 to 2005. Though there is still net deforestation taking place in the world as a whole, the annual rate has more than

halved – the rate was 0.08 percent between 2010 and 2015, fallen from 0.18 percent in the early 1990s.

“It is also worth noting that economies broadly based on the principles of economic freedom and private property are more likely to prosper.”

This article is adapted from Philip Booth's "Property Rights and Conservation: The Missing Theme of

Laudato si' in Pope Francis and the Caring Society" (Independent Institute 2017).

Booth is professor of finance, public policy and ethics at St. Mary's University, United Kingdom. He is also a senior academic fellow at the Institute of Economic Affairs in London. [R&L](#)

BRIEF

Pollution causes as many deaths as two jumbo jets crashing every hour

Joe Carter

Imagine that within the same hour, two large Boeing 747 passenger jets crashed, killing everyone onboard. Now consider two planes crashing every hour for an entire 24-hour period. Finally, think of the accumulated deaths of two passenger jets crashing every hour for an entire year. The death toll from all those crashes would be roughly equivalent to the number of people who die every year from pollution. A new study published in the British medical journal *The Lancet* finds that one in six deaths around the globe is due to polluted air, soil, water and work environments. Here are some of the findings from the study, as reported by STAT:

Pollution disproportionately impacts the poor. More than 90 percent of all deaths tied to pollution occur in low-income and middle-income countries.

Deaths from some types of pollution have been on the decline. Deaths tied to household air pollution, water pollution and poor sanitation are declining.

Deaths tied to other types of pollution are rising. An estimated 4.2 million deaths in 2015 were attributed to air pollution, a big jump from 3.5 million in 1990.


The health impacts of pollution take a financial toll. Pollution-related diseases account for up to 7 percent of health spending in developing countries dealing with heavy pollution. In wealthy nations, they account for nearly 2 percent of annual health spending.

As the *Lancet* study notes, benefit is to be gained by pollution regulations that protect us from the tragedy of the commons-type problems. But for most of the world, the problem is not a matter of regulation but of poverty and underdevelopment.

Every day almost half the planet's population is exposed to toxic amounts of household air pollution (HAP) because they use solid fuels, a term that includes biomass fuels or coal for combustion. The problem arises because solid fuel is commonly used in homes with poor or absent chimney ventilation of smoke. What the world's 3 billion energy-poor people need is what those of us in the West take for granted: cheap electricity to cook their food and heat their homes.

The only effective long-term solution to HAP is to reduce energy poverty. And the only effective long-term solution to energy poverty is economic growth. Long-term economic growth, however, is dependent on increasing economic freedom, the rule of law and access to markets in developing areas.

Such preconditions are much more difficult to implement than actions that merely require passing laws that ban environmentally harmful actions. But that's what the poor need most – and what Christians should be leading the way in bringing to the world.

Joe Carter is senior editor at the Acton Institute. 

BRIEF

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MARKET WITH REGARD TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

Donald P. Hodel

Human behavior affects the environment. The impact of communism on the environment is now proven to be demonstrably worse than anything we have seen in this country. On the other hand, capitalist countries reached a stage where quality of life became enough of a concern that people took steps to protect or improve their environment.

In one sense, it is a problem of the commons; if nobody owns something, nobody takes care of it. In fact, there is a school of thought that is well-documented and quite scholarly that says the best way to protect the future of national parks, wildlife refuges and wilderness areas is to convey the ownership of them to groups that are dedicated to the operation and protection of those kinds of properties.

A good example is the Audubon Society's Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary. On this refuge, the Society has permitted drilling for and production of natural gas in a way that is absolutely compatible with the management of a good refuge. It has generated revenues that have helped the Audubon Society not only operate that refuge but also do many other positive things.

People who provide wilderness experiences in parks and wildlife refuges—fishing and hiking trips, backpacking, and horseback riding—are in a practical sense among the most concerned environmentalists I've ever encountered. They don't want people to trash wilderness areas because they're their livelihood. They care about them.

Adapted from R&L's 1997 interview with Donald P. Hodel

Conscientious environmental stewardship

Rev. Robert A. Sirico



I grew up in Brooklyn, an environment that was decidedly urban yet dotted here and there with parks and green spaces. So it should come as no surprise that it took me at least a couple of decades before I learned to fully appreciate nature's bounty.

One takeaway from my sojourn as an activist on the left coast was the lessons from the Great Environmental Awakening of the 1960s and 70s. Much of the information used as a basis for our newfound concern with conserving nature stemmed from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

I realize that Carson's book prompted a host of subsequent rebuttals and even several successful attempts to debunk a few of her conclusions completely. Leaving all that aside for the purpose of this essay, I prefer to hold Carson and her work in esteem for an admittedly abstract reason.

Without Carson, her work and her book, I wonder if the modern environmental movement would have attained the same degree of urgency in so short a time. Certainly, reading newspaper stories and watching newsreel footage of the Cuyahoga River catching fire in 1969 was alarming, and the intense smog enveloping Los Angeles where I lived for a time provided more than ample empirical evidence to justify the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act.

Kris Mauren and I began the Acton Institute in 1990, establishing our headquarters in the heart of Grand Rapids, Michigan. For those readers unfamiliar with either Grand Rapids or Michigan, I cannot emphasize enough how beautifully nature and humanity's endeavors complement each other in my adopted state. The Great Lakes, shorelines, forests and inland waterways all provide ample evidence of what the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins termed "God's Grandeur."

By 1990, much had been accomplished to reverse our nation's environmental devastation wrought by either ignorance or indifference. There is no doubt that bad actors continued – and continue in our contemporary society – to purposely disregard or accidentally ignore God's directive for us all to exercise effective stewardship of his creation.

At some point, the most extreme forms of environmentalism – however benign or desirable the ends imagined – succumbed to humanity's pantheistic urge. This approach upends Christianity rightly understood because it positions nature inherently above humankind. One unfortunate result is that certain environmentalists evolved into zero-sum activists for whom all human effort was an affront to nature and, by extension, even offensive to God.

Additionally, there are some who – in the name of "science" – are remarkably unscientific. By this I refer to the groups and individuals who fail to accept the tremendous benefits of newer forms of agriculture over the highly romanticized yet wasteful and harmful methods of the past. Furthermore, nature and its inhabitants are tougher than many pantheists assert and, in several ways enumerated in this issue, are able to adapt to new conditions.

Finally, protection of the environment is important, but of equal importance is the protection of property rights. As has been noted by Christian thinkers since the advent of Marxist ideology, property rights are the bedrock principle of every free nation on Earth. Property rights are based within the precepts of Natural Law as outlined by Saint Thomas Aquinas and found a staunch defender in Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* encyclical in 1891.

Our mission at the Acton Institute often attempts to bridge the divide between the extremists of pantheism and those who would seek profit at any cost to the environment. It is our goal to celebrate human flourishing while recognizing that it's not mutually exclusive with God's call for us to be conscientious environmental stewards. **R&L**



ESSAY

Betting the ranch

Property rights, conservation and “social value”

John Couretas

You’ve spent the better part of a lifetime restoring, building and continually improving a prime piece of ranch land just outside Bozeman, Montana, one of the most desirable real estate markets in the West. You look around and comparable properties are fetching big premiums. Time to cash in your chips?

Not for John Baden and Ramona Marotz-Baden, two college professors turned ranchers who have taken their Enterprise Ranch out of development play by placing it in a conservation easement. The property is now reserved “in perpetuity” for agriculture and wildlife preservation.

“We had the opportunity to develop the land for multiple values,” Baden says. “Our goal with the ranch was to bring together liberty, sustainable ecology, and modest prosperity.”

Indeed, over the years the ranch in Gallatin Gateway, on the outskirts of Bozeman, has hosted outings for Warriors and Quiet Waters, a nonprofit co-founded by Baden that brings in service members from national hospitals to fish spring fed chain of trout ponds on the ranch. The

Cancer Support Community, a local nonprofit, brings patients and family members to the ranch in the summer to fish the ponds. The local volunteer fire department has used the four miles of ranch trails for off-road fire truck training exercises.

Besides being handy with hay balers and other farm equipment, Baden is also a scholar-entrepreneur, having set some of the early intellectual groundwork for the free market environmental movement and was a leader in the founding of the Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman. He currently serves as chairman and founder of the Foundation for Research on Economics & the Environment, also in Bozeman, and started up the Gallatin Writers group. So when it comes to putting real dollars into conservation projects and causes, Baden and Marotz-Baden have done just that.

Given what the prices for ranches are going for in the Bozeman market, the couple could have easily realized a significant profit in selling to developers. Enterprise Ranch would have been “super attractive” to real estate developers who could chunk it out into 40-acre “ranchettes,” Baden says. Instead, they worked with the Gallatin Valley Land Trust to voluntarily place the property in a conservation easement, paying hefty legal fees out of pocket (see main story, “Growing pains in romance lands”).

The Enterprise ranch is located in the Gallatin Valley, one of the most picturesque and agriculturally productive valleys in Montana – not to mention home to some of the best trout fishing in the world. Hemmed in by four prominent Montana mountain ranges: the Bridger Gallatin, Spanish Peaks, and the Big Belt Mountains. Its recorded history goes

back to the Lewis and Clark expedition. At that time, the valley was well traveled by tribes such as the Blackfeet, Crows, Flatheads, Nez Percé and others on their way to hunting grounds in the Yellowstone and Snake River valleys. The Native Americans knew the Gallatin passage as the “Valley of Flowers.” Later, a succession of settlers arrived for the fur trade, gold mining and farming.

Baden describes Enterprise as somewhat smallish by local standards. But to understand what he means by small requires some Montana context.

In 1989, cable TV magnate Ted Turner paid \$21 million for the Flying D Ranch, one of the largest ranches in the state, according to news reports. Turner’s aim was to restore the land to what it looked like before the white man came and, among other things, brought in new livestock such as bison. He also placed the 177-square-mile (113,613 acres) property, just outside of Bozeman, under a conservation easement so that the land would remain unsubdivided. The land is open to guided big game hunts for deer, elk and bison.

In December, reports indicated that the 119,500-acre Diamond Cross Ranch near Birney was sold. The asking price was \$64.8 million. The property was assembled by the late Mars candy heir Forrest Mars Jr., another wealthy conservationist.

When Baden bought Enterprise in 1970, there were no buildings on the property and it was suffering from years of neglect. With a lot of sweat equity, and plowing income back into the land, he built a home and barns, dug ponds, restored a spring creek and made dozens of other ranch and wildlife habitat improvements, including a fish tank he built raising rainbow and Westslope cutthroat fingerlings. At one time in the mid-1980s, the couple was raising as many as 1,250 ewes, rams and lambs on the ranch. The ranch remains a prolific producer of alfalfa hay under irrigation and dryland grass, some they feed to grass fed steers and lambs on Enterprise Ranch, with much of it trucked off to cattle operations.

It is not uncommon to see herds of elk and mule deer traversing Enterprise Ranch not far from the trout ponds, barns and hay fields. Now, with the property set aside for conservation, those wild herds should have plenty of room to roam for years to come. **R&L**



INTERVIEW

A conversation about the best policies for the environment

Sarah Stanley

An environmental policy expert explains difficulties with environmental concerns and gives examples of the triumphs and failures we, as a society, have made to protect the earth.

"Science" doesn't have the answers: Case of the marbled murrelet

The marbled murrelet is a small seabird from the North Pacific that nests in old-growth forests or on the ground at high latitudes. After an increase in logging in the 19th century, murrelet populations shrunk. According to the International Union for

Photo: "Pendleton Coast" by Pfc. Daniel Booth (Public Domain)

Conservation of Nature, the marbled murrelet is globally endangered.

Todd Myers is director of the Center for the Environment at the Washington Policy Center in Seattle. Curious how to address the issue of protecting this bird, Myers spoke to a biologist who'd spent her life studying and writing on the marbled murrelet. She explained that to protect it, a buffer should be put around the type of habitat it needs to ensure humans don't encroach upon it. There should also be a buffer around the buffer in case of a natural disaster.

Next, Myers spoke to a forester and asked the same question, "How can we protect the marbled murrelet?" The forester explained that the forest is an ecosystem. "Everything is part of the system," he said. "Everything plays a role." It would be impossible to squish everything into one box – that would throw things out of balance and give you unhealthy forests. You can't separate the endangered birds because they wouldn't live in the right habitat and it would affect everything else.

Two expert scientists who know the marbled murrelet and its situation were asked the same question and gave opposing answers. They both followed the "science."

In this case, the difference wasn't science but rather risk tolerance. The biologist had spent her life studying this bird and has a low risk tolerance for murrelets. The forester had spent his life studying the forest and has a low risk tolerance for forests. He wants to manage them in a way that is healthy for the entire ecosystem. Both follow the science, but their choices reflect their own values and risk tolerances. "That is the key role of values and economics that gets overlooked in the environment," Myers concludes. "People pretend they're making logical, scientific decisions, when in fact they're making values-based decisions."

Trojan horses

It's important to understand, Myers notes, that conservatives aren't necessarily "anti-environment":

There are very clear examples of where anybody, any conservative, any free market, any libertarian would agree. For instance, you would say that you shouldn't pour your sewage out into a stream and kill all the fish, because the fisher-

man downstream won't have any fish, right? Nobody is going to say, "Well, I get to do what I want. I get to pour my sewage into a stream." Unless that stream is entirely owned by you, right, you're impacting other people. So you can be the most libertarian person in the world and recognize, yes, you're imposing cost on others. You shouldn't do that.

He mentions that a possible reason why many limited government advocates are hesitant toward environmentalism is because "protecting the environment" is often an excuse for social engineering. Environmental bills can be a "Trojan horse" for bigger government and social engineering. "This is bad," explains Myers. "It's bad for the environment because it uses the environment as a tool to get something else. So conservatives and free-market advocates say, 'I don't want to do anything to help the environment.'" He also says you can tell conservatives show their care for these issues in other ways:

I mean, look at a map. Conservatives don't live in the city. They live near nature. It's the environmentalists who live surrounded by concrete and steel and asphalt. It's the conservatives who purportedly hate the environment, who actually live in the environment. But you talk to some of those same conservatives, ask them about environmental protection, and they will often give you a very skeptical answer. They're afraid that if they say, "Yes, this is important," that they have to buy into a whole series of big government solutions. That is the problem. I think that's something that conservatives and free-market advocates need to get over – to be able to say, "Who are you to tell me what to do for the environment? You live in Seattle. I live in Walla Walla." Who knows the environment better? Yes. I work with it every day. It affects my life.

Conservatives and other free-market advocates have good reason to be skeptical, but they also shouldn't give up on environmental causes.

A hierarchy to protecting environment

The market does not have all the answers.

"We do need regulation," Myers argues. "There's a hierarchy." The best solution is where a group of people (such as a town or collective of farmers) agree to a solution to protect something. He gives the example of a forest in Japan that is owned by dozens of people. Loggers go in and steal trees from the forest. The owners decided that they would hire someone to guard the forest and if anyone got caught poaching, that person would be fined. The fine was a bottle of Saki for the guard. This created a good incentive for the guard, it was cheap for the owners, and – without being too dramatic – was a good deterrent for the thief.

Not every problem can be solved with cooperation. Sometimes the group is just too big or can't agree. The next step in the hierarchy is pricing. Myers gives the example of a park. People either pay every time they enter or pay an annual fee. That way everyone involved in the park pays for the impact they cause.

If those two can't work, then a regulatory approach needs to be taken. Leaded gasoline (discussed later) is an example of this. Again, the hierarchy is cooperative, then pricing and finally regulation.

The market saves dolphins

One of the best examples of the market solving an environmental problem is "dolphin-free tuna."

If you go to the canned meats aisle of your local grocery store, you'll find that just about every brand of canned tuna, from the cheapest private label to bigger names like Chicken of the Sea have some sort of "dolphin safe" seal.

According to FOR SEA Marine Science Curriculum, during the 1960s the American tuna industry found a new way of capturing tuna. Tuna fishers realized that tuna seem to stay close to dolphins in the wild, so boats would look for groups of dolphins, encircle them and lower a giant net into the water. The net captures both the tuna and the dolphins, though most dolphins are able to swim out before the net is pulled on board. Thousands of dolphins were killed and injured during this process. The International Marine Mammal Project (IMMP) argues that more than seven million dolphins died in pursuit of tuna, so in 1990 they established guidelines for Dolphin Safe tuna and encouraged consumers to boycott canned tuna. Chicken of the Sea, StarKist and Bumblebee, the three biggest

names in consumer tuna, all adopted the label and refused to work with fishers who still engaged in intentionally chasing and netting dolphins.

Later Congress adopted IMMP's standards for what is considered Dolphin Safe tuna. Thanks to conservationists, consumers and large companies, dolphins were protected long before any governments took regulatory action. Today it's difficult to find tuna without the Flipper-approved label.

The government steps in to stop lead

Sometimes the market doesn't move fast enough to stop environmental problems. Todd Myers gives unleaded gasoline as an example of this. "The Secret History of Lead" by Jamie Lincoln Kitman for *The Nation* traces the long, complicated history of lead in gasoline. In late 1921, an engineer working for the General Motors Research Corporation discovered that tetraethyl lead (TEL, a compound of metallic lead and an alkyl substituent) was able to reduce engine knocking, allowing the car to run more smoothly as well as improving vehicle performance. People were well aware of the dangers of lead poisoning in the 1920s, but TEL in gasoline was still pursued. By 1923, it was manufactured in Dayton, Ohio, with 160 gallons being shipped out daily to be added to pure gasoline. By Memorial Day of that year, gasoline with lead, called ethyl, fueled the top three cars at the Indianapolis 500. The group manufacturing this fuel was able to sign exclusive contracts with four of the largest oil providers for distribution of leaded gasoline in the East Coast, Midwest and South. Kitman points out that the benefits of adding lead to fuel "were wildly and knowingly overstated," and lead "is actually bad for cars" and is terrible for the planet as well as the beings on it. In 1985, an EPA study found that an estimated 5,000 people died each year from lead-related heart disease before lead was banned in gasoline. "The leaded gas adventurers have profitably polluted the world on a grand scale," Kitman explains, "and, in the process, have provided a model for the asbestos, tobacco, pesticide and nuclear power industries, and other twentieth-century corporate bad ac-

tors, for evading clear evidence that their products are harmful by hiding behind the mantle of scientific uncertainty."

Lead is bad. Leaded gasoline is bad. It needed to be banned. Myers explains that this was an instance where the government had to step in and stop it. "The easiest way to remove the lead is simply to have a regulation that says, 'No more lead in gasoline,'" he says, "In that circumstance, there was no way to get everybody in America to agree." The horrible effects of lead were too far removed from the manufacturers adding lead. Myers explains:

It would be hard to put a price on it, because the impacts are so dispersed. So the easiest way is simply to say, "We're going to get rid of lead," and do it . . . So it is possible, because we have disposable income,

"Lead is bad. Leaded gasoline is bad. It needed to be banned . . . this was an instance where the government had to step in and stop it."

and to use the market in that way to give preferences without government regulation to phase out a practice that is bad. So it's not impossible. But in the case of lead in gasoline and a few other areas where there are clear problems to be solved and you need big scale, the most immediate way to do it is through regulation.

He also acknowledges that the market certainly has a place, just not always:

If the problem is very simple and very clear, it's not all that much more expensive than having the market do it. Somebody could say, "Well, Todd, what about this? And I could give you an example of it"—fine. Of course there are going to be examples, but I'm not an anarchist . . . I recognize the value of regulation and standards. Because sometimes the incentives just are not there for people.

The U.S. government outlawed lead as an automotive gasoline additive in 1986.

Beauty products harming fish

Microbeads, or microplastics, are a common ingredient in beauty products, especially exfoliants and body washes. The tiny pieces of plastic are used to add sparkles or shimmers and as abrasives to strip away dead skin and dirt. They're so small they wash down drains, slip through all treatment plants and end up polluting waterways. Fish often think the plastic is food and ingest it.

Many private companies were already phasing them out, but the government also had to step in and ban them when the industry as a whole did not. While Myer lauds the several cosmetic companies that found better alternatives, he points out that many others kept them in their products because

"the cost of the impact was not borne by the companies who make the cleansers or the people who use the cleansers." Myers sees it as an incentive problem:

They're borne by the environment or other people. So nobody has an incentive to phase them out because they're not bearing the cost. Now, theoretically somebody

could have said, you know, "Hey, buy our cleanser because it doesn't have microbeads," and people would have switched. But that's not always going to work. Meanwhile the impact is growing. So Washington state banned microbeads from the cleansers because it recognized that the incentives are misaligned. So that's what economics, free-market economics and free-market environmentalism is about: recognizing and aligning the incentives. And if the incentives are such that somebody doesn't bear the cost for their environmental impact, they will continue to impact the environment.

The United States passed a ban on microbeads in personal care products and cosmetics in 2015 (that went into effect in 2017). Without regulation, microplastics will undoubtedly still be making their way to waterways. **R&L**

BRIEF

FINANCIAL REALITIES THAT AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Samuel Gregg

Being in favor of free markets doesn't mean you're necessarily unconcerned for the environment and obsessed with profit. Many free-market supporters have devoted their lives to devising ways to align economic incentives in the direction of environmental conservation. Nor is it just to say that free marketers are uninterested in future generations. It has been, for the most part, people who favor free markets who have been arguing that the current recourse to debt by Western governments in order to avoid making hard but necessary fiscal reforms is laying up enormous trouble for future generations. Those of a more interventionist or Keynesian disposition are generally silent on this subject or don't think it is a real problem.

You could probably count on one hand the number of promoters of free markets who believe that economic freedom alone will assure all-round human flourishing. Take, for instance, Adam Smith. Not everything in Smith's thought is reconcilable with the Catholic vision of man. But Smith's vision of commerce and market exchange is rooted in a wider civilizational vision that (a) stresses the need for a strong civil society; (b) acknowledges there are some things only governments can do and government economic intervention will be needed at times; and (c) underscores the importance of commercial, classical and, yes, Judeo-Christian virtues prevailing in a society if a free economy is going to flourish and benefit the majority rather than just privileged elites who enjoy close ties to the political class.

BRIEF

A cleaner environment requires human creativity

Anne Rathbone Bradley

Last year, President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris climate agreement, provoking a brouhaha over environmental policy. For those who are genuinely concerned about environmental stewardship, we can in fact do better without the UN-sponsored framework.

Climate change is a true phenomenon; we can track it over time. The real question is, how much has the climate changed because of modern industrialized life and how much of that change is harmful? The other relevant question is, what does the trend line look like into the future—in other words, how worried should we be? Once we try to get a handle on these questions, only then can we understand what to do. We do know that while U.S. carbon emissions are at a 25-year low, global atmo-

spheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are steadily increasing and show no signs of slowing. Creative thinking that fosters prudence and develops alternatives is key.

What we can all agree on is that we are called by God to steward his creation. The earth belongs to God, as does everything in it. We are stewards of his good creation and are asked to do two things: work it and care for it. These commands come from Genesis 2:15 (NIV): "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

God created the earth for us and his own glory. It is mysterious, orderly and beautiful, for it reflects God's creativity and love for humanity. We cannot work and care for the earth if we are pillaging and plundering it. But we are not asked to keep it untouched or to preserve it as is either. We are to cultivate, create, tinker and innovate.

We are made "imago dei" (in the image of God). This has critical implications for our roles and responsibilities here on earth. God is a creator and we are creators. We cannot create something out of nothing in the way God can, but we can and are commanded to create something out of something.

We are here to do just that: create and cultivate God's work. What does all of this have to do with greenhouse gas emissions and the Paris Agreement? Everything. The role of human creativity as described in Genesis is our narrative for life. What it tells us is that change, even climate change, might not always be a bad thing. To the extent that greenhouse gases are destroying the climate, we require productive solutions and ways to economize on those gases, maybe even do away with them altogether.

If you want to solve a problem, put a profit on the solution – this is the surest path to a solution. It may not be perfect, but it would certainly be better than an agreement that centralizes planning over greenhouse emissions and has no accountability mechanism. Profits and losses keep entrepreneurs accountable to results. Entrepreneurial energy is what has made us so rich and is the best bet we have to solve the problems that the Paris Agreement never will.

Anne Rathbone Bradley is the vice president of economic initiatives at the Institute for Faith, Work and Economics. **R&L**

FILM

Not quite alone in the wilderness

Jordan Ballor

One of the more intriguing shows that PBS runs occasionally is the documentary *Alone in the Wilderness*, which chronicles the exploits of Dick Proenneke, who retired in 1967 to Twin Lakes, Alaska. In this remote location Proenneke builds a cabin by hand, and the documentary captures his labors with a variety of hand tools and resources taken from the surrounding countryside.



On a superficial level, *Alone in the Wilderness* taps into the deeply romantic vision of the human person single-handedly carving out an existence in the harsh and threatening natural world, “red in tooth and claw” in Tennyson’s words. And particularly in a place like Alaska, Proenneke works in a visually stunning setting, albeit one with an extreme climate often unfriendly to human habitation. By all appearances, Proenneke really is “alone” in his wilderness, and his achievements are indeed remarkable. Over the course of the documentary we see the cabin take shape. This is a man of significant character and ability.

And it is in recognizing these abilities

that we begin to see that Proenneke isn’t really *alone*. He does have some ongoing and periodic contact and help from the outside world. But even beyond this sort of mundane if only sporadic contact with others, when he moves to Twin Lakes, Proenneke brings with him a lifetime of experience and training. He had learned through hard work in the military, and then later as a renowned professional mechanic, the skills that would allow him not merely to survive but in fact to thrive in such adverse conditions. Proenneke isn’t really starting from nothing when he retires. He is only seemingly alone in the wilderness.

Economists often refer to the many intangibles represented in Proenneke’s accumulated knowledge, skills and talents as *human capital*. But that term rings rather cold in our ears and doesn’t really do justice to the creative dynamism and mysterious matrix that lies at the heart of the human person created in the image of God. Each individual person represents a curious mixture of the cultural advances and achievements of the civilization into which they are born and the engrafted dispositions and possibilities

given to that person by God at their birth. We are limited in what we can do in this life, not only by material and temporal constraints like our physical strength and need for periodic rest, but also by what those who have come before us have been able to accomplish in the time given to them. Just as Proenneke doesn’t really start from scratch when he arrives in Twin Lakes, each new generation doesn’t start over anew in the work of cultivating this world.

There is in this way an intergenerational infrastructure to human civilization that engenders a significant responsibility for each successive generation. We have been given much, and as Jesus’ teaching about stewardship makes clear, much is therefore expected of us. As the example of Richard Proenneke shows us, no one is ever really alone in the wilderness, and the best response to this reality is to gratefully take what we have been given and apply it in faithful and responsible labor to the tasks at hand.

Jordan Ballor is a senior research fellow and director of publishing at the Acton Institute. [R&L](#)



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The notion of shared values on both sides of the Atlantic has received new attention. Leaders like French socialist president François Hollande cite “democracy, freedoms and the respect of every individual” as key values. But what about religious liberty, the breakdown of the welfare state, advancing secularism and the health of civil society? R&L Transatlantic will cover these issues here with new articles.

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BRIEF

3 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT STEWARDSHIP

Joe Carter



Sold into slavery, Joseph is put in charge of Potiphar's household. Potiphar “entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph” (Genesis 39:4-5 [NIV]). You may not recognize it, but this is one of the first mentions of both stewardship and economy in Scripture.

The word “stewardship” comes from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which refers to someone who manages a household and is the root of the English word “economy.” Joseph began by controlling a household and would eventually control the entire economy of Egypt. In all of history, there have been few stewards who gained the status and power of Joseph.

Stewardship is an important concept in the Bible, since we are stewards in God's household, his economy of all things. Here are three things we should know about stewardship:

God made humans stewards over creation – God has made humans “rulers over the works” of his hands (Psalm 8:5-6). We're entrusted with the resources of the earth not for our own exploitation but for the cultivation of its use for the good of ourselves, our neighbors and those who come after us.

Stewardship is about all of life – Too often we tend to think of stewardship only in relation to finances (e.g., a church's stewardship committee) or the environment (e.g., creation care). While both of these are important parts of God's economy, Biblical stewardship is much broader. As Stephen Grabill explains, stewardship is a “form of whole-life discipleship that embraces every legitimate vocation and calling to fulfill God's mission in the world.” And as Hugh Whelchel adds, “Stewardship is not one more thing we have to do, but a way of seeing everything we already do in a very different light.”

The basic form of stewardship is daily work – Work is the primary way in which we serve our neighbor. As Rev. Robert Sirico has said, “The Scripture provides an insight into our nature: We are all, man and woman, called into this life to find our vocation, the work that is uniquely ours and contributes to the flourishing of the wider community.”

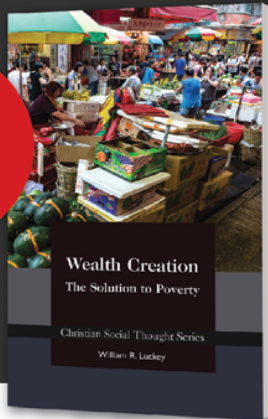
This is an excerpt from Joe Carter's, the NIV Lifehacks Bible: Practical Tools for Successful Spiritual Habits (Zondervan 2016). Joe Carter is senior editor at the Acton Institute. [R&L](#)

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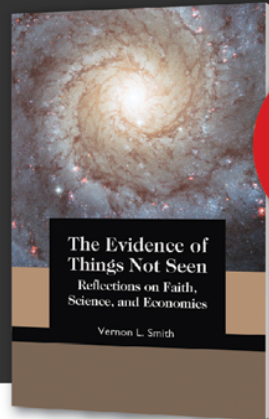


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