

No clash between the environment and eschatology

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Bill Moyers' Jan. 30 Op Ex article evinces his concern that Christians who hold to a literal view of biblical prophecy are increasingly dominating American culture.

If Moyers lived in 700 B.C., he would also have been a big critic of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah made many crazy prophecies about the coming of the Messiah (except this was the first coming) that many enlightened people like Moyers probably considered the product of an irrational mind. However, Isaiah's predictions turned out to be true because he predicted in detail the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53) 700 years before they happened. The record of biblical prophecy lends credibility to its claims.

Moyers claims that public policy should not be based on unverifiable religious beliefs. This is the common claim that secularism relies on facts and not faith. However, secularism does not have a superior claim to the facts because Christianity and secularism are just competing frameworks that seek to offer the best explanation for the reality that we exist in. Both sides seek to show how the facts reflect the truth of their framework. However, the decision to adopt the framework is ultimately faith-based since the most that one can say rationally is that the world that exists is consistent with a specific framework. Faith is inevitable for Christian and secular alike because people cannot rationally verify the truth of the framework itself.

Moyers distorts Christian eschatology when he says that Christians seek to bring about the return of Christ by basing public policy on biblical prophecy. Almost no Christians have this view of prophecy. The point of prophecy is that the predictions are set in stone. It would be arrogant for Christians to assume that they have the ability to change the date on God's calendar for the return of Christ.

Moyers argues that Christians believe that it is unnecessary to protect the environment because of the imminent return of Christ. Any Christian who claims to know when Christ will return is lying because the Bible excludes the possibility of anybody knowing this but God. Jesus said to "keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." It would not make sense for Christians to stop solving problems because they do not know when Christ will return.

Christians have a fiduciary duty to be good stewards of the world that God has given us. Environmental destruction is rooted in the selfish human nature that destroys what God has given us with disregard for the harm that others may suffer as a result.

In fact, environmental protection is more critical in a Christian worldview than in a secular worldview. If a person is going to live his or her life in a manner that is truly consistent with secularism, the most rational course of action is to slight future generations by consuming every resource available. Why does it matter if people in future generations will suffer? A person only has one finite life and then his or her existence ends. It would make the most sense for people to do whatever it takes to maximize personal happiness regardless of the costs it may inflict on other people. Christianity is the most rational foundation for environmental protection.

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