

APPLYING CHRISTIAN WISDOM TO CLIMATE CHANGE

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“Reigning in Life” (Rom. 5:17) for the Good of Humanity and Creation.¹

Some human activity induces climate change with concomitant negative effects upon creation and human society. People rightly experience anxiety and despair at the projected outcomes of such unchecked and harmful human behaviour. When social media sensationalizes various aspects of climate change it tends to exacerbate such anxiety and despair.

In the first article, Brian Rapske concisely presents Wray’s thesis and offers a critique that seeks to recognize her positive contributions to the discussion about eco-angst whose cause is attributed to predicted outcomes of human-induced climate change. He also evaluates Wray’s remedies and suggested that in many ways they fall short of an adequate remedy for eco-angst, particularly in light of the human problem.

In the second article, Howard Andersen offers critical comment from a scientific perspective on Wray’s understanding of climate change and her prognostications regarding its outcomes. He affirms the science that indicates climate change is occurring and the urgency for helpful responses. However, he also notes that not all climate change scientists accept alarmist scenarios and projected hopelessness.

Based on her pragmatic and political approach, Wray urges political activism, self-induced moral transformation, changes to life-style, and the re-ordering of human society as necessary strategies to address the negative effects of human-induced climate change and consequent eco-angst. She focuses primarily on European and North American audiences. Little is said about how humans in Russia, China, South America, the Middle East, or Africa can get involved in climate-change activism. In her narrative it is the historical, colonial agendas of Europe and North America that largely are responsible for the current situation. She ignores the impact of imperialistic political and military ambitions pursued by several significant regimes historically and elsewhere in the world. She offers no comment on the disasters of Chernobyl under Russian leadership, the coal-fired electric generating plants operating in China, the dependence of Middle East countries on fossil-fuel production, the devastation of inter-tribal wars in numerous African countries, or the destruction of habitat encouraged by radical ideologies. In this respect her analysis and proposals remain unbalanced and inadequate.

¹ The intended audience for this paper is people open to consider the solutions to destructive climate change offered within the framework of Christian wisdom, based upon ancient, sacred writings (Old Testament and New Testament) that include revelations by Yahweh, the Creator-god according to this wisdom.

Worldviews and Climate Change

A prior and more significant question should be asked in regard to remedies for human-induced climate change. Various technical and political responses may have partial value in remediating diverse threats and deserve support. Yet such responses, as important as they may be, do not attend adequately to the more significant and very divergent worldview perspectives based on which advocates analyze the causes of human-induced climate change, formulate preferred responses to and remedies for the human factor, and promote therapies that will alleviate consequent eco-angst among humans. This paper seeks to compare and contrast several key elements in Wray's worldview (to the extent it finds expression in her book) that shapes her analysis, remedies, and worldview response along with similar themes articulated in Christian wisdom.

Principally, Wray² urges necessary changes to preserve a human future. She contests the hopelessness of “climate doomism” and fatalistic perspectives. She argues that a worldview based on “a partnership-oriented model,...an interconnected web” that “values egalitarian, life-sustaining structures and mutual support systems”³ offers the best framework for remediating the effects of eco-dread. Humans will achieve this “utopia” only if they re-frame their “desired futures,” accept and adopt a very different standard of living, re-vision human culture, and reject harmful and outmoded ideologies. Wray still has hope that Western science and technology will be able to discover and implement innovative solutions, i.e., a “tipping-point” that will shift the entire equation.

Others are not so sanguine when it comes to the capacity of science to find solutions and they seek solutions in alternative ways of living promoted by pantheistic and animistic worldviews, particularly when it comes to relationships with the earth and other species. Such appeals assume that Western, European, scientifically-based culture generates harmful, human-induced climate change.⁴ This

² Brit Wray. *Generation Dread. Finding Purpose in an Age of Climate Crisis* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2022).

³ Wray, *Generation Dread*, 179.

⁴ Wray offers no critical analysis of the Marxist regimes whose economic and political agendas reflect worldviews that show little real concern for climate harm. What Indigenous cultural options would Eastern cultures appeal to for solutions to climate change? Are all Indigenous cultures equally effective in reversing the impact of climate change? Some of these cultures, for example, traditionally employed slash and burn agricultural techniques. Some also engaged in “colonial” activities, seeking to takeover the territory inhabited by other tribes and subjugating other cultural groups in their region. Arab traders were influential agents in promoting African slave trade. Inter-tribal conflict among Indigenous people groups in Africa continues to generate disastrous climate change, particularly through famine and the mining for resources driven by specific tribal agendas, that show little concern for climate impact.

The emergent claims of many climate change activists put many public educators in a quandary. For the past two decades they have taught their students to dream big, because they have the capacity to become anything they may desire. Their protégés, stimulated by such a mindset, have proceeded to do just that, regardless of the effect upon the climate. Now such educators are being challenged to teach their students to moderate their dreams and

argument is made by Lynn White in “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis.”⁵ In particular, he asserts that “Christianity was to blame for the emerging ecological crisis through using the concept of the ‘image of God’ as a pretext for justifying human exploitation of the world’s resources.”⁶ In White’s view, this perspective places humans at the center, with license to dominate nature for their own ends. The worldview and ways of knowing must be rejected if humanity will have any hope of averting catastrophe. They are obsessed with domination.⁷ Christianity, in White’s view, is bound up with a Western, European worldview and so it too must be rejected. Its values in relation to human use of creation, according to this interpretation of Christian texts, form a root cause of the current, human-induced climate degradation.

Alister McGrath⁸ and Francis Schaeffer⁹ offer serious rebuttals to White’s thesis. McGrath in particular shows that the roots of the current ecological crisis, at least in terms of Western civilization, lie in the Enlightenment. The enlightenment placed humans and their reasoning at the center of everything. Leading figures in the Enlightenment argued that “the domination of nature” by humans should be the great project because humanity is “the creator and arbiter of values and is free to interpret and manipulate nature as it pleases.”¹⁰ The Enlightenment thinkers promoted an anthropomorphic worldview, a self-centered worldview aided and abetted by the exploding developments in technology that characterized the modern era. McGrath shows clearly that their ideas originate with Classical Greek philosophers who proclaim that “man is the measure of all things” (Protagoras as quoted by Plato). No authority other than human reason could determine humanity’s destiny. Greta Thurnberg’s slogan that “we’ve got all of our medicine right here, right now” resonates with this anthropocentric perspective. McGrath rightly protests such reductionism and philosophical naturalism. Unfortunately, Wray does not seem to be aware of these realities and perpetuates this misleading portrayal of Christianity.

McGrath also insists that the perspective of postmodernism, although encouraging “moral and intellectual diversity,”¹¹ does not offer “any firm basis for

embrace lifestyles (which alternative lifestyle should be the one preferred remains quite subjective) that reflect a standard of living different from that of their parents and educational mentors. Whether young people will be willing to do so remains to be seen. And whether public educators will “repent” of their previous misguided teaching and mentoring similarly is uncertain.

⁵ Science 15.5(1967):1203-07.

⁶ Alister McGrath, *The Re-Enchantment of Nature. Science, Religions and the Human Sense of Wonder* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002, 29.

⁷ Wray, *Generation Dread*, 178.

⁸ McGrath, *The Re-Enchantment of Nature*.

⁹ Schaeffer, Francis, *Pollution and the Death of Man. The Christian View of Ecology* (Wheaton, ILL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970 second printing).

¹⁰ McGrath, 54.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

insisting that nature is to be respected, and regarded as something special.”¹² Postmodernity offers no consistent ontology of nature that urges humans to recognize its intrinsic significance. As a result “it has notably failed to prevent – and, according to Soulé, has actually engendered and legitimated – exploitative attitudes towards nature. Humanity is thought of as a consumer, and nature as that which is consumed.”¹³ For many who hold postmodernist viewpoints nature creates barriers to human well-being because it “limits humanity,” whereas “technology enables,” particularly in the realm of physiology. “Pristine nature, far from being seen as a glorious inspiration, is a state of brute discrimination on the basis of ‘natural’ qualities such as gender, race, and ability.”¹⁴ The result is that much of postmodernism argues that humans must break the shackles of nature (e.g., the expectation that gender change should be available for any human, despite their biological sex). McGrath contends that Christian wisdom does not teach that humans ‘possess nature’, but rather that “it is being loaned to us.”¹⁵ Christian wisdom constrains “human exploitation of nature” and does not promote it.¹⁶ Christian wisdom sees in nature a variety of signs pointing to the transcendent. Wray, conversely, dispenses with Christianity and urges humans to look within for solutions to the ecological crises of our day.

The perspective of Christian wisdom

This essay argues that **Christian wisdom and values offer an alternative, sustainable and transformative solution to the negative effects of human-induced climate change, and effective relief for concurrent eco-angst. Christian wisdom envisions a new culture characterized by the Creator-god’s¹⁷ gift of *shalom*¹⁸ and consisting of communities of humans, transformed morally by divine intervention and empowered by the deity to steward creation consistent with his purposes. This fundamental change in human patterns of creation abuse generates hope for sustainable, creation-affirming renewal. This argument is based upon the values,**

¹² Ibid., 75.

¹³ Ibid. Soulé, Michael E., “The Social Siege of Nature,” in *Reinventing Nature: Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction*, edited by Michael E. Soulé and Gary Lease; Washington, DC: Island Press, 1995, 137-70.

¹⁴ Ibid., 76.

¹⁵ Ibid., 187.

¹⁶ Ibid., 59.

¹⁷ In Christian wisdom the Creator-god is named ‘Yahweh.’ Associated with him is Jesus, the son of the Creator-god and the Messiah, as well as the Holy Spirit. Together they constitute what advocates of Christian wisdom term “the divine Trinity.”

¹⁸ *Shalom* is the English transliteration of a Hebrew term שלום that means “prosperity; intactness; welfare, state of being; peace” (HALOT II, 1506-10), depending upon the context. In this essay it refers to the Creator-god’s plans for Human’s well-being as described in Genesis 1-2 and through the actions of Jesus now is available to Human through the gospel.

anthropology, and the vision for humanity and creation that Jesus envisioned, proclaimed, and initiated.

Christian wisdom – the alternative to Wray’s perspective

The alternative expressed in this ancient wisdom promotes a partnering community composed of transformed humans who recognize and submit to the Creator-god’s leadership and mission and embody divine *shalom* in their relationships and actions. This alternative wisdom is different from Wray’s perspective in two important respects. First, the deity, the Creator-god, is the One who is sacred, not the earth that is his creation. The earth exists to serve his purposes and is subject to his will. And second, all humans are tragically flawed and lack the capacity for the transformative moral changes essential to resolving the current, human-induced climate crisis. The requisite moral transformation can only occur through the intervention of the deity in human lives. A tragic, human impairment infects and affects creation directly and indirectly.

The ancient wisdom that Jesus, who is one with the Creator-god, articulates and affirms incorporates the sacred traditions of Israel, as well as the sacred records contained in the New Testament (NT). Jesus’s wisdom presents the credible means for solving the human dilemma. It has the capacity to generate “substantial healing,” enabling moral transformation within humans and empowering them to live justly, steward creation well, and live in communities that express such values. This ancient worldview traces its origins directly to the Creator-god, who mediated it through humans and particularly through Jesus’s wisdom. When it engages data discovered through the scientific method, it integrates this information into its interpretative frame of reference.

This wisdom claims that evil is the basic cause of the terrible depravity and devastation that makes human society dysfunctional and that generates earth-harm. It offers valid, tested remedies for eco-anxiety and eco-despair generated by human-induced earth-destruction. However, humans must be willing to listen to what both the Creator and the creation are communicating (Rom. 1:18-22). This ancient wisdom offers humans the only remedy for their tragic moral distortion, caused by evil’s reality¹⁹ and responsible for earth harm. Its advocates must find effective ways

¹⁹ “The greatest uncertainty in projecting future climate change isn’t scientific, it’s human.” Catharine Brahic, Environmental Editor, “The year in numbers” *The Economist* (Dec. 19, 2022). [view.economist.com/?qs=45455a1e7c17e982f5dabcb0a05853b75fd62706d18f57b585da7e874fa12f16d0dc2a3a8f8d4177840928f4d9fe9760a7f3ff60327c4b6bee78db11d6a48825e23b6f1389cde88edaaf8b097c03884](https://www.economist.com/?qs=45455a1e7c17e982f5dabcb0a05853b75fd62706d18f57b585da7e874fa12f16d0dc2a3a8f8d4177840928f4d9fe9760a7f3ff60327c4b6bee78db11d6a48825e23b6f1389cde88edaaf8b097c03884).

to argue the validity of the Christian worldview²⁰ as a preferred or even possible option in the minds of present and future generations.²¹

The narratives of Christian wisdom and climate change

Various narratives in the Bible incorporate examples of climate change. For example, the story about earth's infection by evil, narrated in Genesis 3, reveals how human actions induced by evil genius affect the entire earthly creation and re-shapes all human relationships and activities. The flood narrative (Genesis 6-11) describes a divine response to rampant, destructive human immorality. The consequences include the extinction of some species, the destruction of human civilization as it was known, and the significant re-shaping of earth's topography and eco-systems. In the account of the Exodus (Exodus 1-15) Yahweh, the Creator-god, devastates Egypt through a series of plagues that affect water systems, flora and fauna, domestic herds, and agricultural practices. The Creator-god weaponizes his created order to destroy Egypt's military forces and to deliver Israel, Yahweh's "force," from Egyptian slavery. The deity also incorporates more localized 'natural' events into his arsenal, such as famines, earthquakes, locust plagues, etc., to rectify harmful human behaviour of all kinds. Human warfare destroys cities and consumes resources, leaving regions devastated (ἔρημοι (*erēmoi*)). In the book of Revelation, John, the apostle, prophesies that the Creator-god will continue to use climate-changing natural events to warn humans of their accountability to him and to destroy Satan's forces. The

²⁰ The Christian worldview derives from documents collected in "the Bible" (both Old and New Testaments) and written 2,000 to 3,000 years ago, primarily in the Eastern Mediterranean. The "gospel" describes the "good news" message that Jesus of Nazareth, both deity and human being, proclaimed in the Roman province of Syria and more specifically the region of Galilee and Judea c. 25-30 CE. He affirmed his own special knowledge of God, as well as divine truth that creation reveals, and the special divine revelation expressed in the Jewish sacred tradition. He also provides the interpretative frame of reference for the true understanding these divine revelatory acts and their record. His immediate disciples subsequently spread this message throughout the Roman Empire and beyond its borders. They also wrote various documents that preserved Jesus' teaching and actions, as well as interpreting their significance, that now are part of the New Testament.

In the period 50-250 CE many Indigenous groups in the Eastern Mediterranean responded positively to Jesus' message and embraced it, though the political, economic, and political elites fiercely opposed it. These adherents of Jesus abandoned their traditional religious beliefs and practices. Many reasons might be proposed for such religious conversion, but chief among them would be the moral values central to the gospel message, its remedy for human sin and evil, its promise of new purpose for life in relationship with the Creator-god, Yahweh, the hope of eternal life in Jesus, his son, and direct connection with the Creator-god through his Spirit resident in transformed humans. These factors all contributed to the rapid growth of this religious movement.

²¹ Many activists and pundits who are engaged in the climate change discourse reject outright any claim that Christianity, as a religious system, may offer any solutions to this problem. Rather, because it is so closely identified with European culture, colonialism, and economic capitalism, it gains notoriety as the 'cause' for the current crisis. Any attempt to provide a Christian response will inevitably be critical of the discourse and solutions proposed by many current climate change advocates because, fundamentally, it is a clash of different worldviews. Advocates will attempt to marginalize any efforts to articulate a Christian response because it invalidates their narrative and their version of truth. The previous adversarial relationship that Evangelical Christianity had with proponents of evolutionary theory may provide an educational case study as thoughtful Christians seek to shape a response to the many claims made by climate change activists.

Creator-god frequently intervenes in the normal course of creation's operation to engage humans in a conversation about the consequences of their present actions and to offer them solutions that will provide a blessed future. In many cases the Creator-god lets his created order do the talking for him.

Christian wisdom – supernaturalism, but not animism

These stories²² assume that super-naturalism or an 'enchanted worldview' defines both the creation and human life.²³ In the stories, drastic, divinely orchestrated phenomena generate fear among humans, because they know that they have no capacity to prevent such creation disorder. In many cases the Creator-god provides information through specific humans so that all humans might know who he is, what he is doing, why he is doing it, and what their response to this divine intervention in creation should be. Jesus himself, the one whom the NT documents the claim that he is co-Creator and sustainer of the created order, knows intimately the purposes of the deity and warns humans about the coming dislocation of earth's systems. History, human society, and the created order have a limited life. The creation has a termination point.²⁴ Eventually, earth itself will be destroyed and replaced by "a new heaven and a new earth," the ultimate act of climate change.²⁵ At

²² Interpreting these biblical narratives requires the application of a rigorous, analytical method, perhaps best exemplified in Robbins' analysis of the various "textures" that biblical texts reflect. Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts. A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, PA; Trinity Press International, 1996). Robbins proposes that a correct understanding of scriptural texts arises from a careful investigation of its inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture.

²³ Some suggest that the idea of an "enchanted world or worldview" is somewhat compatible with the Christian concept of supernaturalism. The definition of an enchanted worldview employed by the Network for the Sociological Study of Science and Religion is: "We define an enchanted worldview as consisting of beliefs about non-natural beings, forces, or abilities that can alter or affect the physical world and practices meant to engage, suppress, or respond to these beings, forces, or abilities" (<https://www.nsssr.org/projects/religion-science-and-the-enchanted-worldview>). While there may be some overlap between Christian supernaturalism and the concept of an enchanted world, the commonalities are quite limited. The enchanted worldview is often associated with magic, astrology, and animism, each of which Christian wisdom rejects as appropriate means to understand and manage life. If advocates of Christian wisdom use the term "enchanted" or urge people recover an enchanted view of the world, then they must define this term "enchantment" carefully so that their message is understood appropriately. The Creator-God is not identified as the world, but he is involved with world, being transcendent and immanent without compromise.

Is there any opportunity for "re-enchantment" under communistic regimes that are avowedly anti-supernatural and non-religious in their ideologies? Islam too struggles with the fundamental assertion of Allah as the only deity and syncretism with local, traditional religious beliefs often regarded as heretical.

²⁴ This perspective emerges in New Testament texts such as 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 20-21.

²⁵ Not every biblical scholar understands the biblical narrative in this way. Rather, they interpret texts such as Romans 8, 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 21 as describing the deity's transformation of the current creation so that it becomes habitable by his redeemed people after the Messiah returns. However, the interpretation of these texts employing accepted exegetical principles leads to the conclusion that the early church leaders accepted that in the context of the Second Advent of the Messiah Jesus, this cursed creation, as wonderful as it is, will be destroyed and the deity will create "a new heaven and earth" that his people shall inhabit.

Romans 8:18-25 forms the nexus of this debate. Paul draws an analogy between human believers who await "the redemption of our bodies" (v.23) and the creation that "shall be freed from the slavery to corruption into

some point in the future, the Creator-god will intervene in a climactic manner, destroying evil in all its forms, eradicating its corrupting influence in the current creation, and making a new creation.²⁶ The deity signals in advance his final intentions to hold humans accountable for their actions in this current age. Nowhere in the Bible does this divine plan reduce or eliminate the Creation mandate for humans to steward this earth as God's delegated agents.

The Christian worldview or "hypothetical frame of reference"²⁷ assumes a supernatural reality within which the created order and human society in particular function under the wise, powerful oversight of the Creator-god. This Being is divine, eternal, sovereign. His name is Yahweh and he is the Trinitarian God. Jesus is one with this God in being and power. Within this supernatural reality there is also an evil persona, a spirit-being named "Satan," more limited in power, who aggressively opposes the aims of the Creator-god. His goal is the corruption of the entire created order, human destruction, and the eradication of God's plans for "shalom." The created order and human society are enmeshed in their conflict, but eventually the Creator-god will prevail. Other worldviews have little to say about the problem of evil or have no mechanism by which to deal with evil's effects. God's ancient wisdom insists that this evil agent is real and that his evil influence affects every human's life – a perspective that distinguishes it from all other worldviews.

Many pantheistic and animistic worldviews also support an "enchanted world" frame of reference, but within an animistic understanding.²⁸ The main differences between these various supernatural worldviews and the Christian worldview is that the Christian deity is the only god and is entirely separate from creation. Christian

the freedom of the glory of Gods offspring" (21). Paul emphasizes in 1 Corinthians 15:33-57 that at the Second Advent God will give resurrected believers a "spiritual body" (σῶμα πνευματικόν) that is different from "flesh and blood that perishes" and fully adapted to its new environment. The "natural body" first must die before believers receive the changed, resurrected body. As glorious as this natural body is, it is destroyed before believers receive the resurrected body. Similarly, Paul seems to argue that God intends to destroy the cursed creation and reveal a new heaven and earth, freed from "vanity" and "corruption." The information in 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 20-21 provides a fuller understanding of the nature of this transition, not a contradictory perspective.

²⁶ In the New Testament documents Jesus declares that at some point climate catastrophes will mark the end of creation as we know it and the Son of Man (who is Jesus) will return to judge the nations (Mark 13; Matt. 24-25; Luke 21).

²⁷ The truth claims embraced by advocates of Christian wisdom to support this hypothetical frame of reference for human life, include the reported witness of many different humans, especially those to whom the risen Christ appeared alive. The historical record that archeologists and the interpreters of ancient records reconstruct may also on occasion lend support directly or indirectly. Just as science generates "hypotheses" to explain data, so for these advocates the God-hypothesis articulated in their sacred texts provides the framework within which to interpret data generated by many different kinds of observations and research, both formal and informal. Christian wisdom argues that the Creator-god is the source of all truth, i.e., the *uni-veritas*, and thus all data, when analyzed and understood properly, will be coherent with their God-hypothesis. This worldview contrasts with an animistic worldview that Indigenous worldviews often incorporate or the god-less, naturalistic worldview proposed by evolutionary science and Marxist political systems.

²⁸ The Cambridge Dictionary defines animism as "the belief that all natural things, such as plants, animals, rocks, and thunder, have spirits and can influence human events."

wisdom argues that there are firm category differences between the Creator-god, humans, other animate forms, and inanimate matter. Neither the created order nor any specific element within it has any ‘spirit-life’ or ‘soul’ apart from humans. It rejects attempts to ‘humanize’ other created categories and thereby eliminate the specific status that humans have in the created order.

The sources for defining Christian wisdom

The ancient wisdom associated with Jesus articulates a valid, alternative response to human-induced climate change based upon its authoritative, written, biblical narrative. The biblical worldview, although revealed in antiquity and preserved in written form, retains as much validity in this modern era as any ideology or pantheistic or animistic worldview. This historic, religious tradition claims that the Creator-god continues to communicate with humans through his creation and through his Spirit, if they will listen.²⁹ Just as climate change advocates appeal to the ‘ancient’ wisdom of various Indigenous peoples, a wisdom often claimed to originate several thousands of years previously, and choose to accept such wisdom as ‘true’ though in many cases it only exists as oral tradition, so advocates of Christian wisdom make a similar claim in terms of the origins of the traditions that shape their culture. In a postmodern, pluralistic world that argues for the validity of every person’s ‘truth,’ climate change activists can reject Christian wisdom as an option, but they cannot reject what its advocates claim, namely that it is ‘truth’ for their cultural identity and deserves respect and consideration. The “way of knowing”³⁰ and defining reality that characterizes Christian culture offers a response to human-

²⁹ This is Paul’s thesis expressed in Romans 1:18-24. Many Indigenous societies claim that the earth speaks in various ways to humans, if they will listen. Christian wisdom claims the same, but insists that the voice is God’s voice, the one who created the earth (e.g., Psalm 19), not another ‘spirit’. Such ‘knowledge’ will be consistent with other revealed truth. The complexity and organization exhibited in creation says something about the nature of the deity who made it.

³⁰ Many today pit Indigenous ways of knowing with the of ways of knowing traditionally embraced and practiced by scientists, including knowing through experimentation, the understanding of cause and effect in nature based upon physical laws, and explanations for physical phenomena based upon the dynamics of natural laws of physics, biology, chemistry, etc. Terms such as “two-legged knowledge” or “braided knowledge” suggest that Indigenous ways of knowing must be distinguished from scientific ways of knowing and be given equal status in humanity’s quest for appropriate ways to live.

Some argue that the knowledge developed by Indigenous people through generations of interaction with the natural world provides significant data that should be included with data generated by scientific methods. This approach argues for eventual convergence of data to generate a wholistic understanding of natural phenomena and the proper management of creation for the good of all, including the animals and plants. Others argue that given the wide divergence in values that frame Indigenous ways of knowing (an animistic worldview) and scientific ways of knowing (generally an anti-supernatural worldview), convergence cannot occur.

The Christian worldview embraces convergence, because it believes that creation contributes to human understanding of God’s truth (Rom. 1:18-22). However, such data must be in alignment with the truth revealed in God’s special revelation. What the Christian worldview will reject is theories of explanation presented as scientific, that in fact assume an atheistic worldview or a materialistic philosophy of human being, eliminating the supernatural from consideration.

induced climate change that has as much claim to validity and legitimacy as many claim for the solutions proposed by adherents of ancient mythologies.³¹

The Origins of the Natural World and Human Responsibility for its Care.

Foundational to Christian wisdom is this principle: the Creator-god, named Yahweh in the biblical record, created the universe, including the earth, *ex nihilo* and through the commanding word.³² The narrative in Genesis 1-2 articulates how Yahweh by his own volition and for his own purposes proceeded in a deliberate, ordered manner to create the universe from nothing, including the earth and all the plant and animal genera.³³ Because the deity creates the earth, he owns it. It belongs to him, and he has sovereignty over it in every respect.³⁴ The earth does not belong to human beings³⁵ nor does it possess a divine status in any sense. The Creator-god

³¹ It is difficult to verify modern claims for the accurate preservation of ancient mythologies that depend solely upon oral tradition. Sociologists and anthropologists have long known that oral traditions, when unaffected by modern cultural influences, sometimes reference ancient events. However, given human fallibility and a need to justify modern claims, once these traditions come under the influence of contemporary ideologies, it remains less certain whether such claims for accuracy remain untarnished. Further, those who claim to be conservers of these traditions argue that only they can teach the wisdom expressed in them.

In the case of Christianity, its claims are based upon ancient documents that have an extensive history of transmission. It is the case that adaptations have occurred during their transmission, but much of this can be detected and accounted for when it comes to discerning the form of these documents as they left their authors' hands. Major truth claims are rarely jeopardized by such variants in the textual tradition. With respect to biblical texts, the case for the ability of humans in the twenty-first century to discern the essential truth-claims of a biblical worldview stand on firmer ground, than cultural myths that depend solely upon oral tradition and that often incorporate legendary motifs that must be interpreted before the sense of the myth can be discerned. It is difficult to validate that both the form of the myth told as well as its interpretation reflect the "original" story and its intent.

³² The interpretation of Genesis 1:1 takes various forms. See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15. WBC 1* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publishers, 1987), 11-13. Wenham argues that the traditional interpretation, supported by the Septuagint translation dated to the third century BCE. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," arguably is still preferred and it supports *creatio ex nihilo*.

³³ This fundamental principle of Christian wisdom differs from the agonistic creation myths that characterize many ancient and modern creation stories. In the majority of these creation myths violence and conflict, blood and gore, characterize the act of creation. This perspective of creation through violence contrasts severely with the narrative in Christian wisdom of creation through love. Christian wisdom asserts that creation did not need to occur, because the Creator-god is sufficient in himself and needs nothing to be fully god.

³⁴ Given this perspective it is difficult for advocates of Christian wisdom to accept the idea that the earth in some sense is their "mother." Yahweh is the Creator and the earth, as creation, belongs to him. Biblical discourse may employ parental images to describe how the deity interacts with his creation, but it does not refer to the earth as "mother" in any sense. The reason for this is plain. The other religions contemporary with Israel in the second and first millennia BCE often incorporated a female deity who represented the earth and its fertility. The books of 1 and 2 Kings, as well as various prophetic oracles criticize Israelites who embrace such religious ideas and venerate such gods (e.g., Astarte). The perspective of divergent religions is that the earth's production of food has divine roots and the myth of a dying and rising deity is linked with the passage of the seasons and the fertility of the earth. To ask advocates of Christian wisdom to embrace similar ideas today, no matter how popular, requires them to violate their religious convictions and engage in idolatrous thinking, if not idolatrous practices.

³⁵ Most pantheistic and animistic mythologies explain creation itself or features of the created order using reference to deities/spirit-beings of some kind. However, their characterization of these deities/spirit-beings and their purpose for the resultant creation varies considerably from that presented in a Christian worldview. None of these mythologies use an evolutionary hypothesis to explain the creation of the natural world or humanity.

provides the entire ecology of the earth for the nourishment of the Human³⁶, a specific category of being within creation. The created order, including Human, reflects the deity's existence, attributes, and designs. The Creator-god's rule over creation includes care for all his creatures. He also communicates in various ways with Human, the sentient being he created, to enable Human to participate in the stewardship of his creation as his assistants. For this reason, the Creator-god distinguishes Human from all other life forms. Humans find purpose and hope in participating with the deity in creation care.

The importance of Human's distinctiveness from the Creator-god and other creatures

The apex of Yahweh's creation is *ha-adam* (אָדָם), Human,³⁷ whom he creates as "male and female" (Genesis 1:26).³⁸ The narrative distinguishes Human from other animated beings, indicating that the deity creates Human "in his image and likeness."³⁹ As a result, Human's ecology is distinct in specific ways from all other plant and animal ecologies because of the Creator-god's intentional design of Human and the incorporation of this creature into his specific purposes. While Human shares essential characteristics with other plant and animal species, Human is created in a categorically different manner.

This perspective articulated in Christian wisdom often is confused with an anthropocentric⁴⁰ understanding. The Christian worldview embraces a theocentric model. The Creator-god creates everything, including Human, in order to accomplish his purposes. The entirety of this creation, including Human, will at

³⁶ "Human" refers to the being created by God and who is animated in a special way by God's breath (according to Genesis 2) and thus distinct from other 'creatures,' but who nonetheless in all other respects is like other creatures.

³⁷ This translation is from N.T. Wright, *After you Believe. Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 73.

³⁸ Proponents of the theory of "Keystone Species" classify humans as a "hyperkeystone species." "We propose that such effects make humans a higher-order or 'hyperkeystone' species, which we define as a species that affects multiple other keystone species across habitats" (<https://www.cell.com/trends/ecology-evolution/pdf/S0169-5347%2816%2930065-9.pdf>). "Ecologists have identified numerous keystone species, defined as organisms that have outsized ecological impacts relative to their biomass. Here we identify human beings as a higher-order or 'hyperkeystone' species that drives complex interaction chains by affecting other keystone actors across different habitats" (Boris Worm and Robert T. Payne, "Humans as a Hyperkeystone Species," *Trends Ecol Evol.* 2016 Aug; 31(8):600-607. doi: 10.1016/j.tree.2016.05.008. Epub 2016 Jun 13). This theory attempts to place upon humans responsibility for conserving all other species under their influence. This is not a moral responsibility, but rather a result of evolutionary processes based upon which the natural world maintains balance. Further, scientists recognize other keystone species in different habitats, e.g., starfish, wolves, whales, wildebeests, etc. There is no claim that such species have an "awareness" of their role and can communicate with each other to regulate their activities in response to climate change.

³⁹ Whether the text implies that the divine image is related to the male-female distinction or some other feature of Human continues to be debated. In the author's opinion, the aspect of divine nature in which the deity shapes Human relates to Human's capacity for stewarding nature as the deity's agents (Gen. 1:28).

⁴⁰ McGrath, *The Re-Enchantment of Nature*, 58. See also his section "The rise of anthropocentrism," p. 54.

some point acknowledge their subjection to this Creator-god, who creates Human so that the Creator-god can partner with him in accomplishing the deity's creation and redemption mandates. Because all of creation is subject to the Creator-god, those whom he delegates to act for him, also exercise some degree of authority to steward his creation in alignment with his purposes. Yet, even with this intentional delegation of agency by the deity, the Christian worldview remains theocentric.

Current climate change advocates reject this notion of Human's distinctiveness. They regard this positioning of Human vis-à-vis all other aspects of the created order as fostering an anthropocentric model, privileging Human in the created order, and they reject the notion that the Christian worldview is theo-centric in its essence. Conversely, Christian wisdom argues for a theocentric worldview, whose deity creates Human with selective differences from other created life-forms. This distinctiveness enables Human to steward the creation as the deity's assistant; it does not give license to exploit that creation. Rather, it is the current regime of evil that imposes an anthropocentric order because Human is rebelling against God, replacing the deity with itself, and acting autonomously. As a result, Human lacks moral restraint.

Ecologists and environmentalists generally agree with evolutionary theory, explaining Human as a creature essentially the same as other animated creatures. Human in this worldview originates from "the primordial slime" as do all other plant and animal genera. For this reason, Human is only one of many genera inhabiting the earth and has no special claim to privilege. Human may have evolved some unique capacities that give them advantage over other plants and animals, but essentially Human is no different than any other animal and cannot claim any special value or privileged position in relation to the rest of creation. Whales, bison, elephants, frogs, canaries, flies, etc., have just as much "worth" as Human.

Climate change advocates claim that Human has obligation to use its capacities to protect plants and animals, not to exploit them or destroy their habitat. However, the theory of evolutionary biology and principles cannot explain how and why Human developed this "moral" responsibility for preserving the rest of nature, nor why Human aggressive behavior that uses the natural environment to its advantage is "evil," given other evolutionary principles such as "the survival of the fittest."⁴¹ Supporters of this perspective often appeal to utilitarian principles as a

⁴¹ If Human's instincts and behaviour have their impetus in biochemical reactions within the human brain and body, then how can Human's responses towards the natural world be assessed in moral categories? This makes no sense and Human's actions mirror those of other animals, as biologists frequently seek to show in their research on apes, chimpanzees, whales, and dolphins. If 'morality' has no status other than as instinctive or biochemically induced behaviour, then it is illogical to place on Human specific and unique 'moral' responsibility to act to preserve the climate. When the population of predatory animals expands too much and food sources diminish, then the predatory species begins to decline. Biologists generally urge that such natural cycles should proceed without human interference. Perhaps in the context of the evolutionary hypothesis this is the explanation for human-induced climate

moral base for their perspective. If Human does bear such a responsibility, how does such a self-conscious sense of purpose or moral duty arise, in comparison with other hyperkeystone species. If other species exploit their natural environment, consuming other species and sometimes killing large numbers through diseases they transmit, why are humans the only species responsible to care for all other genera?

The Creator-god's purpose for creating Human

In Genesis 1:26, 28 Yahweh expresses the primary purpose for which he created Human, namely to assist him in stewarding his new creation. The Creator-god could easily do this on his own, but for some reason he creates Human so that this species can participate with him in earth's stewardship. As Human "multiplies and fills the earth," this species will require more of the earth's resources to flourish. The Creator-god anticipates the growth in human population and provides sufficient resources, when creation is responsibly managed, to provide for Human's needs.

Christian wisdom argues that the deity has shared some of his own capacities with Human so that this species can serve as his agent in "ruling and subduing" the earth (Gen. 1:28).⁴² Usually people read this terminology in a negative way, i.e., Human has license to rape the earth in pursuit of selfish desires and therefore can be blamed for the current climate disaster. However, this language occurs before the event in Genesis 3 that results in curse and that alters at essential levels the relationships that Human has with the Creator-god, with other members of the Human species, and with the rest of creation. The consequence is Human's rapacious, harmful behavior towards creation. Harm to nature is the result of Human's moral impairment. However, at the beginning this was not the deity's intent. Rather the Creator-god announces "blessing" when he creates Human (1:28) "in his image" and with the capacity to steward the creation based upon the Creator's own values and in accountability to him. Humans through the Creator-god's

change. Because Human is a predatory species and its population is expanding rapidly, its current practices are exhausting the earth's resources. The resulting deprivation of natural resources will 'naturally' cause a decline in Human's population and this destruction will result in a restored balance. Eventually the climate will recover.

⁴² The Hebrew verb כבש means "to subdue something, subjugate" (HALOT 1, 460), often modified by objects that are human agents (Jeremiah 34:11-16; Nehemiah 5:5; 2 Chronicles 28:10). The other verb used in Genesis 1:26-28 to describe Human's function is דרר and it means similarly "to subjugate, conquer" (HALOT 2, 1189), as in Isaiah 41:2; 45:1. Attempts to translate them differently violate the sense they have when used in other contexts. However, the role expressed by these verbs and given to Human by the Creator-god is one exercised only because this species functions as God's agents to steward creation on his behalf and for his purposes. Unless Human exercises its responsible role in creation based upon the Creator-god's values, then it is inevitable that such "subjugation" will result in abuse and devastation to the creation. However, this is not the deity's intention. Rather evil's dominant influence in Human (Genesis 3) generates such aberration. Human's ability to act responsibly is affected negatively at the most basic levels of decision-making and behaviour. What the story of Genesis 1-2 does claim is that the Creator-god created Human with distinctive cognitive and moral capacities so that Human could collaborate with him in stewarding creation.

intentional action become his regents, working “with God in making God’s world work.”⁴³ Disregarding the order of events in the Genesis 1-3 narrative leads people to misunderstand and misrepresent this document’s message.⁴⁴

The Creator-god demands a responsible stewardship of his creation by the Human

According to the narrative in Genesis 2 the Creator-god develops a special ecological reserve⁴⁵ on the newly created earth, the Garden of Eden, where he places Human.⁴⁶ Initially only the male of this Human species exists, to whom the deity gives responsibility to care for the garden. Soon, however, Yahweh creates a female form who is the perfect complement to the male. There is no distinction made in their respective responsibility or capacity to care for the natural world. Rather they are expected to do so together. This divine action provides additional insight into the terms “rule and subdue” used in Genesis 1:26, 28. Presumably, as the Human population grew, the Creator-god intended Human to expand the boundaries of the garden, in the process “subduing” nature outside the garden’s original boundaries to fulfill his purpose.⁴⁷ The Creator-god intends Human to live “in the garden” context and to employ all of its resources, with two limitations.⁴⁸

⁴³ Stevens, R. *Playing Heaven*, 164. Stevens goes on to claim that “co-creativity draws us into God’s love for the world (Jn 3:16). The purpose of creation is the glorification of God” (164).

⁴⁴ Here is one example. In the 2005 novel *The Lighthouse*, written by P.D. James, one of the characters who is debating with a scientist about the morality of using animals to test the efficacy of experimental drugs makes this statement:

You surprise me. I assumed you took an Old Testament view of these matters. You’re familiar, I take it, with the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over very living thing that moveth upon the earth. That’s one divine commandment which we’ve never had difficulty in obeying. Man the great predator, the supreme exploiter, the arbiter of life and death by divine permission.

Although this may be how some within and without the Christian community historically and currently interpret this text, it is a distortion of the divine intent. As long as climate change advocates continue to base their rejection of Christian wisdom upon such misinformation, it is difficult to develop meaningful dialogue. It may be acceptable strategy in demagoguery and propaganda to caricature another person’s position, but such ad hominem arguments achieve nothing except division. If climate-change advocates desire to collaborate with more than a billion human beings who identify themselves as Christian, then respect for their sacred traditions would be a positive first step. Christians have equal right to live out and articulate their Christian “truth” in the public arena as do any other cultural groups in the postmodern reality.

⁴⁵ The Creator-god provides this model, ecological reserve so that Human might learn what an appropriately stewarded creation looks like.

⁴⁶ It is not possible to determine the “historicity” of this account, because corroborating evidence at this point has not been found and perhaps never will.

⁴⁷ If death was not the deity’s intention for Human prior to Genesis 3, then human ability to multiply and fill the earth would proceed. N. T. Wright, *After you Believe*, 74 suggests that “the point of the project is that the garden be extended, colonizing the rest of creation; and Human is the creature put in charge of that plan.”

⁴⁸ According to Genesis 2 the deity prohibits Human from eating produce from two different trees, whose fruit would give a specific kind of wisdom, and also immortality.

The Creator-god intended a responsible stewardship of the ‘garden’ ecology. Human would be his agent in nurturing this ecology, because they shared his “image” and would value it as he valued it. Human implements God’s beneficent rule among all creatures in this ‘garden.’ In this environment the Creator-god intended Human to enjoy a balanced ecology that provided for their needs, but not in ways that exploited it for the species’ own selfish interests. For this reason, he prohibits the use of several resources in the garden, namely the consumption of fruit from two specific trees. The garden belongs to the Creator-god and Human’s accountability to the deity for its care is assumed in the narrative.⁴⁹

Christian wisdom’s creation narrative has as much validity as any other human creation narrative

Many would regard the creation story that is foundational to Christian wisdom as just one of many creation stories developed by various ancient Near Eastern people groups. Originally, this is the Israelite creation story,⁵⁰ but subsequently it is adopted by Christianity, a Jewish religious movement comprised of Jews (descendants of Israel) and also non-Jews, emerging in the first half of the first century CE in the Roman province of Syria. It becomes the creation story adopted by the new cultural group defined by Jesus’ message. For this reason, although Genesis 1-2 provides us with the most information about the creation story, it is referenced in other Jewish sacred texts (e.g., Ps. 8), as well as writings that now form part of the NT (e.g., Col. 1:15ff; Romans 5, 8; John 1:4-8). Regardless of whether a person considers this creation story as “true,” in the sense of explaining how the universe originated, the ancient Israelite creation story is certainly as “true” as any other human creation story told by other people groups.

This wisdom about creation, about the intended role of Human in the care of creation, and the destructive consequences of evil frame the Christian worldview. Christians have a huge challenge in communicating this truth accurately and coherently in the current cultural climate. Mis-readings of the Christian creation story lead many climate change advocates to blame the Christian worldview for the

⁴⁹ It is difficult to discern how Human’s relationship to the natural world described in Genesis 1-2 as care-givers differs in any substantial way from perspectives expressed in ancient pantheistic or animistic stories. And if, in the Christian worldview (Genesis 1-2) the Creator-god intends Human to care for his ‘garden’, then the language used to describe the divine mandate for Human “to rule, subdue” creation, expressed in this story, cannot be blamed for current, human-induced, climate change challenges. Rather it is distorted interpretations of this story that may have led Human to abuse creation. According to Genesis 3 it is evil’s perverse influence upon Human that causes them to disregard the Creator-god and treat the creation abusively.

⁵⁰ The Israelite creation story shares some elements associated with creation stories preserved from other Ancient Near Eastern cultural groups (e.g., Sumerian, Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian). However, the Israelite story also has some common features with creation stories preserved in contemporary Indigenous cultural groups in various regions of the world. Israel’s creation story has a claim to indigeneity in its own cultural setting just as any other creation story claimed by modern Indigenous groups.

current climate disaster and on this basis to dismiss it. It is the cause of, not the solution to human-induced climate change.⁵¹ Undoubtedly the Christian community has some reason to lament how previous generations of believers have acted based upon a misunderstanding of these texts in Genesis 1-3. Stereotyping modern people who align themselves with Christian values as if they agree with such misunderstandings does not do justice to Christian wisdom's perspective. Stereotypes are counterproductive. If Wray expects Christians to abandon their commitment to this wisdom to achieve her agenda, she does not understand the Christian way.

Christian Wisdom and Climate Change

To discern solutions to human-induced climate change, Christian wisdom makes these arguments.

- a. Human responses need to be compatible with what the Creator-god has revealed regarding his care for creation as well as its place in his purposes.
- b. Human responses will require humans to acknowledge, value, and embrace the Creator-god's intention for human stewardship of creation.
- c. The creation belongs to the Creator-god, not humans.
- d. Humans can have confidence that Yahweh cares for his creation and that humans both in this age and in the age to come will enjoy God's creation(s).
- e. Human stewardship of creation, because of the curses implemented in response to human rebellion and evil, will never be perfect and will never result in a utopian bio-sphere. The struggle between the Creator-god and evil beings, between good and evil, will play out in the created order, as well as in human society collectively and individually.

Responding to human moral failure, the cause of failed stewardship of the earth

⁵¹ The influence of social media in this matter is immense. Some scientists wonder whether a major cause of eco-angst is in fact the misinterpretation of scientific data that is sensationalized by various sources on social media. People respond to what they see on social media, but this is not necessarily the scientific truth as reported by responsible scientists. Similar misinformation about the claims of Christian wisdom also fills social media sources. The purpose seems to be to mislead people and cause them to reject both science and gospel truth. It is the case that some so-called Christian sources that use social media also employ similar tactics. If we are as humans collectively to seek good solutions to human-induced climate change, then we have to stop mouthing misinformed slogans and respectfully engage the truth claims that humans are making. Whether advocates of Christian wisdom have the resources to or even should use social media to express their truth and voice in these debates remains a question.

In the Israelite creation story,⁵² the blessing that the deity pronounces when he creates Human (Gen. 1:26-28) quickly changes to a curse (Genesis 3) when Human disobeys the deity's direct command. As a result, fundamental moral impairment affects every subsequent member of the species and the natural creation becomes dysfunctional (Genesis 3). Evil is the explanation for this and the source of evil in the universe is the spirit-being named Satan. His goal is death and destruction of God's created order to block the divine mission's success. His strategies include human-induced, destructive climate change.⁵³

A curse is performative language that urges some powerful agent to inflict dire consequences upon individuals, nations, or things because they have contradicted and opposed that person's goals or desires. The intended outcome is drastic change that complicates life through unexpected and unexplained difficulties. These include disease, broken relationships, economic damage, natural disaster, and even death. Greek mythology is replete with stories in which deities curse humans for some reason and as a result ruin their lives (this includes the concept of nemesis). Although the scientific worldview of Western European rationalism has no place for curse, it is an operational, social concept in almost all pantheistic and animistic worldviews. The gods are not always friendly, nor do they act in consistent ways.

The agency of a malevolent persona

The rebellious action by Human brings the curse of sin, i.e., the propensity to evil and immorality, that mars every human, creates hostility with the deity, distorts human society, and upsets the balance in the natural world. It alters every aspect of God's intent for Human in his creation. The evil persona responsible only gains

⁵² In this story the first two created humans, Eve and Adam, become the focus. An evil persona employs a beautiful animal to interact with Eve and entice her to disobey one of Yahweh's commands, to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She succumbs to the argument that such an act would not harm her and accepts the lie that the act of eating would give her important wisdom that the deity did not want her to have. She disregards Yahweh's prohibition and eats the fruit, giving some to Adam, who intentionally partakes. God realizes what they have done and holds them accountable. They not only gain knowledge of good and evil, but this knowledge generates divine curses that fracture their relationship with the deity and one another, affects the ability of the earth to produce crops, and drastically changes the nature of childbirth and human work.

⁵³ Christian wisdom locates the causes of destructive, human-induced climate change in the immoral behavior of every human. The entire species is being influenced by the evil persona who is "corrupting" them and the creation. Wray gives little, if any, role to evil as a cause of human-induced climate change or as one of the reasons why people experience eco-anxiety. She accuses some humans of immoral behaviour that results in colonialism, injustice, racism, and climate change. She admits that "injustice...runs wild within our species" (188). Apparently only some humans are profiting from others' suffering and they are the ones responsible for destructive, human-induced climate change. She recognizes something called "the ills of domination" (187) but has no sense that every human is engaged in some way in this activity because of their moral limitations and incapacity. On page 183 she lists many possible human responses that might "heal the harm," but none of them include personal repentance and moral transformation as the first step in developing better stewardship of creation—the essential response espoused by the Christian worldview.

definition in the Jewish tradition gradually, but in the Christian tradition Jesus identifies this evil, spirit-being as Satan, who opposes the deity and seeks to thwart his purposes, particularly for humans.

Christian wisdom teaches that Satan exercises harmful, corruptive influences over every human being, animating them to act in sinful, destructive ways, resulting in destructive effects upon the earth and its climate. Greed, jealousy, ambition for wealth and power, hate, rivalry, desire for domination, etc. are some of the manifestations in human culture and society of this basic, human immorality. Satan is responsible for the existing, unremitting, social-moral dystopia, working through human beings and creation to achieve his nefarious ends. His continued interference in creation is one strategy he uses in his campaign to thwart the Creator-god's purposes, but ultimately the Creator-god will destroy Satan and his evil empire.

Sin - the primary human deficiency

Paul describes the event in Genesis 3 as the means by which “sin entered the world...and death through sin and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—...”⁵⁴ Christian wisdom names ‘evil’ as the cause for disharmony between humans and the deity, disequilibrium between humans and creation, exploitation of creation by humans, and the inability of humans to change their behavior individually and collectively. Evil also prevents remedial, systemic change from happening in the human ecology so that the worst effects of human behaviour upon creation continue unremittingly. Without the complete, moral transformation of human beings, they will not have the capacity individually or collectively discern and implement effectively any sustainable reversal of human-induced climate change.⁵⁵

Christian wisdom also affirms that despite this fundamental human deficiency, the Creator-god's general providence allows humans to exercise their ingenuity and use creation's resources to support general human well-being. This includes remedies for the bad effects of human-induced climate change. However, responses will be limited, intermittent, and subject themselves to misuse. Because flawed humans manage whatever solutions to the climate challenge might be discovered, the outcomes and applications will also be flawed to some degree.

The correlation between sin and creation-abuse

⁵⁴ Romans 5:12 (NIV).

⁵⁵ This Creation story in Genesis 1-3 expresses fundamental concepts that shape the Christian worldview. Some regard it as myth and others regard it as essentially an historical account of the way evil entered the creation and continues to wreak havoc. It remains the critical foundation for the Christian story.

Christian wisdom offers an explanation⁵⁶ for the failure of humans to develop a responsible human ecology that stewards the natural world as the deity intended.⁵⁷

- a. On their own, humans cannot ‘redeem’ their own situation, because of human depravity. However, God’s general providence will allow humans to generate some useful responses that might address some aspects of this very complex problem, but these will be limited, intermittent, and subject themselves to misuse. Because flawed humans manage both scientific processes and Indigenous solutions the outcomes and applications will always be flawed to some degree. Some might argue that science is ‘amoral’, or that Indigenous communities have a special relationship with the environment and their wisdom can guide humans to respond responsibly to climate change. However, this perspective ignores the reality that ‘moral agents’, i.e., humans, are the ones managing the direction of scientific research and the application of scientific discoveries, as well as Indigenous proposals for change and remedy. This moral ‘flaw’ affects the capacity of science per se and Indigenous alternatives to provide sustainable and effective solutions to the current climate change challenges.⁵⁸
- b. Misuse of the earth occurs because humans fail to control their individual and collective desires (greed), actions or relationships in morally good ways over time. Ego-centric, ambitious, greedy human culture collectively and individually pursues interests, policies and actions that inevitably generate results destructive for society and the earth. In other words, humans lack the moral energy and capacity to reverse the effects of the Fall, to heal human relations and pursue a more beneficial use of nature. The human species without moral transformation cannot create a human ecology that stewards the earth responsibly. Until humans

⁵⁶ Some argue that the worldviews by which different segments of human society operate do affect the created world. It may be that some cultures, because of their social ecologies and technologies have less impact upon the created order. Even in the contemporary world the affects that different Indigenous cultures have upon the created order vary greatly, depending upon their cultural and technical traditions. As long as populations remain relatively small and can access relatively large geographical areas to support traditional ways of life, their contribution to human-induced climate change might be minimal. However, in a world populated by 8 billion people, most of whom live in densely populated urban centres, adopting such traditional ways of life seems impossible.

In the United States about 80 percent of those who self-identify as Indigenous live off reservations. In Canada it is about 60 percent. If all of these individuals were living on the assigned ‘reservations’ or traditional territories, what would be their impact upon the natural ecology within those reservations?

⁵⁷ Climate-change advocates increasingly use the term “wicked” to describe the problems associated with negative impacts on the natural world. By it they refer to problems “characterized by their complexity and intractability,” so the term “wicked” has no moral frame of reference. However, how this term serves to advance or assist discussions about such issues is unclear. Rather, by redefining the concept of evil in this way, climate-change advocates reject the analysis of destructive, human-induced climate-change that Christian wisdom articulates.

⁵⁸ Recent participation by Canadian Indigenous groups in major commercial projects related to resource extraction or transportation, even if for the best of reasons, raises the danger that they will become net contributors to climate change, despite the general claim by Indigenous groups that they have the knowledge necessary to remediate the harm created by climate change.

get themselves right, healthy stewardship of the earth cannot occur.⁵⁹ Until the redemptive mandate becomes operative, the creation mandate falters.

- c. This malaise affects all humans. Current climate change remedies that seek to blame one portion of humanity for the problem and expect them to “fix it” overlooks the reality that every human being shares in the guilt for this situation. To blame one segment of humans for it is in essence scapegoating and does not address the fundamental issue, that all humans because of their broken relationships with one another and the deity fail to exercise appropriate stewardship of the creation. Wray recognizes this to some degree, urging humans, especially in the Western, liberal democracies, to repent and change. However, in many ways she adopts the blame-game approach and does not admit that all humans share in responsibility for the crisis. She has nothing to say about regimes dominated by Marxist⁶⁰ or other ideologies. Although she understands that human change is necessary if positive climate-change is to occur, she has no mechanism by which to generate this human transformation. The question of any effective response to negative climate-change goes begging because of this essential flaw.

Christian wisdom articulates the kind of human transformation necessary to reverse the effects of human-induced climate change.

- a. Christian communities can applaud most attempts to alleviate harm caused by climate change. However, without a far greater number of humans accepting their need for moral transformation, reversing the effects of human-induced climate change will be uneven and probably ineffective.
- b. Such human transformation requires reconciliation with the Creator-god. With it comes the opportunity for reconciliation with other humans and with creation – the experience of *shalom* to the degree that it is possible in this age.
- c. Scientific and other perspectives are reluctant to admit that evil exists and avoid any suggestion that a supernatural being is acting intentionally to promote human destruction. However, if humans ignore or reject the notion that spiritual conflict between good and evil envelopes creation and human society, they will lack the wisdom necessary to propose and implement necessary remedies.

⁵⁹ Wray urges human transformation so that humans can “whip up together” a new world (189). However, if, as she states, human beings lack “control over the physical world” (177), on what basis can humans create “a new world?” She urges better communication, public mourning rituals over climate degradation, cultural agitation “to force people in power to pay attention and respond to grievances” (214), as well as stronger communities that practice “community-based mental health care” (226). Her presentation lacks an ontology of nature, as well as clear expression of the origins of the human morality that she hopes will rescue humanity and the environment.

⁶⁰ McGrath, *The Re-Enchantment of Nature*, 88-93, documents the terrible consequences when Marxist ideology drives the treatment of nature.

- d. Christian wisdom agrees with Wray that responsible creation stewardship requires human moral transformation but disagrees that her proposals for achieving such transformation are effective.
- e. Articulating Christian wisdom and its remedies for climate change and eco-angst in this maelstrom of conflicting worldviews is a primary responsibility for those who accept the Christian worldview.

The Remedy for Human’s Essential Flaw, Despair, and Resulting Eco-Angst

Wray’s prescription for dealing with the eco-angst and human despair arising from projected climate change disasters involves a kind of repentance and conversion. She accepts the possibility of apocalyptic catastrophe and urges humans to embrace “a life of purpose that creates beauty, connection, laughter, and love.”⁶¹ She acknowledges that humans are greedy and selfish and unjust. However, she is silent about this truth—no utopian experiments have ever succeeded in human history. Rather every such experiment ends in dystopian tragedy. She quotes with approval Greta Thunberg’s refrain “we’ve got all of our medicine, right here, right now” (203). However, previous and contemporary expressions of human ecology give the lie to such sentiment, if the Creator-god is not involved directly and consistently. The war in Ukraine surely explodes such ideas as illusory and deceitful.

Wray hopes for some human transformation that will enable humans to live for the good, but she defaults to a kind of human self-help process to break the cycle of eco-angst. She anticipates some adaptation, human collaboration, outbreak of love, or evolutionary change that will bring enlightenment and human change but offers no roadmap for achieving this in the face of the world’s geo-political realities. She operates with a closed worldview, arguing that humans must find a solution within themselves, but therein lies the fallacy in her proposed solution.⁶²

She puts her confidence in those living in the closed, autonomous system generally called “the world.” Humans on their own cannot change this “system,” because they live within it and are the problem. In contrast, Christian wisdom asserts that within the limitations of this world system humans can experience “new creation,” i.e., moral transformation, and reconciliation with the Creator-god and his creation. In this way they can experience *shalom*, remediation for their behaviours that harm others and creation, and also resolution to their eco-angst.⁶³ The

⁶¹ Wray, 144.

⁶² Carl Sagan summarizes this common monistic view by saying “The Cosmos if all that is or ever was or ever will be” (*Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 4). Christian wisdom would characterize this affirmation as one of the most hopeless statements that Human could entertain.

⁶³ Jesus himself articulates the essential angst or anxiety that plagues humans as they struggle for the necessities of life. His advice for remedying this angst is very direct – seek God, trust God, and obey God. “Do not be anxious for

transformation requires two human responses. repentance and conversion, accompanied by humility and submission to the deity's purposes and values.

Christian wisdom's understanding of human transformation

Wray includes a chapter entitled "The Potency of Public Mourning" and introduces it with a quote from Shierry Weber Nichol森: The primary emotional work we need to do to deal with our inadequacy in the face of environmental destruction is the work of mourning.⁶⁴

Wray claims that "what we choose to mourn shows what we choose to value" (207). Humans rather mourn failure, loss, limitations, tragedy, their own vulnerability. Even if such loss or failure reflects to some degree what humans value, is what they choose to value the right thing? She calls mourning a "transformative process" (208), "a way to mobilize," and a "contribution to healing" in times of "profound emotional disorientation." Those who have attended numerous funerals know that human mourning rarely results in any meaningful human change. Wray's focus is entirely on emotional health (not moral health and the re-shaping of our mental maps) and shifting of blame to the other, the so-called "powerful," who are the ones responsible for human-induced climate change. Apparently not all humans through their individual and collective behaviours (as the response of the people of Nineveh in Jonah 3 might suggest) carry such responsibility. One of the problems with her position is that it enables many people to feel "righteous" and not bear responsibility for destructive human-induced climate change, because, in her view, it is the fault of the elite or the multi-national corporations who behave immorally for profit. She fails to acknowledge the complicity of every human in the problem. If we are to protest, then let us protest against our own personal moral failures that make us complicit with human-induced climate change.

Christian wisdom also claims that mourning for the devastation induced by climate change, both individual and collective, is necessary. However, the reason to mourn arises from personal immoral behaviour. Human-induced climate change is merely one terrible symptom of flawed human decisions and behaviour. This mindset motivates and instigates all human, harmful behaviours. Such repentance will demonstrate humans' deep grief at their personal and collective participation in the great conspiracy of evil that Christian wisdom names as the cause of creation abuse. Public rituals of mourning, because of human immorality and its devastating

yourselves" (Matt. 6:25). This applies to food and clothing. Rather "seek first God's rule and his rightful will, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). Nor should one "be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will have its own anxieties. Today's evil is sufficient for today" (Matt. 6:34). Jesus names evil as the cause for anxiety, the cursed creation, and the cursed Human.

⁶⁴ Wray, 203. Underlining added.

impact, become important practices within communities committed to Kingdom culture. They serve to emphasize the importance of these issues for individuals.

To repent genuinely before the deity for personal acts of immorality begins the journey to “redemption” and reconciliation with the Creator-god, a pathway that he provides and he defines.

The metaphor of “born-again” used in Christian sacred texts symbolizes the dramatic transformation that humans experience in redemption. Though himself not responsible for the curse in Genesis 3, Jesus voluntarily accepts the guilt that past, present, and future humans accrue because of their essential immorality. In his death he absorbs and takes upon himself the divine condemnation and punishment that rightfully belongs to every human being and enables reconciliation with the deity. This divine mechanism, filled with mystery, is the only hope humans have for changing the trajectory of planet damage caused by human-induced climate change. Jesus’ death and resurrection get the Creator-god’s Human project back on track.

Jesus’ Vision for the New Human

Jesus’ vision for this new Human⁶⁵ revolves around two commands, to love God and to love neighbours. Jesus does not articulate any command to “love the natural world.” However, entailed in the command to love God is the responsibility to embody the deity’s values and these would include his care for his created order. In the Christian worldview, only when humans “love God with all of their heart, soul, strength, and mind” will they have the capacity to steward creation responsibly. When humans recover the capacity to live within this framework, they simultaneously can engage in the deity’s Human project that includes earth-care. For this reason, the Christian hypothesis offers the only substantial solution to the issue of climate change. **Only the Creator-god has the capacity to transform humans, enabling them to repair human relationships and pursue *shalom* with creation, as they live according to the deity’s values. As a result, they will possess the desire, capacity, and moral rectitude to steward the earth in appropriate accountability to the deity.**

⁶⁵ Jesus’ miracles and exorcisms recounted in the Gospel narratives express his ability and intention to accomplish this program of human transformation and restoration. These actions visibly represent the reversal of the effects of the curse generated by human rebellion (Genesis 3) and Satan’s interventions. Some of these miracles include the use of the created order to validate his claims to be the Son of God. These include control of weather, creation of matter (feeding of the five thousand and four thousand), and the catch of fish (John 21).

Within the reality of the redemptive mandate humans discover the opportunity and their capacity to fulfill their creation or cultural mandate.⁶⁶ This is premised upon two realities. First, the deity places within humans his Holy Spirit, who resources humans with the desire, will and moral capacity to obey the deity, under whose rule they now exist. This Holy Spirit empowers them to reject Satan's values and illusory promises and conversely embrace the deity's values and agendas, including proper creation care. Second, humans become once again divine agents within the created world, working in alignment with the deity and his purposes to steward the created world. In this way, humans are quite different from any flora or fauna. Such people do not worship the natural world, nor do they regard the earth as a deity. Christian wisdom denies the earth has divine or supernatural powers. It is not a 'person' and is entirely subordinate to the deity and his purposes. As Yahweh declares in Ex 19:5-6, "The earth is mine." Christians hug trees because they thank the Creator for such a marvelous creation. Because the Christian worldview subordinates the natural world to the Creator-god, it is different from every pantheistic or animistic worldview. Christians worship the Creator-god not his creation. The creation has no power to overthrow evil.

Conversely, arbitrarily placing the natural world in the category of deity, i.e., Gaia, negates any hope that humans have of responding effectively to the climate change challenge. Gaia has no capacity to transform humans. Giving the created world the status of a deity ultimately makes creation itself responsible for climate change and its remediation. Such a worldview also divorces humans from the only power that can generate moral transformation and climate remediation. Further, the Gaia hypothesis requires humans to find the solution to climate degradation within themselves, but Christian wisdom argues that humans have no such capacity.

Kingdom communities as part of the Creator-god's human project

Included in the Creator-god's human project is generating "Kingdom⁶⁷ communities." Paul expresses this same goal in Romans 5:17 when he declares the Jesus followers in their present life "will reign in life through the one man Jesus the Messiah."⁶⁸ This theme of "reigning with the deity" resonates with the Creator's

⁶⁶ "The creation or cultural mandate is the on-going charge to humanity, in the power and blessing of God, to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth and to gently subdue and cultivate the earth." Creation or cultural mandate is a term found in Reformed theology. This definition occurs at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-creation-mandate/>.

⁶⁷ The term 'Kingdom' in this phrase refers to the core message of Jesus who offered to humans opportunity to enter the sphere of God's redemptive rule, i.e., the "Kingdom of God." When they do, they become part of a local "Kingdom community" that in submission to the Creator-god seeks to develop and demonstrate a new, redeemed, human ecology or culture within this current age.

⁶⁸ Hints of this occur in Jewish sacred texts as Yahweh gives Israelites instructions about how to care for the land and build productive, agricultural rhythms into Jewish cultures (e.g., Sabbatical Year, Jubilee year).

mandate (Genesis 1:26-28) to Human, “to rule and subjugate the creation” so that it reflects the deity’s glory more fully. The failure of human society, because of sin’s curse, to live in justice, compassion, peace, and love results in the failure to care responsibly for creation. However, it finds remediation in divinely sponsored experiments to develop a new human ecology that expresses Kingdom culture. Developing a faith-filled stewardship of the earth arises from prior redemptive transformation that affects all human relationships. Jesus envisioned new communities existing under his Lordship and resourced by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating what God’s wisdom and *shalom* looks like.

Currently thousands of such local experiments in Kingdom culture exist and provide context and opportunity to love God and neighbour, as Jesus defines it.⁶⁹ In these communities, the capacity exists for humans to control their egos and to live humbly together, for the good of others. If, as Wray argues, the basic cause of climate change is injustice, then the development of this new human ecology, expressed in these new kingdom communities and based upon the commitment of the Creator-god to what is right, holds the only hope and promise for achieving justice. If the deity cannot manage this, who can?

These are the implications of the principles expressed in Christian wisdom.

- a. If humans are to respond effectively to human-induced, destructive climate change, then clarity about human moral transformation is essential.
- b. While it is possible that some humans might find motivation in other worldviews to practice creation stewardship, such motivation will not have the capacity to effect essential, moral transformation.
- c. The cause-effect relationship between the redemptive and creation mandates is an essential part of Christian wisdom.

⁶⁹ The cogency of this argument is muted, however, by the fact that the church as an institution has existed for 2,000 years, but what has and is it doing collectively to mitigate the deleterious effects of human-induced climate change. Until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the point at which most climate change advocates mark the beginning of real human harm to the environment, most adherents of Christianity tended to be members of the lower classes. Human population in general was small compared to the magnitude of the created order. Many people lived as subsistence farmers because they did not own the land or filled menial tasks that made some contribution to society. Land ownership was the basis for power, until the rise of the mercantile class. Such believers had little opportunity to steward creation, unless it pertained to the land that they farmed in some form. In the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, Christians acted to enable workers in factories to enjoy a reasonable quality of life. They did this through education, health initiatives, and legislative reforms. Little energy was left to address the impact of industrialization on the environment.

Having said that, the church has had over a century and half to start acting according the biblical principles of creation stewardship that this paper outlines. However, the impact appears to be minimal. Yes, there are challenges to mobilizing Kingdom communities to respond with some degree of awareness, unity, and effectiveness to the climate change challenge. However, most expressions of human culture, whether tribal, religious, or political, face the same indictment. Awareness motivates.

Even Wray recognizes that successful remedies for human-induced climate change in many instances come down to local people pursuing local solutions and this is exactly what Kingdom communities have the capacity and opportunity to do.

- d. Christian wisdom generates communities of people who are developing a new culture that exists as one among other cultures of the world. It is Kingdom culture. These communities have responsibility to the Creator-god to fulfill the creation mandate.
- e. It is the case that most Kingdom communities have not realized their responsibilities or potential in creation stewardship.

Alternative Communities Demonstrate Kingdom Culture - Healthy Human Ecology and Inaugurated *Shalom*, as God Designed It

Wray's solution to eco-angst is to create an alternative culture, namely "a partnership-oriented model,...an interconnected web" that "values egalitarian, life-sustaining structures and mutual support systems...."⁷⁰ In her view Indigenous cultures in various parts of the world provide examples of what this looks like. However, she never goes into detail about what such experiments in remediated human ecology actually entail, how they can be generated on a large scale, or what might be the best examples of such remediated human ecology existing in the contemporary world. She uses generalized descriptions, but points to no specific, present large-scale human ecology that demonstrates the values and ideals that result in amelioration of the causes of human-induced climate change.⁷¹

Christian wisdom's vision of human culture

In contrast, Christian wisdom offers a specific vision of a culture morally attuned to the Creator-god's agenda for his creation. Further, there are hundreds of thousands of such cultural experiments, operating within every current expression of human society, political system, and economic jurisdiction in the world. Although imperfect expressions⁷² of the Creator-god's designs, they are seeking to demonstrate the reality of this cultural alternative. The flawed realization of the ideal does not discount the hope it provides and the opportunity it gives for ameliorating some effects of climate change and helping individuals deal with the resultant eco-angst.

⁷⁰ Wray offers no argument to support her contention that "human values" will in fact result in the outcome she claims. Nor can she suggest any reason why humans should hope that such a transformation among humans is even possible, let alone sustainable over the long term. The history of human conflict in the twentieth century would suggest that such a hope is illusory. One might argue that similar values have fueled the 'American Dream' for the past century and half. However, whether these values have indeed generated the promised 'American Dream' can be debated.

⁷¹ Why is this the case? Do they not exist? Or if they do, is Wray not aware of them?

⁷² If we are to look to Indigenous communities for worthy examples of "partnering in community," it soon becomes clear that these models too suffer from flaws and impairments. Rarely do they achieve a high degree of alignment with their declared values. It is the human problem.

People who identify with this culture have confidence in the Creator-god and his promises for human good now and in the future.⁷³

While people in “the Kingdom of God” continue to live in the broader ecology of their specific form of human culture, their ‘ethnicity’ has shifted and they are now incorporated into the family of God who is their “Father” and their culture expresses Kingdom virtues. The Apostle Peter uses terms such as “race (*genos*),” “kingdom (*basileion*),” “nation (*ethnos*),” and “people (*laos*)” to describe social structure created by those who embrace Christian wisdom.⁷⁴ The fundamental reality of their kingdom relationship and distinctive Kingdom culture frames their life even as they function within their respective national, social, and political contexts. Believers are “in the world” as kingdom agents, being instruments or tools of God to accomplish his purposes (Romans 6).

Repentant, transformed humans form Kingdom communities by means of the deity’s intervention. As a result, they are “not of this world/age” (John 15:19). They embrace Kingdom ideals as they develop this new-birth, Kingdom culture in the midst of their physical birth culture.⁷⁵ The core ideals include the following.

- a. Every human in the Kingdom community is equal before the deity (true egalitarianism).
- b. Every participant is a Kingdom agent in submission to Jesus as Lord and working in partnership with the Creator-god (i.e., loving God) and one another (i.e., loving neighbour) to achieve divine purposes, including creation care (partnership-oriented model).
- c. The Holy Spirit inhabits and resources each believer so that their behaviour models Kingdom virtues and values and achieves alignment with divine purpose. Under his influence they bless the creation and enable its participation in the Creator-god’s purposes.

⁷³ Jesus’ vision for this new kind of community incorporates several strategic principles. Upon conversion Christians move into Kingdom ‘space’ where the deity rules; the Holy Spirit moves into them, taking up residence (as the New Testament describes it). They now live in this new ‘space’ under the mandate of Jesus Christ, their Lord, Creator, and leader.

⁷⁴ He borrows this language from Exodus 19:4-6 where it is used to describe Israel as a distinct nation and people group with their own culture, defined by the deity’s values.

⁷⁵ As they embrace Jesus’ vision, they experience individual and personal transformation, building generative Kingdom communities (in which love, justice, and goodness are dominant values) and stewarding the earth, so that humans become the Creator-god’s agents in his mission and so that they and creation can experience the Creator-god’s shalom. Paul and Peter employ the metaphor of “Temple” to describe this new community that worships the deity and cares for his creation. Paul expresses this idea in Ephesians 2-3 and Peter articulates it in 1 Peter 1-2. This dynamic, “temple” community worships and serves the deity as priests and rulers. Principles of Kingdom living focus upon the implementation of the Creator-god’s two great commands, i.e., love God and love neighbour. Following these two principles forms the basis for a healthy human ecology and for a wise stewardship of creation.

- d. The Holy Spirit⁷⁶ given by the Creator-god gives believers collectively the wisdom and courage to exercise moral leadership, particularly in creation care (new values and moral capacities based on essential moral transformation).
- e. Each Kingdom community is interconnected with other Kingdom communities around the world (valuing the Creator-god’s global mission, but determined to express this in their local context), creating a vast network of communities that can demonstrate appropriate human and creation care (an inter-connected web).
- f. Every Kingdom agent receives from the Holy Spirit, the biblical texts, and mentors in the Kingdom communities, spiritual, moral, and practical wisdom that enables them to discern the Creator-god’s vision for true human being and creation care.⁷⁷

When Kingdom leaders help participants in Kingdom communities to incorporate Kingdom values within their relationships and organizational fabric, they collectively become responsible stewards of the creation.

- a. Advocates of Christian wisdom form new “habits of the heart and mind” (Rom. 12:1-2) by means of careful teaching regarding the relationship between the Creation mandate and the Redemptive mandate. As a result, they understand, endorse, and apply Christian wisdom personally and collectively. This includes honouring God as Creator, realigning human relationships in reconciliation, recognizing humans’ responsibility to act as God’s agents in stewarding creation, and perceiving and resisting the damaging influence of evil in society and the natural world.
- b. Participants in these new communities learn how to live collectively according to the Creator-god’s values. As their unity becomes a reality, they become wise influencers of a better way within the broader culture. The goal of Kingdom communities in Canada is not to create a Christian Canada through political action, but rather to challenge individual Canadians to respond to the Creator-god’s offer to work in alignment with his creative purposes. As individuals experience moral transformation and collaborate together in Kingdom communities, they develop the desire and capacity to demonstrate creation-caring behaviours and attitudes that model healthy human ecology. Kingdom communities, by the vitality of their Kingdom culture, present the only viable

⁷⁶ The Christian sacred texts attribute to the presence of the Spirit in transformed humans the generation of a new set of moral capacities that Paul calls “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5.22-23).

⁷⁷ Many climate change activists and pundits blame Christianity for the current climate crisis. They see possible solutions in other religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Animism, all of which Wray appeals to at one point or another in her book. However, she does not explain how these religious worldviews have the power or wisdom to generate the kind of human transformation needed to remedy human abuse of the creation. She never includes Judaism, Christianity, or Islam among religious options that might provide solutions. It seems that monotheistic religious options within the Abrahamic tradition are problematic for climate change activists, but not other theistic options in general.

alternative to the dystopian, climate damaging cultures in which they exist (whatever that culture may be).⁷⁸

- c. Kingdom leaders provide participants in Kingdom culture guidance so that they learn how to participate in the marketplace in ways that promote human *shalom* and a responsible use of the natural world;
- d. From within their Kingdom communities participants discern ways to demonstrate a responsible use of the natural world and influence others in similar actions. This includes ethical uses of personal and collective resources.

A Healthy Ecology of Human “Being” - the Pathway to *Shalom*

Wray articulates three possible outcomes⁷⁹ that the current climate change crisis might produce for humans. First, humans continue the current trajectory, with disastrous consequences for human culture and the earth. Humans survive as a species but experience great deprivation and terrible dislocation. Second, humans continue the current trajectory and as a result become extinct.⁸⁰ The natural world cannot sustain their abuse. After humans disappear, the earth, following evolutionary processes, eventually rejuvenates itself from the damage humans have caused. Third, human beings change their behaviour so that they can survive and help the earth to rejuvenate.

She pins her hopes on the third outcome but is somewhat pessimistic that this indeed will happen with sufficient speed and efficacy to alter fundamentally a dystopian outcome. Realistically, she seems to accept that the first option will be the likely outcome. If this is the case, then she can offer little help for those who are experiencing eco-angst. The apocalyptic, dystopian destruction of the earth and human culture she anticipates will proceed unimpeded, because humans lack the capacity to effect the essential moral transformation necessary to support political transformation and reverse human-induced climate-change.

The hope offered in Christian wisdom and Kingdom culture

The Kingdom culture model presented by Christian wisdom offers a valid and effective alternative, resulting in the remedy that the third option posits. Relying on the Creator-god’s assistance, Kingdom communities can and do reflect changed human behavior. This transformation holds promise of restored relationships among the diversity of repentant human beings that form Kingdom communities, regardless of race, economic status, gender, or social rank. As Wray argues, restored

⁷⁸ Religious traditions in some cultures may share some values in common with Christian wisdom. Where advocates of Christian wisdom can identify these commonalities, then it might be possible to make common cause with such groups in developing some aspects of creation-care.

⁷⁹ Wray, 173-74.

⁸⁰ If humans are the hyperkeystone species that some propose, then their extinction would not bode well for the future health of creation.

human relations, i.e., the development of a healthy human ecology, is key to responsible stewardship of the natural ecology.⁸¹ Without restored human relations, no effective response to the climate change crisis is possible. This is why Christian wisdom offers humanity the only viable hope for remediating the destruction entailed in human-induced climate change.

Kingdom communities express and pursue the goal of a restored human ecology. The participants realize that as long as the current age continues, it is not possible to realize perfectly the goal of a healthy human ecology and perfect *shalom* with people and creation. However, its imperfect realization is far better than the alternatives. When humans experience the *shalom* of God in the context of redemption and Kingdom community, they are then in a position to practice this *shalom* in their stewardship of creation.⁸² Without *shalom*, the disruptive, dysfunctional, and malevolent actions of flawed humans create unremitting dystopia. With incredible deception, the media promotes the illusory message that humans in themselves have potential to become catalytic heroes, or that through some unknown mechanism a few humans develop supernatural powers and can save the day.

Constructive conflict resolution

A healthy human ecology involves constructive conflict resolution, so that differences among humans do not result in harmful and violent retaliation and damage creation, i.e., war.⁸³ It requires moral transformation, deep trust, and truth-telling for there to be true collaboration. Without this healthy human ecology, efforts to seek solutions to harmful problems will fail. There will be winners and losers in every case. Effective conflict resolution requires respect for all and a true appreciation for a life of serving, humility, forgiveness, and mutual care. It resists human greed and selfishness and offers a way of life that seeks the good of others consistently. It provides the opportunity for every person to become the Kingdom leader/agent that God desires, as people mentor others. By working together in transformed communities, humans can leverage their resources for the greater good. As the re-formed human ecology matures, it demonstrates Christian wisdom to those who are pursuing other options and welcomes them to explore the one response to human-induced climate change that holds potential for success.

⁸¹ Wray, 226-28.

⁸² Paul's argument in Romans 8 is that the whole creation "groans" under the deprivations resulting from human depravity. The only solution is a renewed humanity in whom the Spirit of the Creator-god dwells and whom this Spirit helps to intercede with the deity for alleviation of these terrible effects of sin.

⁸³ The war in Ukraine is an example of such unresolved conflict that seems engendered by new attempts at colonialism.

The cultural dynamics within divinely-activated, Kingdom communities encourage participants to work collaboratively in alignment with the Creator-god's agenda. At their center is agreement around wisdom from the Creator-god and his two great commands that constantly generate constructive change. A Kingdom community may decide to take action together to support an initiative directly and immediately related to stewardship of creation. This might be a collective initiative that embraces recycling as an important life choice. Or perhaps it will involve restoration of some local habitat. For those in the marketplace it might provide guidance for influencing business decisions to be creation-friendly. Perhaps the community will decide to help employees purchase electric vehicles and build charging stations in the church's parking lot and make them available for a cost to the local community. Such activities would be secondary, building upon the primary work of human transformation so that the Creator's values become the operative realities of human life and actions.⁸⁴

The implications of this principle of Christian wisdom for human-induced climate change would include the following.

- a. Kingdom communities embrace and exhibit a culture that enables healing and hope for people distressed with eco-anxiety.
- b. Leaders of Kingdom communities must themselves discern and embrace the connection between the redemptive and creation mandates. Expressing this relationship becomes a key strategy in achieving the community's mission.
- c. Leaders of these communities must also promote values and actions that strengthen the cultural identity of these communities. Christian wisdom generates a new and different culture (human ecology). Believers may live in a certain cultural context, e.g., Canada, South Korea, China, but Kingdom truth generates a new, cultural identity, that is different from and often at odds with their local birth culture. Leaders bear responsibility for helping communities understand their new identity, develop clear expressions of it, and have courage to live it.

The cultural reality and expression of Kingdom identity generates conflict with the surrounding culture. Leaders must help believers learn how to navigate such conflicts in ways that win a hearing for Christian wisdom.

A Healthy Ecology of Work

The most effective way that those who identify with Kingdom culture can influence harmful causes of climate change practices will be to learn how to live virtuously in their individual workplaces and family units and to model responsible stewardship of the natural world in these settings. Both before and after the Fall

⁸⁴ The role of Kingdom communities in political activism will have to be determined by each community.

(Genesis 3) the Creator-god intended humans to work and to steward the creation, using created resources in responsible ways, despite evil's influence.⁸⁵ Genesis 4 recounts how humans developed various technologies that enabled them to use natural resources to improve their standard of life. Work is one of the ways in which the deity's image finds expression in humans. Work involves creative, responsible engagement with other humans and also the responsible use of natural resources to generate the necessities of life. Work is one reason why the deity creates the physical earth.

Although the ancient world described in the narratives of Genesis 1-11 was essentially agrarian, humans nonetheless needed to "rule" the created order in care-filled ways. Because human populations were small in proportion to earth's size, human impact upon creation continued to be rather minimal and somewhat localized. The Bible provides little information about the affect the construction of Noah's ark and the Tower of Babel had upon the local natural resources (Genesis 6 and 11). The exception is the impact of the 'flood' that the deity generates in response to human evil.

Abusive human treatment of earth's resources intensified as politicized centralized regimes emerged. Essentially one family group, a ruling dynasty, claimed ownership of the entire area under its control, as well as the resources it contained. It maintained control by military and religious force, often exercised through claims of deity.⁸⁶ Many natural resources were diverted to satisfy the personal and political ambitions or egos of such rulers.⁸⁷ Although modern society considers such monuments, whether tombs, palaces, temples, or fortifications, to be ancient "wonders of the world," rarely do modern people stop to consider the cost of such edifices in terms of human lives (e.g., slave-trade) and the ego-centric plundering of natural resources required for their construction. For example, according to the narrative in Exodus 1, entire people groups could be enslaved to serve the purposes of a ruler, including the construction of cities. Such societies were not just and did not experience or demonstrate God's *shalom*. Political elites used natural resources for their own aggrandizement, ambitions, and selfish desires. How much negative climate change occurred in antiquity because societies pursued these selfish activities? Then as today, political elites would argue that such use of resources was

⁸⁵ The account of the attempt by humans to construct the "Tower of Babel" in Genesis 11 may be one example of humans' attempts to use creation inappropriately to serve their own ends and in opposition to God's directives.

⁸⁶ Religious support for misuse of creation's resources by adherents of Christianity was derived from interpretations of sacred texts that today no longer have validity. Climate change advocates do not discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate interpretations of Christian scripture and tend to assume that previous interpretations of selected text used to validate certain practices (e.g., human slavery), are indeed the intended meaning of such texts. The result is that every form of Christian expression is tarred with the same brush.

⁸⁷ Christopher Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervans, 2022), 49-51, argues that ancient societies "enshrined violent power exercised through coercion" in their creation myths. Much of "modern political thought... is built on an 'ontology of violence'" as individuals and groups exercise their "will to power."

politically expedient.⁸⁸ This is the kind of “ruling” that the Creator-god consistently condemns, built on an “ontology of violence.”⁸⁹

As modern society emerged out of the Industrial Revolution, the nature of human work changed, at least in European-controlled regions of the world. As well, new ideologies defined the role of human work in society differently. Marxist views contrasted significantly with capitalist ideals. However, in both ideologies human work becomes a means to an end, whether in service to the utopian ideal of the communist state, or to a vision of human society that wants the benefits of a profit-driven economy framed within somewhat democratic ideals. In post-Reformation England the Puritan ideal understood human activity as service to God that flows from confidence in God’s grace and promises and alignment with God’s purposes. As the Industrial Revolution gained momentum such religious ideals become devalued by the majority. Laissez-faire often guided government policy. Keynes observed in 1926 that in Western societies, the result is modern capitalism that “is absolutely irreligious, without internal union, without much public spirit, often, though not always, mere congeries of possessors and pursuers.”⁹⁰

In the postmodern era corporations are seeking to “rediscover their soul” and there is much discussion about leading from within a framework of spiritual realities. These attempts to integrate spiritual values into corporate life tend to choose their religious principles eclectically, mixing ideas from traditional religions with New Age spiritual expressions of all types.⁹¹ Stevens remarks that “the alleged paradigm shift of the century is not a return to religion, but to spirituality without religion.”⁹² The

⁸⁸ It is difficult to estimate what military conquests contributed to such abuse of creation. Josephus claims that the Romans, during the Roman-Jewish war, de-forested Palestine because they crucified so many Jewish victims. It is also important to remember that these ancient regimes were “Indigenous cultures” with their own creation stories (Egyptian, Hittite, Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, Canaanite, Babylonian, etc.), with deities as central figures. Yet these religious frames of reference did not result in a responsible use of natural resources. Few, if any, ancient documents reveal such concerns exercised by ancient leaders. The story of Easter Island society (c. 1500-1800 CE) also reflects the tragic results for humans and creation when ancient, indigenous social and political values misuse nature and its resources. The legislative regime described in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy offered to Israelites a way of managing the creation resources (land and animals) responsibly (sabbath year and Jubilee year land use practices), even as there is a just distribution of food produced for everyone. Yahweh warns Israel what the social and economic consequences of installing a king will be (1 Samuel 8.10-18).

⁸⁹ Many climate change advocates seek to organize in ways that will pressure political elites or even replace the present political systems. However, the flaw in such an approach is that such political action has no capacity to transform the humans involved in these political elites or in the proposed new political system(s). The humans who replace such elites eventually will demonstrate that they have no more personal moral direction or rectitude than the previous leaders. Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory*, 50.

⁹⁰ J. M. Keynes, *Laissez-faire and Communism* (New York: New Republic Inc., 1926), 131. Max Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scriber’s Sons, 1958).

⁹¹ Recently Simon Fraser University appointed an “ecological chaplain.” His role is to tend “to the emotional, existential, and spiritual care of our community related to climate and ecological distress”

(<https://www.sfu.ca/fenv/about/ecological-chaplaincy.html#:~:text=Jason%20M.,to%20climate%20and%20ecological%20distress>. Accessed January 13, 2024).

⁹² Stevens, *Playing Heaven*, 76.

corporation becomes the new tribe; the multinational business functions as the new cathedral, symbolized by the gleaming office towers that display their logos. Stevens notes that the vocabulary in “business as spirituality” discussions tends to reflect Christian values.⁹³ The problem is that this new spirituality only relies on “inner wisdom, authority, and resources.”⁹⁴ It operates as a closed system that seeks to provide “authentic community” and “significant service.”⁹⁵ However, it lacks the capacity to deliver because of its presuppositions about human nature, the Creator-god, and the purpose of life and society. The Business Spirituality movement correctly has identified the human need, but cannot marshal the human capital necessary to achieve its goals. Wray’s prescriptions for resolving the climate change crisis and eco-angst suffer from the same disconnect. She identifies significant issues, but her remedies lack the capacity to achieve her desired outcomes.

Christian wisdom and Human’s vocation

Every Kingdom agent has the same vocation (“calling” is the term used in the NT), to serve the Creator-god. The ways in which they fulfill this vocation are as different as the people themselves because of their talents, gifts, education, opportunities, social realities, etc. (cf. 1 Corinthians 7 and 12). Plumbers who are Kingdom agents in some sense fulfill their vocations under the Creator-god as they work professionally as plumbers. Their work can contribute to the responsible use of natural resources, as they design and create systems and devices for the proper use and control of water or the healthy disposal and treatment of waste-water. In so doing they also create necessary systems to support human community. Kingdom agents in the marketplace love the Creator-god and love neighbour and in so doing to find ways to steward creation responsibly.

Christian wisdom and the value of work

Kingdom culture, as defined in Christian wisdom, offers humans a unique perspective upon the value and purpose of human work. The essential principle is this: believers are agents of the Creator-god and his co-creators. They become his *diakonoi* (designated representatives/agents), accountable to him for everything they say and do. When they participate in the marketplace to earn money and thus enjoy a reasonable standard of living, they do so as the Creator-god’s agents in their marketplace context. The whole of their living occurs under the direction of the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ John Renesch, ed. *New Traditions in Business: Spirit and Leadership in the Twenty-First Century* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1992), 15.

⁹⁵ Stevens, *Playing Heaven*, 77.

Creator-god’s Spirit who resides in them. He is with them in the marketplace.⁹⁶ He creates them with talents and resources them in other ways to participate in the marketplace.

Because of the nature of Kingdom ethics, these agents of the Creator-god enjoy considerable freedom in choosing how they will work. So long as their work enables them to love the Creator-god and love their neighbour, stewarding the creation responsibly in the process, they have many different options for employing these skills and abilities. Whatever they decide, they have responsibility to act as his agents in every work context. Michael Novak argues that “the task of laypersons in the economic order, whether investors, workers, managers, or entrepreneurs, is to build cooperative associations respectful of each other’s full humanity....Economic activity is a direct participation in the work of the Creator himself.”⁹⁷ Stevens states that “Adam and Eve were the first priests of creation” and “in the same way business entrepreneurs are priests of God and priests of creation, accountable to God...and charged to be sub-creators through which they bless creation and others.”⁹⁸

Wray does not seem to regard human work as therapeutic for resolving eco-anxiety or the fundamental means by which ordinary humans engage creation care. Enabling believers to understand their work as part of their vocation as Kingdom agents enables them to apply Christian wisdom in ways that can alter the trajectory of human-induced climate change.

Christian wisdom incorporates and advocates for an appropriate theology of work that values human work as service to God and neighbour, but also engages such work in ways that steward the creation, fulfilling the creation/cultural mandate expressed in Genesis 1:26-28. Through their worshipful work, they generate “disciplined, cooperative communities.”⁹⁹ The scale of responsibility for stewarding creation increases along with the level of authority a person exercises in the marketplace. Kingdom agents who own businesses or lead professional organizations carry particular responsibility to figure this out well for the good of their employees, clients, or members, to demonstrate Christian wisdom and to worship the Creator-god through daily work.

Christian wisdom’s understanding of human work has significance for addressing human-induced climate change.

a. Individual Kingdom agents understanding the nature of their work.

⁹⁶ Paul asserts this in 1 Corinthians 7:17-24.

⁹⁷ Michael Novak, “The Lay Task of Co-Creation,” in *Toward the Future: Catholic Social Thought and the U.S. Economy, A Lay letter, Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (North Terrytown, NY: 1984), 25-45.

⁹⁸ Stevens, *Playing Heaven*, 78.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

- b. Leaders of Kingdom communities assist each agent to learn how to work wisely and effectively in alignment with the Creator-god in the marketplace.
- c. It is in their marketplace contexts where these agents will have the greatest influence for earth-care.

A Teleological Perspective on Creation - The Creator-god's Endgame

Christian wisdom articulates a specific perspective on the purpose of the creation. According to Christian wisdom, creation has value because the Creator-god made the universe. "The whole earth is mine," he declares (Exod. 19:5-6) and he rules the ages (Exod. 15:18). The creation does not have existence or value independent of the Creator-god and his purposes for it. Further, the biblical record narrates numerous situations in which the Creator-god uses creation as his instrument to accomplish his will among rebellious humans. Often his usage results in what modern humans would term "natural disasters." Whether it is the flood (Genesis 6) that destroys humanity because of their wickedness, or the plagues employed against Pharaoh to liberate Israel (Exodus 7-12), or the control of locusts so that Israel can defeat its enemies (Joel), Yahweh exercises his sovereign right to involve the creation in the moral and spiritual conflict between himself and evil, whatever its manifestation.¹⁰⁰

Christian wisdom, apocalyptic, and teleology

Wray has no place in her worldview for a teleological understanding of creation. She incorporates apocalyptic scenarios in her book, but her projections have no teleological purpose, because no sovereign deity is involved in their instigation and the evolutionary premise has no sense of what the natural world's purpose might be. In her view, for a Creator-god to employ creation to serve his purposes might be regarded as an abuse of creation. Wray has no framework of reference that might explain some elements of eco-destruction and climate change as a divine response to evil human activity and the failure of humans to repent of their greedy and selfish abuse of creation. Rather, if there is a cause-effect relationship between human actions and harmful climate change, it must be explained within a 'closed system' void of any external factors.

Within the biblical frame of reference, even though the Creator-god continuously reveals himself to humans in and through creation, he repeatedly allows them, as moral agents, to reject him and to choose sinful modes of life.

¹⁰⁰ Christian wisdom argues that humans have a distinctive place in the creation. The evil persona Satan is also involved and Jewish and Christian sacred texts indicate he has limited power to use creation to serve his purposes (consider the story in Job 1-2 and the natural disasters that destroy Job's family and flocks).

However, he builds into these sinful choices destructive consequences (Romans 1-2). He “gives them over” to their evil desires and as a result other humans suffer, as well as the natural world (Romans 8). Evil human behavior has devastating consequences both for human and natural ecology, producing death in all of its multiple dimensions. While advocates of Christianity resist pointing to a “natural disaster” and declare that this represents the Creator-god’s judgment upon evil human activity, they will also not deny that acts of judgment involving the natural world can and will occur (as the book of Revelation indicates).

Christian wisdom and Human’s accountability

Christian wisdom contends that degradation of the natural world occurs because of wicked, human activity, but also acknowledges the Creator-god’s authority and power to incorporate the terrible consequences of such degradation into his plans for judgment against Satan and rebellious humanity. The cause-and-effect relationship that may exist between human evil, natural disaster, and divine judgment cannot be discerned precisely. However, Christian wisdom insists that it is present and that it demonstrates the continuing struggle between good and evil. Negative climate change might be construed as one symptom of the continuous spiritual warfare between the deity and Satan. According to Christian wisdom nothing happens in the natural world that is unrelated to the deity’s designs or his response to the reality of human depravity and Satan’s schemes.¹⁰¹ Immoral humans might seek to remediate the effects that abuse of the natural world creates, but their success will be limited, because they have no solution to the evil bent that warps every human decision and behavior and generates divine condemnation that results in death.

Christian wisdom and the endpoint of creation

What Christian wisdom offers is hope that abuse of creation has an endpoint. In Wray’s perspective the universe, including the earth, continues to exist without any discernible endpoint, except perhaps billions of years into the future when the sun ceases to exist as a star and consequently planet earth becomes “dead.” Humans are merely part of this natural order and have no “special” place in this order, except

¹⁰¹ This view of the world involves supernaturalism. Pantheistic and animistic myths employed to explain “things” similarly involve elements of supernaturalism, but it is of a different nature and order. Contemporary scientists, climate-change advocates, and culture influencers do not seem to have a problem “respecting” this supernatural dimension of Indigenous knowing and understanding, but bristle when asked to respect the supernaturalism embedded in the Christian worldview. It is also the case that the view of the world articulated by Christian wisdom allows space for “acts of Satan” as well as “acts of God.” However, it is impossible for us as humans on our own to distinguish these, unless a special revelation makes it clear.

perhaps as a “hyperkeystone species.” Deities might exist, by the suffrage of humans.¹⁰² If humans are the sole agents responsible for the current climate change crisis, they are on their own and have to find some solution from within human capacity. In contrast to Greta Thurnberg’s unsubstantiated mantra that “we’ve got all of our medicine right here, right now,”¹⁰³ Christian wisdom declares that humans in themselves have no ‘medicine’ to heal the immoral bent of the human heart that is the fundamental cause of destructive, human-induced climate change. Humans have no ability to stand outside of creation’s ‘closed system’ and discern authoritatively either the creation’s ultimate purpose or their own, individually and collectively. Of course, some religious worldviews, such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Islam, present teleological alternatives that involve either numerous cycles of earth creation, destruction, and reincarnation¹⁰⁴ or a more singular trajectory that involves creation and its destruction, with some possibility of a new earth/heaven.

The narrative trajectory presented by Christian wisdom is creation, introduction of evil/curse, the course of human history, the deity’s climactic destruction of evil, and the creation of a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21-22; 2 Peter 3). In other words, creation is time-limited, and it has no purpose independent of the Creator-god’s teleological purpose, part of which he has chosen to reveal to humans. This purpose is to create a people who are loyal to him and will participate with him in the current age to advance his agenda. At some point the Creator-god will destroy the earth because it is too infected and poisoned by Satan’s delusions and destructive evil.¹⁰⁵ He exercises acts of judgment that challenge and eventually destroy evil human systems, including the infected, cursed creation¹⁰⁶ The deity promises to create a “new heaven and a new earth” in which evil and its terrible curses have no part.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Humans may regard natural phenomena such as volcanoes or unusual geographical formations as deities. In some animistic societies human actions that violate the taboos require action to appease a particular deity. What rituals and sacrifices will be necessary varies considerably.

¹⁰³ Wray, 203.

¹⁰⁴ In the ancient world, some Stoic philosophers taught that every 10,000 years the earth is consumed with fire and a new earth emerges “from the ashes,” as it were. This is a continuing cycle but is not leading to an ultimate end. Some might argue that belief in reincarnation that forms part of some religious expressions, e.g., Hinduism, is a kind of teleology. Religious adherents believe that if they live a ‘good life’ in this age, then in their reincarnation they will return as part of a higher caste and thus enjoy a better life. However, they have no guarantee that this indeed will be the outcome and they might return as a member of a much lower caste, even an animal or insect. This does not sound teleological, but rather cyclical with no specific outcome in view.

¹⁰⁵ Not every Christian theologian accepts this reading of the biblical documents. Some argue that the Creator-god will re-furbish the current “earth” and this will be the context in which Kingdom people will enjoy him forever, i.e., a kind of new Eden. However, it is difficult to accept such a scenario given the statements in 2 Peter 3 and the description of events in Revelation 21-22.

¹⁰⁶ Some regard Jesus’ language in Mark 13:24-27 as metaphorical and not literal, thus discounting the destruction of the created order as part of the end-times.

¹⁰⁷ Stevens (*Playing Heaven*, 96) observes: “We are invited to leave beautiful marks on creation, on the environment, family, city, workplace, and nation. And when we cannot do this, and cannot undo the violence we

Wray describes the scenarios depicting the results of human-induced climate change as ‘apocalyptic.’ Intentionally or unintentionally she chooses a biblical term to name the devastation. Prophetic documents in the Hebrew Bible (Daniel) and the Christian Testament (Revelation) incorporate visions of earth-destroying events instigated by the Creator-god in response to human evil. These writings self-describe their contents employing the Greek verb ἀποκαλύπτω (*apocalypō*) meaning “to reveal, unveil.” The deity chooses to share with humans some of these destructive events associated with the end of history as a form of final warning to humans to repent. Of course, Wray employs this term without any theological sense. However, the fact that she uses it indicates the gravity of the situation. Advocates of Christian wisdom can agree in some sense with her use of this term given the way the deity uses natural phenomena in the biblical apocalypses to express his judgment against evil and the imminent end of human history.

In the face of such apocalyptic projections as Wray describes, Christian wisdom urges humans to ask what the Creator-god might be saying by allowing these distortions of his creation? Human moral transformation is his goal. This applies to all government, business, military, institutional, religious, and scientific leaders. Based upon this moral transformation, human actions, both individual and collectively, should align more closely with earth-care principles.

Sacred Ritual and Creation Stewardship

Wray argues that humans need to devise new rituals that promote beneficial relationships with the natural world and aggressively oppose the activities of the elite who rape the natural world in pursuit of their greedy ambitions.¹⁰⁸ Public mourning rituals for parts of the natural world suffering human destruction become her ritual of choice in this endeavor. Indigenous groups and adherents of other religions address supernatural agents and give thanks for the natural world, as well invoke the spirits inhabiting the natural world to act favorably on their behalf. Often their invocations ask the gods to intervene on their behalf to relieve the effects of famine, disease, or some ‘natural’ disaster. In previous times the human response often involved the sacrifice of animals or humans to the deity(ies) in hopes of provoking their beneficial action. Whether such rituals have any ‘objectively-determined’ efficacy is impossible to determine.

have committed against the cosmos, we have faith in Jesus that one day he will transfigure even the environmental, social, cultural, and political scars we have left through our work.”

¹⁰⁸ Wray, 207.

Summation and Conclusion

*Christian Wisdom and Human's Response to the "Gratuity of Creation"*¹⁰⁹

Christian wisdom defines rituals for Kingdom communities that continually invoke the Creator-god. They pray through his Spirit for the renewal of human community and the entire creation now and in the future, i.e., *shalom*. They worship in hope that he will restore and renew creation and provide them with 'resurrected bodies' entirely suited to the "new heaven and new earth."¹¹⁰ This becomes one of the most effective ways for humans to unite in remediating the causes of human-induced climate change. When believers articulate in their worship good stewardship of creation as one of their desires, it results in action concurrent with that desire. Such rituals also calm the minds of those confused with eco-angst. Their unified, hopeful worship precipitates action.

¹⁰⁹ Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory*, 62-65 argues that when the Creator-god makes the world, this is his gift and human's response can only be thankful acceptance. This perspective cuts the ground from under any approach to creation management that holds human's function as producer and consumer as the framework from within which we can respond effectively to creation-abuse.

¹¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 15. The hymn by M. Babcock "This Is My Father's World" (1901; public domain) voices this Christian hope:

This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world,
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their maker's praise.
This is my Father's world,
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world.
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world:
why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring!
God reigns; let the earth be glad!

Christian wisdom provides a more complete and realistic analysis of the human predicament than other worldviews. It argues that the human moral predicament is the source and cause of human-induced climate change. Christian wisdom also offers a remedy, namely a God-energized human transformation that enables individual humans, in partnership with the Creator himself, to generate *shalom* through their collaborative efforts with one another and with creation, all energized by the Creator-god's Spirit. The implementation of the cultural mandate as defined in the Bible offers the primary remedy for human-induced climate change and its various harms.

Christian wisdom understands human work as co-creating with the Creator-god to do his good work in this world for the benefit of humanity and the earth. Good work in this context becomes a core expression of human worship.

Kingdom communities are forging a new cultural identity that contrasts with surrounding cultures. Christian wisdom is the 'truth' that energizes and forms this new culture. It incorporates a different vision for moral human community that requires appropriate earth-care. However, this different vision does not negate the possibility of respectful collaboration with people who hold other worldviews, to ameliorate the effects of harmful climate change. The degree of collaboration, however, will be proportional to the ability of Christian wisdom advocates to remain loyal to their faith commitments.

Christian wisdom argues that evil is real and an evil persona, a supernatural spirit-being, Satan, sponsors its manifestation in many different ways to prevent the Creator-god from achieving his purposes for his creation. Evil expressed in humans and human society is the root cause of human-induced climate change. There is a cause-effect relationship between human evil and human-induced climate change. Only divine intervention in humans' lives can produce necessary and appropriate human transformation.

Attempts to seek remedies to reverse the effects of human-induced climate change solely based upon human knowledge, technical capacity, or moral effort will fail, because humans are flawed and there is no space for the Creator-god. This reality negatively affects every effort to address the fundamental cause of climate abuse. The result is that eco-angst cannot truly be addressed through such efforts, because the Creator-god who can bring hope is ignored and removed from the equation. Wray's prescriptions for resolving the climate change crisis and eco-angst suffer from this disconnect. She identifies significant issues, but her remedies lack the capacity to achieve her desired outcomes.

Creation care is an essential value according to Christian wisdom. It may also be a core value within other mythologies and worldviews. Where the values of these different worldviews overlap with the values of Christian wisdom, collaboration for remediating harmful climate change might occur. However, the anthropologies

expressed in these worldviews are very different and as a result Christian wisdom articulates a different pathway to remediate the effects of human-induced climate change and to generate true *shalom* in human community and in earth relationships.

Advocates of Christian wisdom who lead Kingdom communities generate and conserve the novel cultural identity aligned with the Creator-god's values. They have great responsibility to mentor participants in these cultural communities so that they understand how their work as believers can demonstrate love of God, love of neighbour, as well as appropriate stewardship of creation.

The promises of the Creator-god for a "new heaven and new earth" generate hope in redeemed communities that his plans will succeed. Advocates of Christian wisdom have four great challenges as they seek to engage the current debate regarding human-induced climate change:

First, advocates of Christian wisdom should develop effective ways to marshal the intellectual and spiritual capital of believers to develop an alternative vision for creation care and to mobilize individual Kingdom communities, so that they begin to address climate change issues in ways that align with the values and priorities expressed in Christian wisdom. As Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist theologian who did much to stimulate the development of social gospel stated in 1893:

Only if the number of such God conquered souls is great and increasing in any nation will the progress of that nation in material wealth be of real benefit to the people.... Special work and hard work has to be done in pointing out a social wrong and thinking out its remedy.¹¹¹

Second, advocates of Christian wisdom need to discern an effective way to network thousands of these Kingdom communities so that their collective voice and "truth" gets magnified within the discourse on climate change and the larger questions of responsible creation stewardship.

Third, advocates of Christian wisdom should build into their discipleship processes teaching that helps Kingdom agents perceive their work in the marketplace as an expression of their Christian vocation. This includes intentional and committed love for neighbour and creation care within the institutions and corporations within which they work. It is important to learn how "to live righteously amid the temptations that come with power." To refer to Rauschenbusch once again,¹¹² we cannot underestimate the power of and importance of individual social consciousness and moral behaviour among business leaders.

Fourth, advocates of Christian wisdom need to help believers understand the relationship between two goals of Christian wisdom: building *shalom* within

¹¹¹ Walter Rauschenbusch, *Social Principles of Jesus*. 1917.

¹¹² Walter Rauschenbusch, *Dare We be Christians*. 1914.

Kingdom communities and allowing the benefits of that *shalom* to overflow into the broader society.

As the only effective response to eco-angst, Christian wisdom urges people to put trust in the Creator-god's desire and capacity to generate human moral transformation. The Creator-god resources his changed people so that they develop Kingdom community experiments that ameliorate the impact of human greed and ambition upon the natural world. Supported and encouraged by such Kingdom communities people can realize their human potential to steward creation as the Creator-god intended. Kingdom agents have confidence that the Creator-god cares for his creation more than they do, that he has designs for his creation that include the eradication of evil, and that he will recreate a new heaven and earth that one day they will enjoy. This is the ultimate solution to eco-angst and human-induced climate-change—trust in the merciful Creator-god and confidence in his plans, capacity and power.

Christian wisdom, when rightly understood and lived, generates precisely what Wray argues is necessary to address human-induced climate change and eco-angst. It has the potential to generate human moral transformation, partnering communities, and a human ecology that has the capacity, wisdom, and mandate to care for humans and creation. People who embrace Christian wisdom confidently hope in a future void of evil, extending beyond the current creation into a “new heaven and a new earth.” Its primary advantage is that it aligns humans with the purpose for which the Creator-god made them, includes them in his work that makes the world work, and incorporates divine resources into their efforts.

The prophet Habakkuk writes:¹¹³

I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation
invading us.
Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines,
Though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food,
Though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.
The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a
deer,
He enables me to tread on the heights. (3:16b-19a)

¹¹³ In the interplay between the Creator-god's decision to exercise judgment on the nations for their attacks upon his people (Habakkuk 3:5-15) and his action to save his people, he weaponizes creation to accomplish his purpose. Creation is a willing participant in the Creator-god's triumphant procession over his enemies who, as a result, experience distress and anguish. Through this process he crushes “the leader of the land of wickedness.” Habakkuk stands in awe, trembling at his vision of Yahweh's mighty power exercised in such dramatic fashion. Within the framework of Christian wisdom not all climate change is bad.

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