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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

On October 2, 2015, the Liberty University Law Review hosted its Eighth Annual Symposium. The symposium speakers and panel broadly examined Christian legal thought on the role of the state in protecting natural resources. We invited Christian legal scholars from multiple viewpoints to interact with each other both in defining and applying a Christian perspective on environmental law. The speakers and panelists included John Copeland Nagle, Lucia A. Silecchia, Tory L. Lucas, and Becky Norton Dunlop. Our primary purpose in hosting the symposium event and publishing this issue is to make an effective Christian contribution to environmental legal scholarship.

The Liberty University Law Review is grateful to the authors and speakers for their contributions to this symposium and to the ongoing worldwide discussion on environmental law.

Why Focus on Environmental Law?

Morality. Traditional values. Ethics. Faith. In connection with law, these terms are most often associated with issues like abortion, marriage, and religious freedom—the so-called “culture wars.” When it comes to debate over environmental issues, though, the skirmishers far more often appeal to research studies and cost/benefit analysis than to the Bible. But, as Christians, we know that God our Creator reigns over all things, visible and invisible. That includes every sphere of life, every field of law. For this reason, Christians are called to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” . . . even thoughts in the minds of Christian lawyers, and even thoughts about the environment. Thus, the Christian legal community must not shrink from the task of applying our faith to the pressing legal issues surrounding climate change, energy production, endangered species, and natural resource conservation. We fail our duty to God, to each other, and to our children if we ignore the creation God has entrusted to us.

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?*

*Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him dominion over the works for your hands;*

*you have put all things under his feet,
all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 8:3-9 (ESV).

Ian S. Lamont
Symposium Editor