



THE CHRISTIAN,^{THE} ENVIRONMENT AND^{AND} SANITATION

“The earth is the Lord’s and
everything in it; the world, and
all who live in it.”

Psalm 24:1

We are stewards, not owners;
caretakers, not proprietors.

...Your camp must be holy, so that he (God) will not see
among you anything indecent and turn away from you.

Deuteronomy 23:14b

God the creator:

In Genesis 1:1, we are told *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* Then in verse 24, God commanded, *“let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind. And It was so.”* God created nature, animals and humans—male and female.

The Mandate:

In Genesis 1:26-28, God created man in his own image; male and female he created them to **rule over** everything he has created.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it. Nature was created before humans. Before humans were created, all that was necessary for life and living was available.

Then God blessed the man and woman and gave them his mandate: *“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*

Humans were mandated to be stewards of nature, to take care (tend, nurture, protect) of what God had entrusted to them. Leviticus 25:23b reminds us that the earth is still the Lord’s *“... the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants.”*

Take away #1

The word **Rule** denotes responsible stewardship and care; the proper exercise of authority; NOT abuse or exploitation. Stewardship is not ownership; it denotes accountability.

Don't litter! Keep your home and environment clean



Mountains and Hills make the environment beautiful



God created the earth in all its beauty

So, God the Lord of the land has made rules governing his property of which we are stewards and tenants, i.e. temporary residents. Some of the early rules were:

Deut. 22: 6 & 7 "If you come across a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the eggs, do not take the mother with the young, You may take the young but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life."

The Sabbath Rest (day and year) was instituted as a time of recreation and restoration of humans, animals and the land. Man was forbidden to work non-stop to exploit the hired hand or animal to the point of exhaustion and death. Exodus 23:12, *"Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your house-hold and the alien as well, may be refreshed."*

Leviticus 26: 2 "Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the Lord".

Even in times of war, nature is to be respected. War was to be waged with the environment in mind. Forests (nature) were to be respected and not destroyed. Deut. 20:19 & 20 says, *"When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an axe to them because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees of the forest people that you should besiege them? However, you may cut down trees you know are not fruit trees and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls."*

Don't litter! Keep your home and environment clean



*A serene environment like this is for the benefit of
God's creation and should not be destroyed*



*Wildlife bring a balance to our ecology.
Let us preserve them*

Long before humans understood the interconnectedness of humanity, animals, plants, and weather patterns, God the Creator urged humans to respect and protect all of nature, “so that it may go well with you and you may live a long life.” In recent times, climate change is sounding the alarm that unrestrained human activity will impact the quality of human life on planet earth.

God promises to reward us if we follow the rules that govern the use of his property in Leviticus 26:3-5 *“If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit. Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land”*.

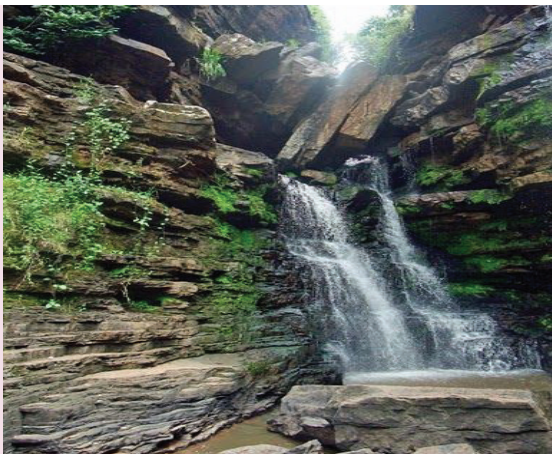
Take away #2

We are to use this earth and its resources with the next generation in mind. We are not the last generation and so we must not and dare not use up everything, trash what remains, leaving nothing for generations yet unborn.

In all these things, there is the issue of **sustainability**.

As a Believer, respect and protect nature. Plant trees to renew the earth.

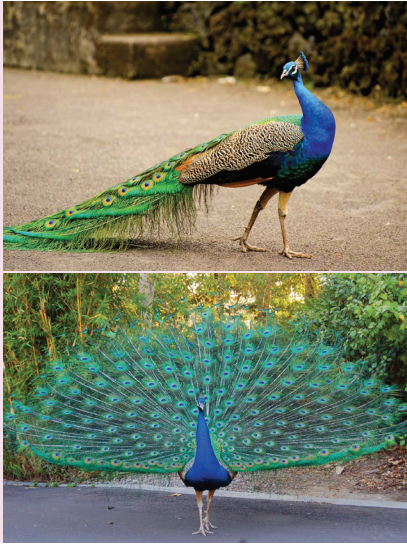
God handed over a beautiful gift to humanity to take care of – His creation. It was so beautiful, awesome and perfect that God himself was pleased and said, “It was good.” What do you do with a gift? You treasure it, you cherish it. You do not trash it.



In Psalm 104: 10, “He (God) makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.”



Psalm 106: 14, “He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate...Bringing forth food from the earth”



*He created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible
Colossians 1:16.*



*God created every winged bird of every kind
Genesis 1:21*



Elephants crossing a stream

The Bible and Sanitation

When God began to deal with the people of Ancient Israel, he kept reminding them that they were to be Holy because he their Lord is Holy.

In Leviticus 20:7-8 God says, *"Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord who makes you holy."* Holy means set apart. Not for common use.

Then in Deuteronomy 23:12 & 14, God instructed the Israelites... *"designate a place outside the camp where you can go and relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. For the Lord your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be Holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you."*

God moves in the midst of his people; the divine presence is the privilege of Christians. *God moves in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you (Deut 23:14a)*. Your number one enemy is diseases that come from filth and insanitary conditions.

Take away #3

As a Christian, your camp is your home, your camp is your neighbourhood; your camp is your country. There should be **No indecency in the camp**. Keep your home, your neighbourhood and your country clean.

Psalm 34:7 says “*The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.*” Because of the angelic presence around his children, God has every right to demand that your dwelling and surroundings be holy and clean. “Holy unto the Lord” should be one of our slogans as Christians.

Anything unsightly, unclean, ugly, repulsive, horrible, disgusting, filthy etc, are not supposed to be found in your camp. All these things are characteristics of refuse, garbage and waste that human beings create. They are not part of nature that God handed over to humans. They are a result of human activity. No Christian man or woman; girl or boy should live or sell in dirty and filthy surroundings. Do not live with filth.



Filth is a major hazard



Improper handling of refuse destroys the environment and harms human health

The Christian and Sanitation

Refuse, garbage or 'borla' can be divided into two main categories:

Degradable: Things that will rot, e.g. kitchen waste, garden waste, dried leaves, branches, and animal manure - natural things. The things that rot, disintegrate and become one with the earth (earth to earth).

Non-degradable: The creation God handed over to humans was organic. Everything could go back to the soil, mix with it, without harming any living thing. We humans have made the non-degradable things for our convenience - plastics, bottles and metals. We have failed to properly dispose of them and they are causing harm to the environment and other living things. For example, Whales that die on beaches are found to have swallowed tons of plastics, cans and bottles - things that cannot be digested.





Don't throw rubbish into the sea

We have learnt that God created the world, pronounced it to be good and entrusted its care to human beings. How are you taking care of God's earth? What are you doing and what can you do to make the world a cleaner and healthier place?

"Cleanliness is next to godliness" –John Wesley

Take away #4

A summary of the Ten Commandments: **Love God and love your neighbour.** When you throw rubbish into the gutter, the rain washes it into people's homes. How does that show love for your neighbour?

The facts are not on our side

Virtually every piece of plastic ever made still exists in some shape or form (except the small amount that has been burnt). 91% of plastic waste isn't recycled.

1. Statistics show that plastics kill animals, birds and fish

- At this rate of production, plastics will outweigh fish pound for pound by 2050.
- 100,000 sea creatures die from plastics they have swallowed (this represents only those found).
- Approximately 1 million sea birds also die from plastics.

2. Statistics show that plastics ruin the earth

- Ghana produces 12,710 tons of waste per day (Miezah, 2015).
- In Accra less than 50% of waste generated is collected (AMA 2015).
- More than 60% of households indiscriminately dump their waste (NESSAP, 2010-2015).
- The Kpone Landfill in Tema used for Greater Accra region has filled up in half of the time expected.

3. Statistics shows that Ghana is poor in sanitation

- Our national record in sanitation and cleanliness is very embarrassing.
- 70% of all outpatient diseases are caused by poor environmental sanitation (Ghana Health Service).
- Ghana's arable land is being degraded at an alarming rate.

So, what should you do? Separate your waste! Make compost pits!



A Compost Pit

How to Make a Compost Pit

- In your backyard, dig a pit three feet long, three feet wide and three feet deep.
- Put two containers in your kitchen. The one nearest the kitchen sink should be for kitchen waste that will rot e.g. plantain, cassava and yam peels, orange and other fruit peels, ie (degradable material), that is the compost bucket.
- In the second bucket, put plastics, glass bottles and take-away packs, things that will not rot (non-degradable material).

- On the appointed days, put out the second bucket containing the plastics and other things that will not rot, for refuse collectors to cart away.
- When the second bucket is full, spread dried grass at the bottom of the pit in the backyard and pour the kitchen waste into it. Cover the garbage with dried grass to keep away the flies. Whenever the compost bucket is full, pour the contents into the pit and cover with dried grass and leaves raked.
- You may add animal manure eg chicken and goat droppings to make it rot faster.
- Every four weeks, use a shovel or a pitchfork to turn the compost to aerate it.
- As the compost pit fills up, dig a second pit of the same dimension.
- When the first pit is full, transfer the contents into the second pit.
- Begin to fill the first pit again with more organic kitchen waste. (Note: when it is well done, the compost pit will give no bad smell).
- After about three months, shovel out the compost in the second pit. Spread it on a garden bed or in a flower pot to grow vegetables.
- Composting is the simplest way to get organic fertilizer (black soil) for home gardens.
- Grow vegetables in your backyard.



*Soil from compost is used to grow cocoyam.
The leaves give us "Kontomire"*



Tomatoes fruiting



Compost gardens do better in flower pots and old buckets. This spice, Sweet Basil (Akoko Besa) is ideal for chicken dishes

Separate plastic waste

- DON'T put kitchen waste into plastic bags. They will not rot.
- It will create a sanitation problem.
- Always separate things that will rot, from things that will not.

The Strategy – Use organic waste.

Organic Waste

- Build a compost pit in Your church.
- Encourage members to replicate this at home.

- Let there be consistent education/advocacy from the pulpit.
- Everybody must promote and practise good sanitation.

Plastic Waste

- Colour code or label bins to differentiate those meant for organic waste from those meant for plastic waste.
- Challenge members to do this at home and at church.

Medium to Long term Advocacy

- **Ban of plastic products:**
 - Food vendors should be educated to reduce the use of plastics to wrap food.
 - Government should consider banning plastic bags or reducing their use. It has been done in some African countries, it can be done here.
 - Government and industries must promote the manufacture and use of strong, re-usable paper bags.
 - Plastic waste cost too much. It is unsustainable
- **Strict enforcement of sanitation codes:**
 - Municipal and District Assemblies should hire more sanitation officers to promote and enforce sanitation by-laws.
 - Sanitation courts must work and punish those who litter and pollute their communities and the environment.

**We all have a duty to leave a clean and healthy environment for future generations.
Play your part.**

This publication was compiled by the Social Action Ministry of **Legon Interdenominational Church** for the Christian community and other interested groups in Ghana.



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