



A Lenten Journey

REMEMBRANCE

*Who are we,
and what are
we called to be?*

**Tuesday
March 3, 2009**

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

*So God created humankind in his image,
In the image of God he created them;
Male and female he created them.*

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

-Genesis 1:26-28

What does it mean to "have dominion" over God's creation? Often, by intention or carelessness, humans have lived as if all the world exists for our use alone. After all, God put us in charge, right? God gave humans dominion over all the living creatures of the world, and commanded us to "be fruitful and multiply." But read the story of creation in the first chapter of Genesis carefully, and you'll find that God also blessed the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, and every winged bird of every kind with the same words addressed to humans: "Be fruitful and multiply." (Genesis 1:22) God made a world of abundance for all living creatures, and gave us the task to tend and keep it (Genesis 2:15).

Even as more and more people of faith are awakening to the call to care for creation, we are confronting the reality that human activity is altering our planet significantly. Climate change is one of the most daunting challenges we face, one that will take all our talent and ingenuity to confront and overcome.

Consider these facts:

- 45 percent of the carbon released from human activities during the 1990s remains in the atmosphere. ([Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group I Report](#), pp. 514-515)
- Arctic ice melt has accelerated over the past several years, according to data collected and analyzed by [NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center](#). "Researchers believe that if the rate of decline continues, all arctic sea ice could be gone within the

century.” Disappearing ice floes threaten polar bears and other arctic wildlife, and rising sea levels threaten people all over the world.

- [8.5 million people in the Horn of Africa experienced extreme hunger](#) due to a drought and extensive flooding in 2006. The United Nations Development Program predicts that the number of people in this region affected by malnutrition could rise to 600 million by 2080 [due to changes in temperature and rainfall caused by global warming](#). Impacts such as these are falling hardest on those who are least able to adapt to them: [people living in extreme poverty around the globe](#).

Be Aware

Carbon emissions from fossil fuels are heating the earth. [Calculate your carbon footprint](#). Knowing your footprint can help you determine what changes in your personal habits will have the most impact.

Did you know? Just 40% of the average American’s carbon footprint is due to direct energy use? The other 60% is indirect; it comes from everything we buy and use—goods and services. Learn more at [The Story of Stuff](#), and find ways to consume and waste less, which will also shrink your carbon footprint!

Did you know? [Meat eaters contribute 3,000 pounds more CO2 emissions per year on average than vegetarians](#). Even if you’re not a vegetarian, try increasing the number of meatless meals you eat each week by one or two. And remember—poultry is less greenhouse gas intensive than beef. For ideas, recipes and information on how reducing your consumption of meat can also improve your health, try the [Meatless Mondays website](#).

Something to think about: Stopping global warming will require immediate and long term-action on the part of individuals, communities, corporations, and nations—it’s not a job for the easily discouraged, but one that requires all our hope, inspiration, and commitment as God’s faithful earthkeepers!

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