

Foundational Christian Theological Principles Supporting Environmental Ethics.

For elaboration and references see: A Pastoral Letter on The Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands to The Faithful of the diocese of St. Paul on The Occasion of the Jubilee Year in Honour of St. Paul by †Luc Bouchard Bishop of St. Paul in Alberta, Canada January 25th, 2009

http://www.dioceseofstpaul.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=11

- Biblical faith proclaims that creation is good.
 1. **All creatures, therefore, are gifts from God to be nurtured and safeguarded with which we enjoy a type of kinship.**
- The earth has intrinsic value.
 2. **To abuse creation, therefore, constitutes a lack of faith, a type of despair, or even a blasphemy.**
- Jesus' many references to flowers, birds, crops, seasons, weather, etc. reveal that nature has for him a revelatory significance.....{making] visible the power and beauty of God"
 3. **Therefore, when people destroy or damage creation they are limiting their ability to know and love God.**
- Creation has limits, and constitutes in itself an objective order that requires respect.
 4. **Therefore, when we allow creation to be damaged and degraded we risk losing our sense of God's natural order and even our sense of God's existence.**
- Pope John XXIII in his 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, was the first Pope to extend the concept of the common good to a global, international dimension.
 5. **Therefore even great financial gain does not justify serious harm to the environment.**
- When there is uncertainty as to whether a development project seriously endangers the environment, a pre-cautionary principle utilizing prudence and caution should guide the decision making process which itself must be administratively transparent.

6. Therefore, massive projects that clearly endanger the environment must be approached in a deliberate, open, and consultative manner.

- “The relationship of indigenous peoples [*and of farming, rural and urban communities*] to their land and resources deserves particular attention, since it is a fundamental expression of their identity.”

7. Therefore industrial projects that directly affect the traditional way of life for First Nations and Metis people [*and farming, rural and urban communities*] must receive their support and approval.

[Bracketed and italicized words added to Bishop Bouchard's statement of principles]