

RATTLESNAKES AND BEEHIVES: WHY LATTER-DAY SAINTS SHOULD SUPPORT ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Amid the stressful and anxious march of Zion's Camp¹ from Kirtland to Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith paused on May 26, 1834, to record an inspiring instruction of restraint and environmental sensitivity:

In pitching my tent we found three massasaugas or prairie rattlesnakes, which the brethren were about to kill, but I said, "Let them alone—don't hurt them! How will the serpent ever lose its venom, while the servants of God possess the

same disposition, and continue to make war upon it? Men must become harmless towards the brute creation, and when men lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race, the lion and the lamb can dwell together, and the suckling child can play with the serpents in safety." The brethren took the serpents carefully on sticks and carried them across the creek. I exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve ourselves from hunger.²

In the grand scheme of the Restoration, this prophetic remonstrance slipped quietly by as a rather inconsequential event (except for the rattlesnakes concerned). It was not about to shape Latter-day Saint theology or culture. However, the Prophet's invitation to the members of Zion's Camp to move to a higher plane of environmental consciousness illustrated his understanding of humanity's extensive capacity to remodel the natural environment in both positive and negative ways. Indeed it appears as though the Prophet

comprehended with revealed clarity that impact or change consequential to physical human activity is both natural and unavoidable but not unconditional. Critics of Joseph may have contended that changing the natural world for the temporary benefit of man—in this case, the killing of three snakes whose habitat lay unfor- givably in the path of Zion’s Camp—has scrip- tural authority, for Adam was given dominion over all living things and instructed to “dress” and “keep” the garden (see Genesis 2:15; Moses 3:15; Abraham 5:11). Still, the Prophet’s more complete and comprehensive explanation of this gospel principle stipulated that with authority comes stewardship and with dominion comes responsibility (see D&C 121:34–46).

Leaping forward to the present day, envi- ronmental scientists understand, as did Joseph Smith, that all living things metamorphose their surroundings to varying degrees. However, it is an anthropocentric and value-laden assessment that determines whether the change is good, bad, or inevitable. Limitless combinations of science, culture, politics, and religion influence humanity’s perception of the relative value of eliminating or preserving individual species or ecosystem func- tions. Simultaneously, a plethora of unforeseen variables influence the way nature adapts or evolves in response to human-induced impact and change. Stated simply, nature, even if left to itself without human intervention, is not a har- monious symphony where everything happens for the collective best. What is positive for one species or ecological community may be very negative for another and vice versa. Even non- anthropogenic and relatively random processes such as the weather and geological events can both create and destroy, thus perpetuating a diversity of ecosystems. In short, the natural environment—of which humanity is an integral part—is an oxymoronic dynamic equilibrium of impacts, extinctions, responses, and adaptation. It is not static, and there is no such thing as the ideal environment.

Notwithstanding the nonstatic characteris- tics of nature and the earth’s incredible capacity

to absorb change, the very real and present danger facing modern society is that humanity’s advanced skills of reason, communication, and tool making have accumulated a disproportional capacity for changing the natural world. Unfortunately, the scale of sustainability—whether or not changes to the natural world are an aid or impediment to good health, long-term resource viability, and the maintenance of biodiversity—appears to weigh towards a conclusion that we cannot maintain our current course. Markovic³ contends, “That we dominate and plunder nature is not just a fact, it has been considered a value, a state of affairs that ought to be maintained indefinitely.” History and the scriptural record are replete with examples of humans disregarding, either negli- gently or deliberately, natural resources such as rivers, forests,⁴ and wetlands. Since the onset of the industrial revolution, with its social and tech- nological advances, humans have accelerated change to a pace and geographic range that threatens not only the existence and distribution of other species but the quality of life for human- ity and future generations.

Acknowledging the inevitability of human- ity’s impact on the natural environment, be it good or bad, this paper does not attempt to pre- sent—as an argument for environmentalism— comprehensive data or analysis concerning the health of the natural environment. There is a plethora of literature in this regard. Nor does this paper attempt to oversimplify the problem of en- vironmental degradation or present a pessimistic doomsday scenario of propagandist proportions. Rather, this paper explores Latter-day Saint scrip- ture, culture, and theology for reasons why the Latter-day Saint community should, like Zion’s Camp, rise to a higher plane of environmental consciousness and seek ways to live in harmony with nature by preventing or mitigating negative impacts on the environment.

The Global Awakening

The worldwide awakening to the problems of environmental pollution, habitat loss, unsus- tainable resource extraction, and species loss did

not accelerate until the 1960s, well over a century after Joseph Smith's 1834 instruction to Zion's Camp. By then, the luxury of slow and considered responses had all but disappeared. At the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment⁵ in Stockholm, Sweden, the international community agreed on the *urgent* need to respond to the problem of environmental deterioration.

In 1992 the international community met for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, again in an attempt to stem the tide of environmental decay. Delegates sought to come to an understanding of development that would support socioeconomic growth and prevent the continued deterioration of the environment. They sought to lay a foundation for a global partnership between the developing and the more industrialized countries, based on mutual needs and common interests, to ensure a healthy future for the planet. Agreement was reached, among other things, on a suite of principles known as the Rio principles and a global action program known as Agenda 21. These outcomes enshrined protection of the environment parallel with social and economic development as fundamental to sustainable development.⁶

Though numerous variations on the definition of sustainable development now exist, the emphasis is on applying judgment in the use of both renewable and exhaustible natural resources so that biodiversity is preserved and future generations are not robbed of opportunity.⁷

In September 2002, over twenty-two thousand people, including heads of state and government from around the globe, converged on Johannesburg, South Africa, for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The summit was "to take stock of the achievements, challenges and new issues arising since the groundbreaking 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro."⁸ It was also "designed to turn the lofty goals, promises and commitments of Agenda 21 into concrete, tangible actions." The summit "reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and paved the way for the practical and sustained steps

needed to address many of the world's most pressing challenges."

Strangely, the incremental realization of society's collective responsibility to protect and conserve the natural environment, while pursuing economic and social objectives, has escaped mainstream attention of the Latter-day Saint community. As in the private business sector across much of the globe,⁹ the concept of *ecologically sustainable* development is still largely unknown among Latter-day Saints. Though there have been moments of epiphany and leadership,¹⁰ and though a perusal of the Latter-day Saint hymnal suggests a deep and abiding love of nature, the Saints' curriculum, instruction, and culture have yet to incorporate the concept and principles of ecologically sustainable development. Though understandable, this lack of engagement is ironic, for Latter-day Saints have at least three good reasons to be actively concerned with global, national, and local efforts to realize the objectives of ecologically sustainable development.

Judgment in the Use of Natural Resources

The first and arguably most important reason that Latter-day Saints should support and even advocate ecologically sustainable development stems from the fact that Latter-day Saints enjoy the prophetic insight of modern revelation. In 1831 the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation instructing the Saints, "*All things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion*" (D&C 59:18–20; emphasis added).

In this profound instruction, simultaneously relevant to individuals, families, communities, and nations, the potential for humanity to abuse the

resources of the earth was foreseen. Recognizing humanity's potential for rapacity, greed, self-indulgence, and a lack of self-control,¹¹ a simple and flexible proviso demanding wise judgment was placed on the right to subdue the earth (see Genesis 1:28) and extract its bounties.

Of course, wherever human judgment is required, opposing and impassioned social argument is inevitable. Judgment surrounding questions of environmental protection is no exception, and naturally many Latter-day Saints prefer to avoid what could be contentious issues. However, the fact that decisions are difficult or politically loaded and that definitive or detailed instruction has not proceeded from Church leadership does not excuse Latter-day Saints from the obligation to apply wise judgment in the use of "all things which come of the earth" (D&C 59:18). Disciples of Christ cannot choose the do-nothing option simply because there are competing and politically sensitive arguments. The duty to obey supersedes the detail.

That God expects man to use wisdom and judgment in temporal matters comes as no surprise to Latter-day Saints. It is a recurrent principle in modern scripture (see Mosiah 4:26–27), and though the subject may differ, the principle remains: wisdom and judgment are required of Latter-day Saints in the exercise of stewardship over earthly things. Joseph Smith's 1831 revelation concerning the earth's natural bounty *empowers* Latter-day Saints to judge for themselves whether current patterns of production and consumption, with their associated environmental degradation, are excessive. With this empowerment, they may apply the principles of wise judgment with a view to tempering their behavior to avoid excessiveness and extortion.

Fortunately a careful search of the scriptures produces a few inspired pointers to assist the Saints in their use of judgment. For example, the Saints are advised in section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants that the things of the earth are made not only to provide food, raiment, taste, smell, and to strengthen the body but also

to please the eye and gladden the heart. This important clarification shows that God entrusted the resources of the earth to humanity for emotional as well as physical well-being. In His infinite wisdom, God recognizes that the beauty of the earth is as important to the physical and spiritual development of man as the bounty of the earth. As though providing a hint for our efforts to return to Him, a loving Father in Heaven subtly calls to our attention the reality that just as each of us requires an adequate and healthy diet, we also require a sacred grove into which we can retreat and feel the proximity to God that nature can provide. As populations increase and the unrelenting pursuit of economic growth encroaches on every last resource, Latter-day Saints should be cognizant of the impact of development on the raw beauty of the earth and acknowledge that different people and communities find beauty in different ways. As a people once chased from their homes because of their different views, Latter-day Saints should acknowledge that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. What may be to one an unused plot ideal for another parking lot or eighteen holes of golf may be to another a virgin oasis of spiritual replenishment worthy of protection.

With the insight of modern revelation, Latter-day Saints should remind the world that, irrespective of the earth's final destiny, humanity was not given a blank checkbook from which to make environmental withdrawals. Instead, a sacred stewardship over *all* things that come of the earth is ours to magnify. "O be wise; what can I say more?" (Jacob 6:12).

The Principle of Self-Sufficiency

A second reason why Latter-day Saints should be concerned about the environment and achieving sustainable development is that concern for our fellowman and service in the community (see Matthew 25:40; Mosiah 2:17), paralleled by habits of thrift and self-sufficiency, is a central tenet of Latter-day Saint teaching and culture.

The Church has always taught the Christian value of service to others, of meeting the needs of the less privileged, and of being our brother's keeper. A fundamental objective of such service is not to entrap the recipient into a cycle of welfare but to aid the achievement of economic independence. Indeed, paralleling the principle of service, prophetic guidance has increasingly promoted economic independence and focused on individual (or family) self-sufficiency.¹² Importantly, Latter-day Saints view independence, self-sufficiency, and family support as a spiritual as well as a temporal obligation (see 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 42:42).

The question must therefore be asked of the faithful Latter-day Saint, "How can families be self-sufficient when acts of environmental degradation by others are robbing them of the primary resource on which they depend for sustenance?" For example, when a Church member in the mid-western United States pours chemical cleaning agents into the toilet bowl, does that person pause to think that nearby rivers will carry the chemicals into an overpolluted dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico where a Mexican member is trying to realize an income as a prawn fisherman? Or when a Church member has a choice of purchasing a small, fuel-efficient vehicle or a large, fuel-guzzling SUV, does that person think of the effect that purchase may have on the atmosphere and an African member's ability to grow maize and feed a growing family?

In asking reflective questions of this type, history should be our tutor. For example, during the three days of London's Great Smog of 1952, some four thousand people died as a result of a lethal combination of air laden with SO₂ from the widespread burning of coal and a temperature inversion over the city. In March 2000, several hundred people were killed and thousands displaced and impoverished by naturally occurring floods in Mozambique, the severity of which were exacerbated by poor land management, serious erosion of wetlands, and overgrazing of grasslands in the upper watersheds of the

Limpopo River in Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.¹³

In the twenty-first century, the Church's emphasis on self-sufficiency should consider the fact that human vulnerability to environmental change has important economic and public health dimensions. Indeed, human well-being is inextricably linked to ecosystems through the goods and services that ecosystems provide, so that any reduction or degradation in supply leads to a loss in human welfare. This includes both marketed goods and services, such as food or forest products, and nonmarketed ones, such as water flow. Degradation of natural resources such as land, fresh and marine waters, forests, and biodiversity threatens the livelihood of many people, especially the poor.

Latter-day Saints should acknowledge that as human impact on the environment increases, so people's options decrease, thus impeding their capacity to achieve self-sufficiency. A principle taught by Church leaders is that a situation that threatens one's ability to be self-sufficient also threatens one's confidence, self-esteem, and freedom. Environmental degradation *is* such a situation, and the Latter-day Saint community should seek ways to prevent or repair damage to the natural environment. Letting one's neighbor languish in abject poverty (including environmental poverty) or stealing or deliberately or even negligently causing harm to another person or group of people are all evils.

Latter-day Saints should also realize that the growing gap between the rapid rate of environmental degradation and the slow pace of social responses threatens to drain the environment of assets and options for the self-sufficiency of future generations. For example, consumption of fish has increased 240 percent since 1960, and more than 70 percent of the world's commercially important fish stocks are either fully fished, overexploited, depleted, or slowly recovering.¹⁴ Some fish stocks may never recover to the point where harvesting can recommence. In 1977, 57 million people failed to produce enough food to sustain

themselves as a result of land degradation and by 1984 this number had risen to 135 million.¹⁵ Do trends such as these suggest that future generations will realize self-sufficiency? With an increased awareness of trends such as those mentioned here, disciples of Christ should identify with the principles of sustainable development, viewing them as self-sufficiency up-scaled to national, global, and intergenerational levels.

Finally, with the Church's growing international influence, Latter-day Saints should realize that everyone is vulnerable to environmental impacts of some kind but that the ability of people and societies to adapt and change is extremely varied. Service initiatives should therefore be tailored to meet the needs of a global congregation. As the Church continues to expand into areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, it will increasingly face the challenges of abject poverty, including poverty perpetuated by environmental degradation. In addition to contributing to famine relief and local infrastructure programs, the Church should help its members and the broader community learn and implement the principles of ecologically sustainable development so that long-term self-reliance and independence can be achieved.

The Earth as a Temple

The third reason why Latter-day Saints should be concerned with protecting the natural environment stems from the dramatic accounts of the Creation presented in the books of Genesis, Moses, and Abraham and in latter-day temples.

In the scriptural account of the Creation provided by the prophet Moses, the writer is instructed, "And, behold, thou art my son; wherefore look, and *I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands*; but not all, for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease. Wherefore, *no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory*; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth" (Moses 1:4–5; emphasis added).

In this account an appreciation of God's work is coupled with an appreciation of God's glory. That is, God says to Moses, I am going to show you my handiwork so that you will appreciate my glory. Moses's record then elaborates further with a declaration that God's work and glory is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). This important coupling of "work" and "glory," followed by a description of the objectives of God's work and glory, aids the reader in understanding that Moses was shown *the workmanship of God's hands*, not simply to comprehend the engineering of a new planetary system with all its marvels of physics, geology, biology, and chemistry, but also for the purpose of understanding the immortality and eternal life of man—the plan of salvation.

With this understanding provided by modern-day revelation, students of the Creation may find within the repeated accounts temple-type symbols and clues to a greater understanding of God and His plan of salvation, for "all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of [Him], both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of [Him]" (Moses 6:63).

For example, the creation of the firmament to divide the waters on earth from the waters above on the second day in the scriptural account may symbolize the physical and spiritual separation during mortality of God's children from His heavenly presence, a step necessary for the provision of agency and the attainment of exaltation through the proper but independent use of agency (see Alma 12:24; 42:7).

Following this line of thinking, the creation of the heavenly bodies—the sun, moon, and stars—may symbolize judgment and the degrees of glory attainable by the children of God (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; D&C 76:70, 78, 81). In this

context, perhaps the creation of man walking in an immortal state in the presence of Him who is eternal on the sixth day is symbolic of exaltation—the ultimate achievement of God’s workmanship and the crowning moment of His glory—which after, and only after, can God finally rest.

Viewing the Creation in this way will help Latter-day Saint students realize that the physical earth that we walk on, that we depend on every day for sustenance, was in fact a divine teaching aid for Adam’s, Moses’s, and Abraham’s instruction on the glory of God and that it remains so for faithful Latter-day Saints today. Showing the workmanship of Christ’s hands as commanded by Elohim (see D&C 109:4), the earth is a place in which God manifests Himself (see D&C 109:5). Its majesty and raw beauty inspires “salutations . . . in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High” (D&C 109:9; see also D&C 88:120).

Hugh W. Nibley instructs that “the word for temple in Latin, *templum*, means the same thing as template. . . . That is what a templum is—a place where you take your bearing on things. More than that, it is a working model, a laboratory for demonstrating basic principles by use of figures and symbols, which convey to finite minds things beyond their immediate experience. There the man Adam first sought further light and knowledge.”¹⁶

Both the scriptural and temple accounts of the Creation present the earth, with its plants, animals, heavenly bodies, and so on, as an ever-present template from which to take our bearings on things, conveying to our finite minds things beyond our immediate experience. The Creation presents the natural world, created by Jehovah, as a symbolic embodiment of God’s work and glory, even the great plan of salvation.

When Latter-day Saint readers view the account of the Creation in this way and see the physical earth as a heaven-designed structure built to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, they realize that the earth deserves

complete reverence and respect. Like modern temples, the earth should be used for the benefit of man, but just as one would never deliberately defile a temple, Latter-day Saints should tread lightly on the earth, minimizing the long-term impact of humanity’s activities.

Latter-day Saint Involvement

Though there is ample authority within Latter-day Saint scripture, culture, and theology for an increased level of environmental consciousness, the question might reasonably be asked, “Why emphasize the role of a particular religion in environmental initiatives?” Or put another way, “How can Latter-day Saints, as a social group bound primarily by religious principles, add value to environmental dialogue and the many initiatives aimed at protecting the environment?”

The answer to questions such as these may be found by a closer examination of scripture surrounding the latter-day instruction to use the resources of the earth with judgment, as discussed above. In section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Saints are given a formula for bounteous, rewarding, and sustainable living, for “all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, . . . and it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man” (D&C 59:18–20). However this formula not only concerns the wise use of natural resources but demands a higher standard of personal morality and integrity. Included in the formula for “sustainable living” are instructions to love God and neighbors, and to shun theft, adultery, and murder. The Saints are to thank the Lord in all things, and offer a sacrifice unto the Lord in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Further, the Saints are to honor the Sabbath, going to the house of prayer to offer up sacraments and pay devotions unto the Most High. Finally, all these things are to be done with thanksgiving and cheerful hearts and countenances (see D&C 59:5–15).

The inspired formula articulated with uncanny simplicity in section 59 highlights that initiatives aimed at realizing ecologically sustainable development will be hampered as long as the world “confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments” (D&C 59:21). This principle is central to the practice of Latter-day Saint faith. Elder Russell M. Nelson has instructed: “We should gratefully acknowledge God as our Creator. Otherwise, we would be as guilty as goldfish swimming in a bowl, oblivious to the goodness of their provider.”¹⁷

Obedience is the supreme expression of gratitude and a key element of true environmentalism. In 1977 when drought and severe weather conditions were afflicting many Saints, President Spencer W. Kimball warned:

Perhaps the day has come when we should take stock of ourselves and see if we are worthy to ask or if we have been breaking the commandments, making ourselves unworthy of receiving the blessings. The Lord gave strict commandments: “Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:30). . . . The Lord makes definite promises. He says: “Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Lev. 26:4). God does what he promises, and many of us continue to defile the Sabbath day.¹⁸

To realize the objectives of ecologically sustainable development, Latter-day Saints should not only mobilize as an army of conscientious and environmentally responsible citizens but also couple this with the merits of gospel living. This is the only form of development that is truly sustainable. This is the Lord’s formula and this is where the Saints add value.

Conclusion

Though the natural environment is in a state of perpetual flux and there is in real terms no ideal environment, the past three to four decades have witnessed a global awakening to the fact that humanity, in its rush for the golden egg of economic prosperity, is threatening the

very existence of the goose on which it is dependent; namely, this incredibly unpredictable and majestically beautiful natural environment. In this scenario, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, through the privilege and insight of contemporary revelation, enjoys the wisdom desperately sought by UN and government officials across the globe as they have attempted to stem the tide of environmental degradation and articulate the principles of sustainable development.

In 1831 well before Stockholm, Rio, and Johannesburg, modern revelation foresaw the excessiveness and extortion that humanity would inflict upon the earth and instructed the use of judgment. Similarly, the principle of self-sufficiency has continued to be refined and clarified by Church leaders since the inauguration of Welfare Services in 1936 by President Heber J. Grant.

The focus on wise judgment and self-sufficiency has remained as the Church has expanded across the globe and into the developing countries of the world. While the Church responds to crises and natural disasters abroad and the tremendous cross-cultural challenges pertaining to the principle of self-sufficiency, it should also begin associating with and tackling the problems arising from environmental poverty. Indeed, a universal concern of Latter-day Saints should be to have an identity within larger social systems for a responsible, productive, and integrated life in a varied and changing world.

Finally, accounts of the Creation in modern scripture help Latter-day Saints appreciate the physical earth, in and of itself, as a heavenly designed teaching aid, full of symbolism intended to focus the student of the Creation on the glory of God. The earth, or the natural world, therefore, deserves the utmost reverence.

In 1992 Vigdis Finnbogadottir, then president of Iceland, reminded delegates to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro: “No matter what resolutions are made or not made at a forum such as this, no genuine and lasting environmental

improvement can take place without grass-roots involvement on a global scale.”¹⁹ In answering this call to action, Latter-day Saints should be at the forefront of global, national, and local efforts to apply the principles and realize the objectives of sustainable development. Furthermore, Latter-day Saints should be at pains to emphasize the Lord’s formula for “sustainable living”; namely, the wise and sustainable use of natural resources coupled with the higher standards of gospel living and gratitude to the Almighty.

It is befitting that a popular Church emblem is the beehive. Symbolizing industry, the beehive also represents a symbiotic relationship with nature. Deseret (the honeybee; see Ether 2:3) does not destroy the fragile and beautiful flowers from which it gathers its nectar, but instead it treads softly, aiding the flowers to fulfill the measure of their creation. This should be the attitude and approach taken by humanity and *especially* by those who proclaim to be disciples of Christ, even the Saints of the latter days.



Notes

1. Following the Saints’ expulsion and loss of property in Jackson County, Missouri, a small force assembled in 1834 to accompany the Missouri refugees back to Jackson County. Zion’s Camp, as the expedition was called, failed to obtain gubernatorial support and was disbanded.

2. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 71.

3. M. Markovic, “The Development Vision of Socialist Humanism,” in *Ethics of Environment and Development: Global Challenge, International Response*, ed. J. R. Engel and J. G. Engel (London: Belhaven Press), 127–36.

4. See, for example, the account in Helaman 3:4–6, where unsustainable timber harvesting turned the land desolate.

5. See United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972: Stockholm, Sweden), *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5–16 June 1972* (New York: United Nations, 1973).

6. The term “sustainable development” stems from the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, where development was defined as sustainable “if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (G. Brundtland, ed., *Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987], 8).

7. The following are principles of ecologically sustainable development: (a) decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social, and equitable considerations; (b) if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation; (c) the principle of inter-generational equity—that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity, and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations; (d) the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making; (e) improved valuation, pricing, and incentive measures should be promoted (See article 3A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1999).

8. United Nations, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (New York: United Nations, 2002).

9. See Charles O. Holliday, Stephen Schmidheiny, and Philip Watts, *Walking the Talk: The Business Case for Sustainable Development* (United Kingdom: Greenleaf, 2002).

10. For example, Elder Neal A. Maxwell stated: “This restored work not only involves the things of eternity but is also drenched in daily significance. True disciples, for instance, would be consistent environmentalists—caring both about maintaining the spiritual health of a marriage and preserving a rain forest; caring about preserving the nurturing capacity of a family as well as providing a healthy supply of air and water” (Neal A. Maxwell, *A Wonderful Flood of Light* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 103). See also Alexander B. Morrison, “Our Deteriorating Environment,” *Ensign*, August 1971, 64.

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11. See the footnotes to Matthew 23:25 in the Latter-day Saint edition of the New Testament.

12. In Latter-day Saint culture, “the term ‘self-sufficiency’ refers to a principle underlying the Latter-day Saint program of Welfare Services, and to an ideal of social experience. Self-sufficiency is the ability to maintain one’s self and relates to women and men being agents for themselves” (Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* [New York: Macmillan, 1992], s.v. “self-sufficiency [self-reliance]”).

13. United Nations Environment Programme, *Global Environmental Outlook 3* (London: Earthscan, 2002), hereafter cited as *GEO 3*.

14. *GEO 3*, 125.

15. *GEO 3*, 123.

16. Hugh W. Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 1–41.

17. Russell M. Nelson, “We Are Children of God,” *Ensign*, November 1998, 85.

18. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Lord Expects His Saints to Follow the Commandments,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 4.

19. Iceland President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, UNCED 1992.