

Roth: Environmentalism is a Christian ideal

I have often been struck by the divide between the environmental community and everyone else. It seems we so often try to separate everyone into distinguishable categories: left or right. Then we cusp these debates with religion, economics, and a distaste for that Obama guy, and we forget that indeed our faith first calls us to be stewards of this place we call home. It is not a conservative issue vs. a liberal issue, or a Republicans vs. Democrats. Nor is it a Christian vs. non-Christian issue.

Indeed, according to Psalms 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." In fact, the Bible depicts that God made a covenant with the earth and all of the species within it. Consider Genesis 9:12-13, where it read that "God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 'I now establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you – the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals, all those that come out of the ark with you – every living creature on earth.'"

So, in fact, we all are called to be good stewards of the earth – and I love it when I see so-called Cool Congregations, an effort for greater sustainability from participating congregations, like my own home church Mayflower Congregational UCC. This higher calling is working to make a difference, preserving our world and promoting environmental stewardship, church to church.

Consider the fact that the National Council of Churches, which is comprised of Protestant and Orthodox denominations, has been working to lobby for national and international action on climate change.

Consider the fact that an organization called Christians Caring for Creation is actually suing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services for failing to protect endangered species.

The Evangelical Environmental network is comprised of evangelical churches that believe that the body of Christ should be an example of what God's people can do in the world to solve some of the great challenges of our time.

Our politics might divide us. Our disagreements about tax policies and the Second Amendment might make your blood boil. But, as a nation, and indeed the world, we are working to do something that no one has ever done before. That is, live in a world, where by mid-century 9 billion people will be its inhabitants. If that doesn't sound crowded, or likely to stress our ecosystems, I would encourage you to move three more people into your home today and see how that goes. Change is coming. It's going to require action.

This means we will have to do more with the food, land, water and other limited resources that we have. We will need to be smarter about the energies we produce and consume and probably tackle issues of parity and disparity across the globe. We need to do more with what God gave us, all of us. We must do so while working to avoid the most dangerous consequences of climate change, population growth and the ongoing, tragic destruction of our natural environment.

In the words of my favorite Scripture, Micah 6:8, which asks all of us: "What does the Lord require of you?"

The answers: prayer and action.