



PROTECTION, RESPECT, STEWARDSHIP

A discussion on the roots of the environmental problem
in light of Pope Benedict XVI's teachings

Presented by Crossroads Cultural Center and the American Bible Society

Tuesday, May 18, 2010 at 7 p.m.

American Bible Society Auditorium, 1865 Broadway at 61st Street, NYC

Speakers:

Msgr. Lorenzo ALBACETE

Theologian, author, columnist

Dr. Pablo MARTINEZ DE ANGUIA D'HUART

Professor of Rural Development, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid

Crossroads: Welcome everyone on behalf of Crossroads Cultural Center. A special thanks to the American Bible Society who is organizing this event with us.

Certainly the relationship between mankind and the natural environment is one of the great questions of our age. It is also one of the most controversial, and not just because of the competing political and economic interests. Even if one stops at the level of basic knowledge of the environmental situation (without even attempting to discuss political solutions), one is often faced with conflicting claims. In turn, these claims are based on complex scientific models whose real value cannot be easily assessed by the layman, but which seem easily exposed to the dangers of ideological manipulation. One is left under the impression that, in fact, the environment is today a major area of ideological conflict, except that the conflicting ideologies are never spelled out clearly, but often hide behind the mantle of 'science.' If this is the case, it is not enough to look for better scientific information and more effective policies. The first necessity is for greater clarity about the fundamental terms of the environmental question. What is "nature?" Why do we care about it? What is the human being's place in the natural world? These questions are not idle philosophical problems, because the answers we give are bound to shape both our science and our politics towards the environment. So much so that in practice everybody has a position on these questions, but often tacitly and implicitly.

Tonight, besides the presence of our well-known Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete, we are fortunate to have with us a man who has thought deeply about these issues. Professor Pablo Martinez de Anguita's work shows a remarkable combination of great passion for the natural world and truly rigorous scholarship. For this reason it is a great opportunity for us to learn from him how to look more humanly and more intelligently at the environmental question. To introduce our speakers and moderate the discussion we have a very good friend of ours, Mr. Mario Paredes, Presidential Liaison to the American Bible Society in Roman Catholic Ministry. He is also a member of the Crossroads Cultural Center Advisory Board. Mario...

Paredes: Thank you, Rita. Good evening and welcome to the Bible Society. It is my privilege to introduce the speakers tonight. Each of the speakers will give their presentations, and after the two presentations are completed, we will have a period of questions and answers and an exchange among the speakers.

Just before I introduce the first distinguished speaker, the topic reminds me that Pope Paul VI in the year 1971 released an apostolic exhortation for the Eightieth Anniversary of the *Rerum Novarum*. And in that apostolic exhortation, we find one of the first magisterial documents that mentions the topic of the presentation that we are going to have tonight on the environmental issues. It is interesting that the teachings of the Church dates to those days of Pope Paul VI and from there on the popes of modern times, John Paul II and our current pope have been developing their own thoughts and positions regarding this question.

Tonight Dr. Pablo Martinez de Anguita, a native of Spain, is a professor of forestry and rural development at Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid, Spain, and a visiting professor of natural resources at Oxford University. He has also taught Resource Management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (2006-07) and at the United Nations University for Peace (San José, Costa Rica). He has worked at the United Nations Forum on Forestry (UNFF) as a Spanish Expert since 2002. He also serves as an adviser to the International Timber Trade Organization. He is the author of several books and scholarly articles, most of them in the field of environmental economics, and has worked on more than 40 forestry and environmental projects of which the creation of the Bi-national Peace Park “Padre Fabretto” between Honduras and Nicaragua is one notable contribution. He has also developed projects related to resource management and education in Sierra Leone (Africa). Along with forestry, Dr. Martínez’s interests include what he calls the “ontological” dimensions of the environment, which were sparked during his studies of “ecothology” in Harvard and through studying Msgr. Luigi Giussani, which led him back to living his Catholic faith and developing the concept of “environmental solidarity” as a way of understanding the relationship between the Mystery, nature and creation, and human beings.

Let us welcome Dr. Martinez de Anguita with a warm welcome.

Martinez: Thank you very much. I’m really happy to be here. During the next half an hour I’m going to try to explain basically what I’m doing here. So I will start with a picture of my country. [slide 2] This is Spain. And I will start by explaining my vocation. I think my vocation comes from when I was seven years old and I had to cross some mountains to go to my village. I was in the car with my father and every time I saw the beautiful mountains that I had to go through in order to go to my village, I used to ask my father, “Daddy, who lives there?” And he told me, “Foresters.” So I told him, “Well then, I’m going to be a forester.” So that’s how I became a forester. That’s what I do. And then I started moving around, working outside my country, and the first thing I realized is that the forests, the object of my love, were disappearing as you can see here. [slide 3] Especially since the beginning of this century, we have been suffering a huge process of de-forestation that basically has changed the face of many, many lands in tropical countries. This is just an example. [slide 4] This was Bolivia in 1975, and then, a few years later some settlers were coming into the forest, they were starting to clear it, and the rate of clearing started to increase during the 21st Century, and basically this is it today. So basically forests are disappearing.

And not only forests, but many of their inhabitants. [slide 5] This is a mammo. Long ago there was a king who was able to make a crown with eighty thousand birds and so on. Some years later, at the end of the 19th Century, there were no more mammos in Hawaii, and the same happened to some wallabies in Australia, and the same happened to thousands of species that are continually disappearing. And the experts, and I think I can agree with them, say that the rate of extinction is one thousand times greater than what it has been during the last thirty centuries. I love forests and they are disappearing, and that’s a big problem, but not just for the forests, not just for the animals, but also for millions of people who live or used to live in the forest, and now they are really threatened. [slide 6] For me it was really sad to find Native Indians in Paraguay asking for money in the airport because they don’t have their habitat. There is no more forest. We can later on speak about the political problems, the economic problems, but now I just want to put them there. But also this process of deforestation is a terrible loss for many millions of people. [slide 7] I have here a picture of a boy who is just looking at

himself in a kind of mirror and that's the situation of many of them. "Who am I? I am in the middle of nothing. I used to be someone, and now who am I? There is no forest. There is no habitat. I don't know how I can make a living now."

And at the same time we find that there are about two billion people in this world who live in extreme poverty. [slide 8] And at least one billion of these two billion people will live in what is called "the cyclical trap", which means that they won't be able to change their situation unless they are helped to do so. Sometimes they will not because of political situations, but many other times because of the degradation of the soil and some other environmental related problems, and many of them are related to forests. We are lucky. We live in a developed world and we use fuel to heat ourselves. But basically three billion people need wood to heat themselves, and many of them really require forests to have water and goods to be able to cook. So it's a real problem. If you want, later on we can talk about climate change and those things that everybody's speaking about now. I've been working in this field for many, many years, and I'm really concerned about forests. I'm worried about what has been happening in the last fifty years, and what's happening now. I'm also concerned about what could happen in the future. But after I've seen everything that I've seen, I'm concerned enough with the reality I have to face in many of these countries in many of the projects I work on.

[slide 10] There's something called "The Stairs of Development," and basically we are up here, we are the wealthy people. One billion people. We are wealthy; the other five billion people are not so much, but thank God, there are another one billion people who are at the beginnings of wealth, like Chinese people who are getting close to our economic system. Others are starting "The Age of Technology," like Indian people who are starting to move up the economic stairs, but basically as I explained there are 2 billion people who really live in extreme poverty, and one billion of them live in what is called "the cyclical trap of poverty."

So I was a forester. That was the situation, so what could I do? That is what my life is about. I try to do environmental projects that overcome poverty. That is what I do. [slide 11] That's Nicaragua. If you see the red areas, they are the poorest among the poorest areas. Basically the poor people live in the forests, not in the agricultural lands. Ten years ago I discovered some mountains, some natural parks, and during the last five or six years I've been trying to bring them all together under a single National Peace Park to promote tourism and to create national corridors that bring money to the people through conservation. That's the type of job I do.

[slide 12] That's my beloved area in Central America and the things I like from there—the people, the rivers, the landscape, the history of Fr. Fabretto who saved more than one thousand children who were orphans of war.

[slide 13] So that is my work, and then I said, "Well, I'm a forester, so my life is about solving a technical question." But when I started working on all this, I realized that the problem was not just a technical question. It was basically another type of question. There were drivers behind the facts that I was working with, and then I realized that environmental and poverty related problems were more a kind of economic question. I realized that you cannot do anything unless you have money, and that's how I came to the United States the first time in 1996 to do a Masters in Environmental Economics, and when I was studying for that degree, I realized that the problem was not so much in economic questions, but in the policies. So finally I did my studies in Environmental Policy, and then I said, "Well, I'm a Catholic, and I have some values, I should see reality from my ethical position," and I started thinking about how I could apply my values to this problem. So this was my perspective and that was what I was going to apply, but at the same time, when I was there, I started thinking: well, these are my values, but for the first time I was outside of a Catholic environment, and I started seeing many people saying many different things, and I started thinking, well, I could be even nothing...these are such different positions, so which values should I have? It has been great to be a Catholic, but now I have to grow. I have to discover on my own what is true.

[slide 14] So I started to study the American writers such as Emerson and also Thoreau who gave me really good input that started to shape my mind. [slide 15] John Muir had a consciousness of a global planet, this concept of infinite beauty, of a wonderful planet dancing in the stars. I learned environmental ethics from Aldo Leopold. [slide 16]

And from all that I was able to have my own values and then it happened that I had to go back to my country and I was invited to teach in a Catholic university. And the dean of my Catholic university said, “Pablo, I want you to write a book on environmental values and the Catholic faith.”

I said, “No way.”

He said, “Why?”

“Because if I do, you are going to fire me.”

“How come?”

“Because these people say really interesting things and they have thought about the environment, and if I want to be honest, what can I say about the Church?” This was 1997. “So I don’t want to write.”

He said, “You write. I’m not going to fire you. I just want you to be honest with yourself. Go to the end. Go to the deepest questions that you can find, and don’t worry about it.”

[slide 17] So at that point I realized that it was not just a question of my values, but there were other people with different values, so beyond environmental ethics I realized that I needed a bigger perspective of philosophy, a way to look at the world that could embrace not just my way of seeing, but other people’s, so I continued studying different philosophers such as Arne Naess, the founder of Deep Ecology [slide 18] who was the first who started speaking about two interesting things: the equal intrinsic value for all beings which at this moment is something that is a current extended intellectual position. There are two words here—intrinsic value and equal. Putting them together has been called *the biocentric position*, and we can discuss that later, but this is one of the main questions: Equal is one thing and intrinsic value is another thing—that’s my son and that’s my dog [slide 19] and they are not equal. As you can see, my dog is bigger! But basically my colleagues think that because they both have intrinsic value, both are equal. “There’s no gradation of intrinsic value” said Arne Naess. But that did not fit with the reality of my relationship among me, my son, and my dog. I tried to go through all the philosophers I could find. [slide 20] Peter Singer talked about *Animal Liberation*. We are all equal and what is important is the species you belong to and how that species is able to feel. I went through thousands of theories trying to understand what was important in order to create a moral theory. [slide 21] For example, James Lovelock and the Gaia hypothesis who said, who cares about animals? Who cares about people? The only relevant thing here is the planet. If the planet crashes, we’ll die..so people could be just a cancer, and what is important is to have a healthy planet because it’s the super-organism.

[slide 22] So when I started writing, I was really confused. I was not just confused because I was very critical of my Catholic tradition. I had decided to forget about it because it was not giving me an answer, or at least that’s what I thought. I was confused because I was not able to find an answer that could give me a solid philosophy to continue my research; I found some people like Paul Ehrlich and all the population bomb history whose philosophical values were related basically with our own survival, and then there were other authors who were basically supporting a kind of equalitarism where humans are not much more than dogs. I studied authors who based all their values on the creatures who could have wishes, that could have sentience. From an evolutionary perspective, for example, something is more valuable if it has more bio-diversity. In this sense dolphins are the brain of the ocean, and people are the brain of the surface of the earth—all these are really interesting

approaches and I'm really thankful for those people and I have a great appreciation for them. Lovelock made me understand how important the whole earth is. But there was a missing point. What did this have to do with my desires? So going deeper and deeper I started looking into religions because more and more the ecological movement is trying to deepen into the religious sense. I found authors like Petra Kelly, the founder of the Green Party who really believed in harmony and peace, and Eugene Hardgrove and his belief in beauty.

My search needed to find something big enough that I could be inside of it. I didn't want to just preserve nature and forget about myself. I looked again at the foundations of the ecological movement—which is something beautiful and I'm really happy and proud to be a member of some ecological associations. It's a movement that really started in the 19th Century with Thoreau and other authors who learned from the German romantic movement that there was a meaning beyond the beauty of nature. [slide 23] This is a beautiful picture of Caspar David Friedrich, the man who looks at the infinite. And I was in love with my ecological movements because I felt like that man looking at a beautiful world, beautiful mountains, trying to understand not just a way to preserve all these things, but to understand how they relate to me. So this was my starting point and probably the starting point of the ecological movement—this way of looking at life, like Thoreau. But now with most of my friends, this is what I see: We are looking at the horizon, but instead of asking for my relationship with my destiny, I'm just afraid of nature; it's going to hurt me. So something has changed.

[slide 24] What I loved in my ecological intellectual thinking had the risk of becoming a perverted felling of fear of nature, of life. At the same time I continued studying all the interesting scholarship approaches—how religions could deal with ecology and I met very interesting people who were able to open me to a way of looking at reality, and basically this is what they used to say: “No religious tradition or philosophical perspective has the ideal solution to the environmental crisis.” But we need moral imperatives and the value system that come from religion has to be used because religions can mobilize people to a higher ideal which should be conservation; and that's the movement which is taking place right now. The key point for many of my colleagues studying this relationship is not religion per se, but the use of emotionally powerful symbols to settle particular moral codes and management systems.

[slide 25] This is the cover of *The Ecologist*: “Can Religion Save the Environment?” And basically that's the main idea. “All traditional societies that have succeeded in managing resources well, over time, have done it in part through religious or ritual representation of resource management.” So it seems that religions are important, but if you come to this point and you are really confused, as I used to be, you can realize that religion is something else besides something that can be used. In fact, you need a real sense of the sacred. [slide 26] Something else has to exist if you want something to become sacred, otherwise it's using a religion, and when a religion is used, it stops being a religion. So, there has to be an intrinsic sense of the sacred. “Sacred things are sacred, not built because of their utility as sacred but as a result of a broader sense that preserves them precisely *from* utility.”

[slide 27] So at the end of all my personal research, I asked myself this question: What type of phenomenon is this religious experience? What is all this about? And I realized that I was not alone. Many people in many countries, of many different cultures have asked this question. I was fortunate enough to meet people from the movement I now belong to [Communion and Liberation] who were able to give me a satisfactory answer about how my sense of amazement and love for nature was the beginning of my religious sense.

[slide 28] And then I started to study what Christianity had in common with ecology. And the first thing that was really interesting was how both the Church and ecological thought begin with real facts; we are not inventing the world. Christianity is the announcement of Christ with us, and ecology is the announcement of the real dangers we are facing, so we start from facts. I like it. I think that Christianity and ecology are probably the

only two cultural movements that believe in realism. Reality is not what you say, it is what is happening. So I said, “Okay, I like this.”

Another thing is that we can share compassion and other values, but there were also other more interesting points in common. [slide 29] We all believe in intuition. We all think that there is a meaning beyond things; that things mean other things. Beauty is not empty according to any of these perspectives. Also, whether you are an ecologist or a Christian, we wish to live according to universal laws, not to try to redesign them. So I thought, I like this; I can build something with this. From both perspectives we can try and build a project for a human being, a project that goes beyond, that tries to find a meaning.

In some texts of John Paul II, and also in some of John Muir’s writings, we can find this intuition of something greater.

[slide 30] This is Rachel Carson, one of my heroes. She wrote a beautiful book called *The Sense of Wonder*. And she said, “There is a common thread that links these scenes and memories—the spectacle of life in all its varied manifestations as it has appeared, evolved, and sometimes died out. Underlying the beauty of the spectacle there is a meaning and significance. It is the elusiveness of that meaning that haunts us, that sends us again and again into the natural world where the key to the riddle is hidden.”¹

And I find the same thing in Pope Benedict²: “We can exclaim with wonder: ‘When I look at your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you have established; what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?’” We are relating to a mystery.

I am supposed to speak about Benedict XVI and what he’s bringing to the environmental debate, but I think that he’s bringing what all the popes and the Catholic Church have already said. [slide 31] My ecological Christian conversion took place when I found this in the catechism: “There is a *solidarity among all creatures* arising from the fact that all have the same Creator and are all ordered to his glory.” I had to study so many authors who were trying to say, “We have intrinsic value; animals are important.” And it’s as simple as this: We have the same origin; we have the same final destiny, every specie according to what it is. But we share a brotherhood, as St. Francis says. So I have my brother dog, but he’s not my son, still my dog has a value because he’s also ordered to this glory. It is so simple to put all your values with a sense of solidarity and a sense of creational direction. Everything makes sense.

In 1990, Pope John Paul II said this: “The conservation of the order that preceded man forms part of his obligation, it is part of the project that man has to build. In this sense, all dominion and use is subordinated to an anterior and common destiny.” For me, understanding the words, “common destiny,” and “solidarity,” was the key to everything.

[slide 32] Later on, Pope Benedict came with basically two messages, *Caritas in Veritate*, which is more general, and then this last World Day of Peace message, “If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation.” I felt that I was at home as I was reading his last letter. First of all, I understood that all of my intuition about ecological awareness was something good. I didn’t have to say, “I’m not an ecologist.” I’m happy and proud to be an ecologist. But I need help. [slide 34] “Ecological awareness, rather than being downplayed, needs to be helped to develop and mature, and find fitting expression in concrete programs and initiatives.” Everything that

¹ Rachel Carson. *The edge of the sea*.

² Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace “If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation” (1 January 2010)

was in my heart, creating a National Peace Park, fighting to preserve nature, fighting for people was something that I should do, not just as an ecologist, but as a Catholic.

The second thing, I'm proud to do it as a Catholic, as a Christian, because we have a responsibility to do it. [slide 34] This is St. Malo in Rocky Mountain, Colorado. With some friends we have started to create a think tank and I can really feel that I'm in the right place, [slide 35] where everything fits my desires and the answer that I've found in Pope Benedict, but at the same time, it's not just about conservation because I needed to integrate my values with my family, with my students, with Fanny, who's there, with my goat. They gave me the goat when I was working in Africa. So this conservation cannot be something that is outside of my deepest feelings and my personal life. And I need to live it together in a way that friendship becomes not just the tool, but the end of what I do. I love conservation. I love what I do as much as I love what happens when I am doing it. I am happy working in conservation and every day I have more and more friends, and I care for them. Life for me is a kind of adventure. What's going to happen next? I care about my family and the people I share existence with. What else can I ask?

[slide 36] And I think this is due to the fact, as Benedict says, that the Church can give something to this environmental debate that seems to be outside it at this moment. The Church is an expert in humanity, and my experience is that without my humanity, I cannot do what I'm doing, I cannot be happy working in conservation, I cannot separate myself into, on the one hand, the conservation guy, and on the other hand, the good family man. It has to be one and the same. I need to go to the deepest roots of my humanity and understand who I am and what my destiny is.

[slide 37] Again the concept of solidarity appeared as the fundamental question. I can have solidarity with nature; I can have solidarity with the stars, the moon, the animals, with my family, with everybody; I can feel that I am part of the same plan, the same destiny, and from the same love.

When I was comparing what I've learned during this process, I realized that when I spoke about my values as a Catholic, I was wrong. Being Catholic, or being Christian doesn't mean that I have my values; it means that I want to look at reality according to all possible ways of looking at it. I'm not someone who defends his values and this has to be like this because these are my values. I want to see the world through your eyes because I need you in order to understand the world, and I need the indigenous people in order to understand their visions; so for me it was liberating to understand the meaning of solidarity. Solidarity was not just having pity on others, having a feeling. For me, it was the real need to share my destiny with others in order to be complete. I cannot be complete as an ecologist and as a person if I don't have the view and the love of others for me.

[slide 38] This is what I've been writing about and finally I discovered my personal conclusion when reading the classics of the ecological movement. I read this about the religious sense, "The Universe as a being, this whole is with the totality of all its parts so beautiful... that it is inevitable to love it and to think it is divine... I believe that only this whole is worthy of the deepest kind of love, and that there is peace, freedom and I would say a form of salvation in turning our affection towards this only God and not towards one's interior or to humanity or to human abstractions or fantasies." (Jeffers quoted by Shwarz, 1987) That was fine and I continued reading and I found this: "Our privilege and happiness are based in loving God for his beauty, without expecting any love on his part." That broke my heart. I'm fascinated by the beauty of God, but I cannot expect any love on his part? I need a response. I need someone waiting for me on the other side, and when I want to run and embrace someone, I need a father that says, "Yes! Come to me. I'm here. That's fine. Everything that you desire is real, is true." So for a Christian, for a Catholic it's so wonderful to have the consciousness of this correspondence, to know that it's not our privilege and happiness to love God without expecting any love on his part, but knowing that the Mystery itself came into the life of me as a man expressing

this ideal of existence, assuring me that what I desire is going to be fulfilled, that I'm not running on empty. There is a father at the end with open arms waiting for me.

So who am I? And I discovered this in John Paul II. [slide 39] If I am a thought of God, a beat of God's heart, this is to say that we have an infinite value, that God counts on my unique individuality, and all my desires become a real vocation, a total vocation. Who can say that in the environmental world? Who can say that my vocation is fully correspondent? So what is solidarity? It's simply the recognition of this common destiny, a common destiny that fulfills and corresponds to my human desires.

[slide 40] For many years I've been working, studying. I teach technical issues, economic issues, political values, but at the end for me, even though all those things are really important and that's my work, - I prepare political programs for my country and others-, conservation is not just a game of technical, economic political or even ethical formulas. It can be better defined as belonging to the Presence of Mercy that overwhelms the human heart, a Presence that can assure us that none of the hopes or desires for beauty—including the need to resolve the environmental crisis—of our human heart will be lost.

This is the logical conclusion. [slide 41] What can you do? Care. You have to be as careful "as a child walking on tiptoes, almost on the tip of his toenails, when entering the alcove where his mother sleeps." That's the way you can respond with a vital attitude.

[slide 42] So, coming back to the main question, what am I doing here? I still go through the mountains. Unfortunately my father passed away a few years ago, but my question is still alive because our vocation begins but never ends. I'm still asking myself every time I go through my beautiful mountains to my village, "Who lives there?"

And every time I ask this I grow in the certainty that my father is telling me, "It's me."

[slide 43] So come and see!

That's all that I have to say.

Paredes: Thank you, Dr. Martinez. The next speaker is a dear friend, well-known to all of us, Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete. Msgr. Albacete, author, theologian, and *New York Times Magazine* contributor, is a physicist by training.

He holds a degree in Space Science and Applied Physics as well as a Master's Degree in Sacred Theology from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He holds a doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome.

He is co-founder and has been a professor at the John Paul II Institute in Washington, DC. He has taught at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY, and from 1996 to 1997 served as President of Catholic University of Puerto Rico in Ponce.

He has been advisor on Hispanic Affairs to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is a columnist for the Italian weekly *Tempi*, has written for *The New Yorker*, and has appeared or has been interviewed on CNN, *The Charlie Rose Show*, PBS, EWTN, *Slate*, *The New Republic*, and *Godspy*, where he is the theological advisor.

Besides columns and articles on a number of American and international publications, Albacete is the author of *God at the Ritz: Attraction to Infinity* (Crossroad Publishing Company), a book in which as priest-physicist he talks about science, sex, politics, and religion.

He is the responsible of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in the United States and Canada and Chairman of the Crossroads Cultural Center Board of Advisors.

Let us welcome our dear friend, Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete.

Albacete: Most of it is not true. I am glad you didn't mention the one thing I asked you to mention: I am the Ecological Spirituality Advisor for British Petroleum, and other successful endeavors like that.

This is what I will do. First of all, I've been familiar with Prof. Pablo's projects, works, interests, passions for quite a while. We go way back, but things happen and one loses contact, so I was very happy to see that he has surfaced again, and this time I don't want to let him go because this time I find myself, I didn't start it, involved in this question of the environment and its implications for the Catholic faith as a result of a very beautiful friendship that has been discovered together with Dr. Robert Pollack at Columbia University over here, and many times his Center for Science and Religion co-sponsors a lot of our events. Dr. Pollack is very much agitated, moved by his concern for the questions of environmental policy because he is convinced that of itself there is nothing in nature that assures the survival of the human species. Nature doesn't care one way or another. Species come and go, and those that survive, survive and flourish, and so forth. And therefore, since nature doesn't provide to him its care, and yet he has it, he has the question: Where does it come from? Is there a way in which nature does provide for the impulse to care about these things? I mean, when you listen to somebody like Dr. Pablo here, this intense caring of his entire life has been for this, you wonder, where is it coming from? Is it a psychological thing? Learned behavior? Socially learned cultural behavior? Is it a biological or biochemical origin of caring? So these are the kinds of questions Dr. Pollack began to ask himself. He was not a believer. Then, as a result of other personal awareness intensities, loss of his family during the Holocaust, again he developed the need or the urgency to find what one would call a basis for a global ethics so that these things don't happen. But what can that basis be? It has to be a reality that is acknowledged, as the Professor has stated, having in common with all human beings because otherwise it will definitely be sustained only by conflict which in turn becomes destructive, or by mutual recognition of ignoring important questions. The diminishment of the scope of our interest is inhuman and will also bring about harm. So Dr. Pollack has been struggling with these questions and it was in that kind of an interior atmosphere that we met, and I became involved in discussing these things with him. We are working on a book; we don't even know what it is about or when it will end. Again, we are not representing a Jewish-Catholic dialogue. We don't represent anyone except ourselves and how we allow these questions to impact on us.

So in that context I came upon this discussion about the possibility of finding a common basis for global ethics—a discussion between Jürgen Habermas, the father of European secularism, one of the most challenging of secular atheist philosophers, and Joseph Ratzinger about a month before Ratzinger became pope. You can find this fascinating encounter published in English in this book, *The Dialectics of Secularization* by Joseph Ratzinger and Jürgen Habermas. It's a tiny little book and it's fascinating because it deals with many things, but above all it isn't because Habermas came to the same kind of conclusion, the same kind of concern as Dr. Pollack. By the way, in that conversation Habermas replied to Ratzinger and further conversations have been picked up by other people who are presenting the Ratzinger side. He's too busy; he has another job! And the book on that has just come out. It's called *An Awareness of What is Missing*. It's really good stuff, I'm telling you. Anyway, that's just a little plug in case the publisher wants to send me some money.

So reading about that, Dr. Pollack and myself decided that we would try to get some money to have an international meeting sponsored by the United Nations, specifically on Hans Küng's project. He has expressed a willingness to go along with it, in which the discussions and the questions raised by Pope Benedict, or then Cardinal Ratzinger, the criticism that he makes, the conclusion that he arrives at, that his logic is doomed to failure unless...and what is that *unless*? Is there still a chance of hoping to find a binding basis for a global

ethics? This really would be the topic of the possible convention which somebody at the U.N. is interested in doing. But putting it together, I'll be sure to make sure you [Dr. Martinez] are contacted for the presentation. In the meantime I was just told last week by Dr. Pollack and someone else that they are going to devote most of their teaching at Columbia these coming two semesters on this subject.

So I suddenly find myself involved in it, and I said, "Well, let me look and see exactly and try to understand the Pope's side, Cardinal Ratzinger's side, try to understand what he means, what conclusions has he arrived at, how does he really see the question of creation and faith, particularly Christian faith. And tonight I want to make a few points about that. That's all. This is not a major prepared essay or anything like that. These are just little tidbits for your enjoyment and pleasure.

First of all, what we have to have clear when we talk about the environment, creation, ethics, is the meaning of those words. The Catholic positions, as Habermas reminded us, are in the catechism, are in the Creed, "I believe in God...Creator of Heaven and earth." God is Creator. What does it mean? What does the Christian faith mean? To what does it refer when it says that God is Creator? Ask yourself the question, those of you who adhere to the Creed. What do you mean when you say that God is Creator of Heaven and earth, or God is Creator of reality? I wonder how many of us would answer the way he answers. He says the first point that it means is that the Christian faith as faith concerns all of reality. It concerns the rationality of reality, reason. The Christian faith is tied to reason. Proofs of the existence of God popular in the past, he said, may have to be discarded today because the cosmology they assume is no longer scientifically viable. So we may not be able to use those proofs, but we cannot eliminate the very idea of proof. The very intention behind these so-called proofs, he says, cannot be ignored because their intention is to insist on the link between faith and reason, the reason which is the only thing really shared by all human beings regardless of any other difference. So here you see this is what creation means—how it is a reality, a word that points precisely to what we are looking for, namely a base that is universal that applies to all human beings upon which to build necessary structures that will guide us according to reality, with a respect for reality. If we detach faith from reason, dialogue and search for a global ethics, for whatever interests us, especially the care of creation, and the environment, the survival, that dialogue is ultimately impossible if faith is detached from reason. Faith may not be separated from truth. The first consequence that faith has been separated from truth is that it becomes folklore. It loses any obligatory character. A product to sell, an argument to persuade others, "to sever faith from reason is to eliminate joy from faith." That struck me amazingly. Our view of reason is so limited, affected by developments in our culture, and the atmosphere today, that one doesn't pay attention to that reality of joy. "Joy in the faith," says the Holy Father, "is decisively dependent on the knowledge that it is not just anything, but that it is a precious pearl of truth."

I notice again in Dr. Pablo's presentation, I don't remember exactly where, but I noticed it. It makes you a witness of the idea of a joy in doing this, of a joy with all the sacrifices and efforts involved; it is something that is joyful because to grow in the truth is joyful, and the loss of that joy is the first casualty, the Pope would say, in separating faith from reason. We can see this in so many of the cultural debates we have today, including this one on the environment. They're ideological struggles, and both sides lack joy, and you can see in that the measure of their inauthenticity. It is not a love for truth that animates it, but a fear of it, and therefore defensive and offensive desire do prevail.

An interesting thing about Cardinal Ratzinger's (Pope Benedict's) approach to this subject is his fascination by developments in modern physics. And he frequently refers to the work of Werner Heisenberg, one of the founders of quantum physics, the famous author of *The Uncertainty Principle*. Heisenberg had a meeting prior to the Second World War with what looks like a catalog of the biggest names in contemporary physics—anybody who was anybody was there. "One evening during the Solvay Conference, some of the younger members stayed behind in the lounge of the hotel. This group included Wolfgang Pauli and myself, and was

soon afterward joined by Paul Dirac.” Eventually Max Planck, I mean these are big names! And they are sitting around talking about what? Precisely about the relation between science, but particular for them physics, their cosmology and anything that could serve as a basis for ethics. Many held that there was no problem, that science may reach whatever conclusions it wants to reach, the person of faith is not affected by that because faith doesn't deal with a reality, how things behave materially, where they come from and where they're going—it doesn't deal with that. It deals with values, with something subjective. This sharp division between the objective and the subjective is the dominant view at that time, and this is what is bothering these scientists. They somehow cannot accept such an easy solution. They cannot find a way to rescue the idea of something in common with everyone regardless of scientific development and the apparent lack of determination in the behavior of matter itself at such level of elementary particles. They develop this concept of a “central order”. This is all by the way what Ratzinger is saying. You will find it in the book *The God of Jesus Christ*. I love this Heisenberg and all that crowd. I consider it one of the greatest thrills of my life to have met Pau Dirac, to have shaken hands with someone who has a function assigned to him. Oh that is the biggest honor possible. I have tried many times to introduce *The Albacete Function*, but it was never accepted.

Anyway, this is not necessarily my way of entering into the subject. Again, I am quoting the Holy Father. I will try and simplify what he's saying: The concept of “central order”, to refer to what was once meant by the word *God* ...I would say that the concept of “central order” fulfills the role of what the natural law fulfilled in classical thought, also Catholic thought which in the Bible may be best read by the expression of *logos*—rationality, the central rationality which makes possible science itself otherwise what's the use of tomorrow? There are things that I take for granted, that science takes for granted, a rationality. That which it takes for granted is what the Bible calls the *logos* which here is being rendered by Heisenberg as “central order”.

The question is, can anything more be said about it beyond its existence? We're talking about that which holds the meaningfulness of everything, which holds the meaningfulness of all of reality. These guys are saying that it has to exist because otherwise our scientific work itself would be impossible. But the results of our work seem to introduce a lack of determination; that is to say, well, as you know, the Uncertainty Principle, for example. As you penetrate more and more into the very stuff matter is made of, the more it disappears on you. Then you have the problems of the reaction between the observer and the experimenter, the experimenter and the experiment, how the point of looking at what you're looking at will affect the results. All of that seems to disintegrate. Any ideal center or order has to be.

Can we say anything more other than it has to be? “Can you, in particular,” says Heisenberg as quoted by the Pope, “or can one encounter that order with the same immediacy, make contact with it with the same immediacy as it is possible to contact the soul of another man?” The soul here is not the bottom word. The bottom word is the heart, the identity. For example, in Mario here, I mean God knows what Mario has inside, what comes together to form what we call “Mario Paredes.” We would faint if we knew, especially since he has made it a lifetime project to become more and more mysterious. In any case, nonetheless, being a product of culture, personal background, ideas, all of that comes together to form Mario. But if I want to talk with him as a friend, I don't go through all that entire process to find out the core that I call “Mario.” I can reach him directly. I can say, “Hey, you!” See that immediacy. What Heisenberg's answer is is that in the universe, you have a “central order”. We may not know all the components that come together to create the meaning of reality, but are able to somehow or other reach it immediately, recognize it immediately without going through the process of trying to find it or define it, because that's impossible. We're going to be running into difficulties of, well you don't know what matter, way...you don't know with any certainty this appears, all matter becomes dependent on other factors, etc...So he asks the question: Is it possible to reach it with immediacy? And then he gives the answer: If you put the question in these terms, I would answer, “Yes, it is possible.”

Next, if that is the case, the next proposal is whether this reality can generate what he calls a “compass,” a direction, an ethical direction that indicates life in accordance with that truth, because you see, either there is such a “central order,” the morality we’re looking for—in fact the only moral principle that really matters—morality, ethics itself is fidelity to it—any kind of infidelity to the “central order” would introduce an element of disorder and therefore be destructive. So if there is a “central order,” if we can grasp it with that immediacy, then there is also this “compass” that indicates the behavior which is nothing but the expression of the truth of the “central order.”

“Christian faith,” says Heisenberg, “is the word of encouragement that the ‘central order’ addresses to us...The magnetic power that has guided this ‘compass’ is completely extinguishable.” When faith is separated from reason, the *logos* inherent in reality is lost. When that happens, the split takes place, “central order” becomes disorder and the “compass” loses its power. When that happens, Heisenberg says, “I fear terrible things can happen, far surpassing the concentration camps and the atomic bombs.” And the Pope adds, one of those things is, in fact, environmental disaster.

As you see, this is how this concern about environmental disaster is not just a section of the Church’s teaching on justice and peace and the social order, but it goes to the very heart of the Christian faith. Something is there in raising the issue of environmental solidarity or environmental ethics. For us, for the Christian, the very heart of faith you’ve got to recognize with that immediacy—even if you do not know how to get to it pass by pass, you will experience a kind of immediate recognition, a sense that a lot is at stake. And what is at stake is the very nature of faith itself. I think it’s very important to insist today that the environmental question is not optional for the Church or for the Catholic people, or any Christian really, because it is a question about the Christian faith itself. That, I think, is important to underline. So when you read certainly the present Pope as well as John Paul II, when you read the Church’s declarations on these matters, they’re not just topics—even less since it’s become popular today to be concerned, and just wanting to catch on, he’s now adding these little environmental tidbits. No, no, no! The Church has felt that the raising of this issue is a dramatic challenge to the reality of how we understand faith itself. That is why he says,

The Christian faith will not abandon its link to reason, as reason itself raises questions about the totality of reality... True, Christian faith as the de-divinization of the world made modernity possible and promoted technology as part of the Biblical instructions, “Subdue the earth.” In so doing it is accused of generating an attitude of unchecked domination or exploitation of the earth, but in fact, the Christian faith has always linked the question of dominion over the world to the question of creation by God and of the meaning of creation. Faith makes technical research and questioning possible because it explains the rational character of the world and the orientation of the world to man, but it is profoundly opposed to restricting thought relatively to questions of function and usefulness... Faith protects the contemplative [think of that beautiful example that Pablo gave us] and listening reason from attack by the merely instrumental reason... Faith in God’s creation is not concerned with mere theory or with the question about a very distant past in which the world came into being. This faith is concerned about the present, about the correct attitude vis-à-vis reality. For Christian faith in creation, it is decisively important that the Creator and the Redeemer of the world, the God of its origin and the God of its end, [the God of reason, if you wish, and the God of faith] be one and the same.

The temptation to sever this link goes as far back as the beginning of the Church. And here the Pope gives a great summary of the various influences of Gnosticism and the separation between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the relegation of the Old Testament to a stage that has to be overcome. Therefore, the work of

the God of the Old Testament, namely the Creator of the Book of Genesis has to be redone, this time by man. And that is early Christianity all the way as to how this same drama is lived today.

The final point. In the document, if you want to go to the piece *Protect Creation*, the Holy Father speaks of a covenant between human beings and the environment, the covenant that should mirror the creative love of God from which we came and towards which we are journeying. Animating, sustaining the Church's development of its awareness of the environmental challenge and its relation to its faith, the Church comes to realize that what is at stake is the denial or the affirmation of a reality, of an existence which is inseparable, of being, existence as an expression of charity, love. This is possible because of our conviction that creation is the expression of the Father's love for Christ in which we are invited to share. So at the center of the message, what is at stake in the preservation of environmental solidarity, what is at stake in getting it right is the reality of Jesus Christ.