THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF OUR ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Ecology continues to be an important political issue in our nation and in the world as a whole. From the control of pollution by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the impounding of fishing trawlers by Greenpeace, a wide range of solutions to our ecological crisis are being proposed. As Christians, we need to develop a Biblical view on how these issues should be resolved. In 1970 Francis Schaeffer, a Christian philosopher, wrote the book “Pollution and the Death of Man” to do just that. To better understand the context of Schaeffer’s book I want you to first read an article written by Lynn White Jr. The next project will give Schaeffer’s response.

(You can find this paper in the E-Reserves on the Library webpage. From the University library page, click on “Reserves.” Next click on “Access Electronic Reserve Materials.” In the textfield type “GSCI-1020” and then click the name of our class. You will be asked for a password. The password is “GSCI1020.” Once the password is accepted you fill find three links. Select the one titled “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis.” After reading this article by Lynn White Jr., answer the questions below.)

1. From White’s article list a few examples where man has changed his environment.

2. According to White what is the greatest event in human history since the invention of agriculture?

3. According to White what was the greatest psychic revolution in the history of our culture and what are the implications of that revolution?

4. What is animism and how does Christianity’s defeat of it result in an ecological crisis?

5. White’s concluding remark is “Hence we shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man.” Do you feel White is correct in his conclusion? Why?