

## **The Nine Commandments: Living less like gods and more like God might intend...**

*A New Community Project guide to tending God's creation*

**Less** Recycling and reusing is fine, but most of the waste (95%) is generated before we get our hands on a product in the mining or harvesting process, in manufacturing or preparation, and then in packaging, shipping and merchandising. For this reason, *US'ers are each responsible for about 400 pounds of material consumption per day*—and we aren't even aware of it! Another example: for every pound of shrimp harvested by net from the sea floor, 10 pounds of other sea creatures die as "by-catch." US'ers throw away 100 million cell phones—and their toxic components—every year.

**Local I** Arrange your life to be close to school, work, errands—or work from home. Walk, bike or take public transit when possible. Personal car use is the #1 US environmental impact. *And every mile we drive puts a pound of CO2 into the atmosphere (for a 20 mpg vehicle).*

**Local II** Try to buy products from local producers. The average food item travels 1500 miles to our table—not by magic carpet, but by fossil-fueled transport. Every year, 60,000 container ships dock at US ports bringing merchandise from afar. *One of those ships traveling one mile creates as much pollution as a car driving around the world.*

**Lower I** Eat lower on the food chain. Protein and calories from grain consumed directly rather than as meat are much more energy efficient and less polluting. For instance, the same protein from grain vs. beef creates 3.4 times less global warming gasses, 22 times less water pollution, and requires 20 times less land. (A pound of grain-fed beef can require 8-15 pounds of grain and 8000 pounds of water to produce—or 200 square feet of rainforest, if produced in the tropics.) There are currently about 105 million beef cows and 10 million dairy cows in the US. *If we in the US would reduce meat consumption by half, it would free up water equal to the flow of 14 Colorado Rivers*

**Lower II** Eat lower on the chemical chain—buy organic products as much as possible. Chemical agriculture requires large amounts of fossil fuels (*one quart of oil per bushel of corn*), pollute aquifers, and create dead-zones the size of small states in our bays.

**Lift** Work for justice in the world, as global poverty is a primary cause of environmental destruction. Lifting our neighbors out of poverty will help them survive without over-harvesting the fields, forests and wildlife near them. *“Don't expect to be able to purchase and preserve rainforest when the people living all around it are desperately poor.” – Borbor, manager of Ecuador's Cuyabeno National Park*

**Lighten** Live more lightly around the house. Heating water (showers and clothes washing), raising and lowering the thermostat, utilizing solar gain and tree wind breaks, the kind of light bulbs you use (*compact florescent bulbs can save 300 pounds of CO2 per bulb—and \$\$ as well!*) are all important factors in your household eco-impact.

**Legislate** Let your government reps know you favor bike lanes, higher gas prices (to include the costs of air pollution and global warming), and protection of our last remaining wild places.

**Love** Sounds mushy, but do we love God's creation? God seemed to—the creation stories brim with God's delight. Do we love our neighbors? God does. Then how can we stand by as 150,000 die each year from global warming (World Health Organization)? Do we love our children and their children? God blesses us with descendents—what kind of planet are we leaving them?

*Sources: State of the World 2004 (World Watch Institute); Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices (Union of Concerned Scientists); Planet Ark; Environmental Science (G. Tyler Miller)*

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*“...turning the world upside down...” – Acts 17:6*