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Article

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King, Priest, Prophet, and Climate Science: Ecological Implications of the Threefold Office

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What would Jesus do in response to contemporary global climate change? This question, though in itself necessarily speculative, is addressed here by applying the ecumenical doctrine of Christ's threefold office (munus triplex) to anthropogenic global warming. Our kingly commitment to the stewardship of creation should not be dismissed (as some have argued) but complemented by a priestly awareness of our profound interconnectedness with nonhuman creation and a prophetic dedication to telling the truth, even when it involves costly lifestyle changes. In the process of constantly being formed into the image of Christ, their "chief Prophet, only High Priest and eternal King" (Heidelberg Catechism), Christians may learn to respond in Christ-like ways to the current climate predicament.

Keywords: Christology, climate science, *Heidelberg Catechism*, motivational gap, *munus triplex*, planetary boundaries, priesthood, prophetic critique, sacramentality of creation, spirituality, stewardship, threefold office

One of the most ominous developments of the last few decades is the emergence of the global climate crisis as predicted by climate scientists. Amidst this threatening calamity, how should Christians act, given their unique orientation to God's purposes for their lives and for the world? "What would Jesus do" or, better, "have his disciples do?" Obviously, given the cultural distance between first-century Palestine and the complex technological and economical dynamics of the highly developed late-modern West, this question is not easy to answer. The hermeneutical gap is simply enormous.

Recent scholarship in Christian eco-theology has explored two important

approaches: one via ethics and another via dogmatics. Within the ethical route, important work has involved applying a Christian virtue-ethic to climate change and other ecological crises. Drawing from the biblical story as centered on Christ, Steven Bouma-Prediger, for example, has highlighted the role of virtues such as wonder, humility, and hope in cultivating characters that constructively and effectively engage in the practice of "earthkeeping."¹ In dogmatic methodologies, Christology (the doctrine of Jesus as the Christ) has been revisited from an ecological angle, looking for its—perhaps hidden—ecological potential. Notably, the Danish theologian Niels Henrik Gregersen coined the term "deep incarnation" to emphasize that God did not just become human in Christ's incarnation, but, as the Gospel of John (1:14) has it, *flesh*. That is, God became embodied "in the entire realm of ... biological existence,

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earth and soil,” and thus even came to share our human “climate-dependence.”²

In the Christian theological tradition, dogmatics and ethics have always needed and presupposed each other. The most influential theologians—Aquinas, Calvin, and Barth are cases in point—consistently incorporated ethical treatments in their dogmatic surveys. For, to paraphrase Einstein’s famous quip about science and religion, dogmatics without ethics is lame whereas ethics without dogmatics is blind. Indeed, only rethinking doctrine in the light of ecology could easily remain abstract and barren, while exclusively focusing on ethics runs the risk that our actions are insufficiently thought through and corrected from the perspective of the gospel.³

In this article, I argue that the theological tradition provides us with an important tool to connect Christology and ethics in a way that can be fruitfully employed in addressing ecological challenges such as human-induced climate change. That tool is the *munus triplex*, the so-called doctrine of the threefold office of Christ, according to which Christ operates as our King, Priest, and Prophet, and we are prompted and inspired to take on these same roles in Christ’s footsteps. Deeply rooted in the person and work of Jesus, the implications of this doctrine are inherently ethical, involving the Christlike shaping of Christians’ characters, attitudes, and actions. In this article, I will apply this “tool” to the problem of contemporary climate change⁴ by examining how the current climate crisis urgently calls for a response that is simultaneously prophetic, priestly, and kingly.

Even though this treatment includes multiple Christian denominational traditions and is, in that sense, ecumenical, I am a Northwest-European and a Dutch Reformed theologian. As such, I realize that I belong to that part of the globe that has disproportionately contributed to today’s climate crisis. Also, I will draw mainly on the Western theological tradition as that is the one I am familiar with. So the thoughts elaborated in this article will benefit from conversation across global divides.

The structure of this contribution is as follows: I will first make some introductory comments about the current climate debate—both in a general sense and specifically among Christians. Then I outline the doctrine of *munus triplex*, that is, the threefold office of Christ, and relate this doctrine to the problems surrounding climate change. Finally, I summarize my findings and offer some concluding reflections.

Climate Change and Other Environmental Problems

It is virtually impossible to speak about climate change in a way that is not polarized right from the start, or, at least, that is not interpreted politically.⁵ Although the number of people who think that the climate is not changing is decreasing rapidly, there are still climate skeptics. But most of them now think along different lines—such as, “yes, the climate is indeed changing, but it has not been proven that this is due to human activities,” or “yes, the climate is changing, but the effects of this should certainly not be exaggerated.”⁶ Among Christians there is also the view that we need not be concerned about climate change because we have been promised a new earth that can come only after the existing one has disappeared. Although this kind of “escapism” is based on a theologically flawed argumentation, I am not engaging in a discussion with (Christian) climate skeptics. This is a topic that requires separate consideration.⁷ I presuppose here that the current climate changes are caused by human activities, particularly Western production, consumption, and travel patterns, through the associated production of carbon dioxide and methane, and that climate scientists are correct in showing that these have extremely serious consequences.⁸

At the outset, it should also be mentioned that climate change is not the only environmental problem that humankind faces. In 2009, Swedish researchers identified no fewer than nine planetary boundaries (associated with an equal number of systemic processes), many of which have now been exceeded.⁹ In addition to the warming of our planet as a result of climate change, these planetary boundaries include the extinction of species and the associated loss of biodiversity; loss of wildlife habitat; ocean acidification; growing nitrogen emissions; increasing water scarcity, floods, and forest fires; and deforestation. These processes have in common that they can reach (or have already reached) a critical level (or tipping point) above which they “explode”; that is, they produce consequences that can no longer be controlled. These processes are not isolated from each other but mutually influence each other. Thus, they form a dangerous cocktail that makes the development of the biosphere erratic and unpredictable. Concerns about them have therefore been incorporated into undergraduate science curricula.¹⁰ In what follows, we speak about climate change, but this concept stands for this entire set of ominous ecological

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processes, all of which are largely driven by human activity, especially in the Northern Hemisphere.

Having thus sketched the main outcomes of contemporary climate science, let us now explore some of the trajectories of the so-called doctrine of the threefold office, in order to then examine how this concept might illuminate the calling Christians have in today's climate crisis.

The Threefold Office

In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, written around the year 150, the Greek Church Father Justin Martyr states that, in the Bible, kings and other anointed persons receive their tasks from God. In the same way, "He [i.e., Christ] Himself received from the Father the titles of King, and Christ, and Priest, and Angel."¹¹ Early in the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea specifies that the truly anointed (Greek: *Christos*) "is the only high priest of the Universe, the only King of All Creation, and only Chief Prophet of the Father among the prophets."¹² This is the first historical instance where we find the three offices of king, priest, and prophet that are traditionally ascribed to Christ mentioned in one breath.

Interestingly, Eusebius adds that Christ, as the truly anointed one, "has filled the entire cosmos with Christians."¹³ Thus, according to Eusebius, the followers of Jesus share in the mission (for anointing always takes place for the purpose of a mission) of the one after whom they are named. We find here an awareness of the fact that, even though the anointing received by Jesus was unique in that it was aimed at his fulfilment of God's covenant with the people of Israel, it had a universal scope, since all nations were to be included in this saving covenant (cf. Matt. 28:19). Thus, followers of Jesus were seen as being entrusted with the same kingly, priestly, and prophetic roles, extending Jesus's mission through time and space. As the later Greek Church Father John Chrysostom (345–407) put it in one of his sermons: in Old Testament times, there were three groups that were anointed, namely, prophets, priests, and kings; today, through the Spirit of Christ, believers, both women and men, have received all three of these anointings.¹⁴ So, in a way, they are prophet, priest, and king at the same time.

In the centuries that followed, many other theologians, including Thomas of Aquinas, would use this idea of the so-called "threefold office" as a

Christological and soteriological scheme.¹⁵ This is most pronounced and detailed in the Reformed tradition; for example, with John Calvin, and through his influence, in confessions such as the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) and the *Westminster Confession* (1647).¹⁶ The natural place to proceed to an explanation of the *munus triplex* was in their discussion of the creed. As soon as the title "Christ" is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed ("I believe in Jesus Christ ..."),¹⁷ it is natural to wonder what that designation means. That turns out to be "anointed," which in turn leads to an exploration of the backgrounds of that term in the Old Testament.¹⁸

Incidentally, the usage of prophet, priest, and king in the Old Testament is less uniform than is often assumed: while priests (Exod. 29:7, 21; Lev. 8:2–12; 21:10–12) and kings (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:1–13; 1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 9:1–6) are indeed anointed, this is less clear in the case of prophets. The Old Testament speaks of many prophets, but only in the case of Elisha is an anointing mentioned (1 Kings 19:16).¹⁹ Yet, texts such as Psalm 45:8 and Isaiah 61:1 were taken as supporting evidence on this point. The idea of a continuous line from the Old Testament that finds its climax in Christ, and then fans out again to present-day believers, fits in well with the covenantal structure of Protestant theology. In Roman Catholic theology, too, the doctrine of the threefold office has played a significant role, especially after John Henry Newman re-introduced it by the end of the nineteenth century and, partly under his influence, it found its way into *Lumen Gentium* (1964).²⁰ Therefore, we can speak of an *ecumenical* theme, the roots of which go back deep into the Early Church.²¹

We have to forgo a biblical-theological elaboration of these topics here.²² In the meantime, the *applications* of the doctrine of the threefold office have been numerous. Indeed, the doctrine has allowed theologians "to address a wealth of the most varied systematic and dogmatic interests."²³ For example, Karl Barth made extensive use of it, both in his Christology and in his doctrine of sin.²⁴ Also, one has only to consult the multitude of catechism commentaries and sermons to find a wide range of more practical uses. Even at the present, original proposals in this vein are made, for example, to employ the concept for clarifying the role of theology as it relates to the sciences.²⁵ But there are also pitfalls here. The use of the triad can become contrived, and it is conceivable that it can cause a blind spot in regard to other Old Testament functions and roles that find their climax in the

actions of Jesus (for example, that of a bridegroom, wisdom teacher, servant, and shepherd).²⁶

Things also quickly go awry when the three offices are linked to independent “leadership roles” with diverse characteristics.²⁷ The characteristic feature of the concept is precisely that it is a single, three-fold office (*munus triplex*) and not three offices (*tria munera*). Jesus unites the three in himself into a harmonious whole. Michael Welker correctly points out that the three offices (which can, of course, be spoken of in the plural) are perichoretically connected with each other; they permeate, determine, and mutually influence each other.²⁸ Furthermore, it makes a difference how one prioritizes the three offices in relation to each other and, in connection with this, whether one regards them with the pre-Easter Jesus or the glorified Jesus in mind (in the first case, one would be inclined to start thinking in terms of prophet and priest, and in the second case, from the viewpoint of his kingship).²⁹

Nonetheless, Cornelis van der Kooi is correct when he compares the doctrine of the threefold office with electrical wiring that has been installed in a house, but has remained unused, hidden behind a cover plate. He speaks of a metaphor that has the rich potential to bridge the gap between Christ and us.³⁰ That is exactly what we need when we reflect in this article on the question of how the salvation, which Christians believe to have in Jesus, can be extended into our concrete and complex lives today.³¹ It is striking indeed how emphatically this parallelism is present in the doctrine of the *munus triplex*. For example, question and answer 31 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*: “Why is he called ‘Christ,’ meaning ‘anointed’?” is followed immediately by the question “But why are *you* called a Christian?” The answers to both questions are also very much parallel: Jesus has told us the truth (“us” being the community of believers) as a prophet, has sacrificed himself for us as a priest, and still reigns as a king, who “governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.”³² In the same way, Christians learn, as prophets, to confess the truth (here Christologically focused on the name of Jesus), to offer themselves “as a living sacrifice of thanks” as priests, and to fight against evil as kings.

We realize that the notion of the threefold office should be used with care, since it is not a panacea that offers easy solutions to complex problems. With that proviso in mind, in the next section, we attempt

to make these notions fruitful for our attitudes toward one of the most urgent problems of our days: the global climate crisis.

King, Priest, and Prophet as Key Roles in a Time of Climate Change

In his impressive study, *Ecologies of Grace*, Willis Jenkins distinguishes three strategies for relating grace (in a Christian sense) and ecology to each other: the pursuit of “ecojustice” as a way of sanctifying nature, the role of humans as stewards who care for creation, and the development of an ecological spirituality in which creation is directly linked to God.³³ He connects the first strategy with the Roman Catholic tradition and elaborates this view on the basis of the work of Thomas Aquinas; he sees the second as typical of the Reformed tradition as illustrated by Karl Barth; and the third represents Eastern Orthodox thought in terms of deification (*theosis*), as Jenkins shows from the hand of Maximus the Confessor. This results in a complex whole in which Jenkins ultimately refrains from attempting to realize a synthesis. Up to this point, Christian ecotheology had mainly defended itself against the accusation that Christianity was largely to blame for ecological destruction—ever since this accusation was famously raised by the historian Lynn White.³⁴ Jenkins, however, showed a variety of ways in which theology can much more constructively contribute to the debate on ecologically beneficial strategies and practices. However, the layering in Jenkins’s study is also a weakness, in conjunction with its somewhat contrived way of linking the various strategies with specific denominations. For example, if one regards the work of the Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann, one discovers a strong emphasis on ecological justice and spirituality, and much less on stewardship.³⁵ Apparently, it is not so easy to construe a convincing overview of the ways in which the grace of God in Christ feeds into ecologically wholesome strategies and practices.

The advantage of thinking from the perspective of the threefold office is that the various ecological strategies are interrelated from the outset, without each having to be linked to a specific denominational tradition. For the scheme of the threefold office is, in itself, fully ecumenical: it is shared by all the main Christian traditions as an insightful model that shows who Christ is for us and how we can follow in his footsteps. And, as van der Kooi indicates, it is open to ever-new concrete approaches of what

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Christian life should entail. Let us now see how this may work out in more detail.

Our Kingly Role

When we regard Christian action pertaining to nature and climate primarily from the perspective of the *kingly* office, the concept of stewardship quickly comes to mind. For that traditional metaphor is about governing the earth and, as applied to Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 8:6, even about having “dominion” over the works of God’s hands. Both governing and exercising dominion are pre-eminently kingly tasks. Of course, in these texts, human beings function as “viceroys” under God, and exercising dominion is often interpreted in “softer” terms as providing responsible care to creation on behalf of its Owner.³⁶ Yet, in that capacity, humans still have the kingly task to rule over nature, to exercise (cultural) power, and to guide things in the right direction. The idea is that we have been given the earth on loan, as it were, and that we are to cultivate and maintain it, as Adam took care of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). While this mission was and is carried out in very different ways in practice, including ways that unfortunately contributed to the exploitation of the earth, the notion of human beings as stewards has nevertheless inspired numerous believers to at least proceed with prudence and care in their dealings with the earth. Intrinsically linked to the stewardship metaphor is the realization that one day we will have to give an account of the way we have carried out our management task.³⁷ Applying this insight to climate change means that we must use thoughtfulness and commonsense to prevent it, and to fight its devastating consequences as well as we can.

Although the stewardship metaphor has been widely circulated and has even been adopted in secular circles (in which case our responsibility is not so much to the Creator but to future generations or to the earth itself), it has also been severely criticized recently. Douglas and Jonathan Moo treat it with caution, observing that the term

has been hijacked by groups whose interpretation of ‘stewardship’ would seem ... to contravene nearly everything scripture says about who we are called to be as God’s people in our relationship to the rest of creation.³⁸

Dutch eco-theologian Trees van Montfoort even calls the concept “dangerous.”³⁹ This is mainly due to at least three interrelated aspects of it.⁴⁰ First, the idea of stewardship places humans above, and to a large

extent also outside, the rest of creation. According to some, this speaks of prideful superiority.⁴¹ Others emphasize that it turns nature into a commodity, thus creating distance between humans and the world.⁴² The awareness that we ourselves are part of nature and that our fate is thoroughly intertwined with the entire creation is not considered. Second, stewardship would be an eminently economic function, one that revolves around making a profit. The steward would be what we call a manager nowadays, that is, someone who has to make or keep a business profitable. But it is precisely this focus on profits that has greatly increased environmental problems, including climate change. And third, the steward metaphor conceals a purely instrumental attitude toward non-human creation. Creation apparently exists for us to be exploited – the value it has in and of itself remains out of the picture. Thus, the stewardship metaphor, and especially its focus on our relationship with nature and climate, has resolute opponents today. Some even believe that the concept urgently needs to be retired.⁴³

At the same time, there are authors who vigorously defend its legitimacy and continued usefulness.⁴⁴ They suggest that the criticisms can be overcome (the steward in the New Testament is, for example, not a profit-driven *homo economicus*, but a manager with genuine concern for what has been entrusted to him or her). They think it is especially important that the metaphor forces us to face our responsibility from which we cannot just run away, especially after all the harm we have done.⁴⁵ Today, in particular, it is important that as good stewards we do everything that is needed to save nature and climate from total collapse. The human species is the only one that is capable of doing this and should take this task seriously. Thus, Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, explicitly mentions the importance of stewardship.⁴⁶

When we look at this issue from the perspective of the threefold office, it seems that a way can be found to rise above this stalemate. Could this problem be resolved if we were to view the stewardship perspective as a *partial* response to climate change, next to other equally important ones? In particular, it can be seen as a fulfilment (a carrying out) of the Christian’s kingly office, in which “I strive with a free conscience against sin,” and we then relate the word “sin” to my, and our, climate-sins.⁴⁷ Given the fact that these sins typically take the form of injustice toward fellow humans and God as Creator, it could then be argued

that this translates into a deep concern for environmental justice. In the Old Testament, the king is the guarantor of justice (e.g., Psalm 72) and this role finds its epitome in Jesus as the just ruler *par excellence*. So, it is from this kingly perspective that the virtue of justice can receive a proper biblical grounding.⁴⁸ In line with this, stewards must ensure that there is equitable management of the land entrusted to them so that it can continue to feed all the people who depend on it. In actual practice, this might mean supporting climate policies that promote mitigation efforts such as “contraction and convergence” (contraction meaning the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions to a sustainable level, and convergence referring to the equal division of the emissions per capita across countries), adaptation efforts to reduce climate change harms, and the funding of responses to loss and damages associated with the ill effects of climate change.⁴⁹

Our Priestly Role

In addition to this kingly viewpoint, two equally important lenses can be polished through which other important aspects of a wholesome attitude toward climate change can come into view—aspects that the stewardship metaphor leaves largely invisible. In particular, we may additionally need images and metaphors that express much more strongly the unity and interdependence of humans and the rest of the created world, as well as the intrinsic involvement of God in nonhuman nature. We can discover such images when we look at human nature from a *priestly* perspective. Indeed, various voices today argue for human environmental action to be seen as priestly action in God’s creation, either instead of or in addition to stewardly action. This idea has been elaborated especially in Eastern Orthodox thought.⁵⁰ But just as the Protestant tradition cannot lay an exclusive claim to the steward metaphor, so the priestly metaphor can also be found outside Eastern Orthodoxy—for example, in the ecumenical notion of the priestly anointing of the Christian in line with the priestly role of Jesus in the New Testament.

In the Bible, priests know themselves to be intimately connected with the community of which they are a part. They are one with the people and carry them in their hearts (cf. Exodus 39). At the same time, they live in union with God. In the New Testament, the climax of the priesthood turns out to be Jesus, who is perfectly one with God and, at the same time, fully human. He shared our existence with all its fragilities

and limitations, and ultimately sacrificed himself for the salvation of the world—a world that also includes the nonhuman creation (Col. 1:20).⁵¹ Thus, there is a twofold movement: Jesus represents God in the creation by becoming one with it; conversely, as priest, he represents the creation before God by presenting it as reconciled to God. In this way, creation becomes sacramental: it bears the traces of Christ (also in its suffering!) and is thus connected to God. We may even ask ourselves whether we should call creation “sacred” in the sense of “sanctified” due to this special connection with God.⁵²

Be that as it may, whoever feels touched (or “anointed”) with the Spirit of Jesus will begin to share in this twofold movement. This leads, on the one hand, to a spirituality in which we realize how deeply connected we are with the nonhuman creation—just think of the countless microbes that reside in our bodies from our birth to the grave. We are not above nature but are an organic part of it, and the fate of the world is our fate.⁵³ So, as small and vulnerable beings, we have feelings of respect, wonder, and awe as we are encompassed by a multifarious creation that sustains our lives in all sorts of ways. At the same time, we have the calling to serve as priests as well as we can; we are the only species capable of consciously doing so. This does not possibly imply that we give our lives for creation, as Jesus did, but our sacrifice will at least mean that we act with restraint and know the meaning of “enough” as we deal with nature. In the New Testament, the priestly service takes on the character of “a living sacrifice,” with which believers consecrate their lives to God (Rom. 12:1). Perhaps in this regard Protestants can learn from the Eucharistic (literally thanks-giving) interpretations that other traditions, such as Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, often give to this priestly ministry.⁵⁴ In that case, the priestly office also includes that we, on behalf of the nonhuman creation, give the thanks that is due to God as creator.

In any case, the priestly anointing brings Christians to realize the need of having a much more intimate connection with creation than just the managerial relation that is suggested by the stewardship metaphor. From a priestly point of view, nonhuman nature has an irreducible value and significance in itself as the so-called “nature psalms,” such as Psalm 104, testify. While, as we have seen, the virtue of justice is central to the kingly office—kings are called to rule justly (Psalm 72), the priestly office is all about love—love for God and people, and also for

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the entire creation. As that love grows, our relationship with nature and climate is not dictated by purely rational considerations but arises from a deeper spiritual source. This source also gives our relationship with nature more clout. For we rationally know what we need to do and, especially, what not to do to counteract the effects of climate change, but often the problem is that we simply do not like acting the way we should. In the literature, this is called “the motivational gap.”⁵⁵ When our vision of nature and climate becomes more integral to our spirituality, it will be easier not only to recognize, but also to do, the right things.⁵⁶

Our Prophetic Role

In addition to these kingly and priestly perspectives on ecology and climate, we now distinguish a third calling, namely the one of *prophet*. This does not stem from a forced attempt to build a nice theological system. To the contrary, this third perspective is very timely and needed next to the other ones. In the Bible, prophecy is not necessarily connected to the future, as is sometimes thought, but to speaking the truth—and then particularly to recognizing and affirming what is true in difficult and costly situations. From a Christological point of view, prophecy is “the function by which Christ instructs his people in the truth of doctrine legal and evangelical ...”⁵⁷ The prophetic office thus calls attention to an aspect of Jesus’s ministry that is often sadly neglected in traditional Christologies (and that, for example, is even “skipped” in the Apostles’ Creed), namely his teaching as rabbi. We find this teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, among other places; here Jesus makes the will of God concrete for all kinds of situations in life—even where it is far too radical for our liking, and where it may hurt. Jesus himself did not seek to avoid that pain. In the end, it was his prophetic witness that cost him his life (John 18:37; 1 Tim. 6:13).

Extended to the current climate discussion, this means that in this situation as well Christians are looking for the truth, even if the implications of that truth turn out to be unpleasant. In the midst of a world that is rife with fake news, conspiracy theories, and constructed facts, this comes down to having a sustained love for what corresponds to reality (as the traditional definition of truth goes). This implies that Christians are to be critical of any ideological bias that adjusts the truth for personal (often selfish) interests. Thus, from a prophetic point of view, fact checkers serve an important function. And so do

scientists. We will have to take the results of scientific research seriously, not because they necessarily tell the truth, but because they come about through the best possible test procedures that are available (e.g., by exposing them to criticism and evaluation by peer review). The skepticism about scientific findings that is now prevalent among some groups of orthodox Christians is therefore alarming in this context—even if it may also be somewhat understandable.⁵⁸ For example, we have to find our way today through a maze of information providers, many of which we cannot evaluate ourselves. This certainly applies to complex scientific theorizing. In such situations, we tend to rely on our intuitions and on people we trust. The fact that prominent scientists sometimes link an atheistic worldview to their scientific theories does not help in this connection.

However, it is precisely to rule out all sorts of biases that the best scientific institutions encourage diversity and inclusivity in their ranks so that people from various backgrounds can judge, challenge, and adjust one another’s ideas and theories. In this way, if a high degree of scientific near-consensus emerges about the extremely problematic nature of the current climate changes, it is irresponsible to rely on individual preferences or so-called anecdotal evidence (“I just saw a beautiful bird the other day, so things cannot be so bad”) to call such a consensus into question. As a Christian, in that case one forsakes one’s prophetic office. After all, that prophetic office urges us to speak the truth in our present complex situation, even if this leads us to forego or adjust our air travel, meat consumption, and fossil-fuel driven forms of production, to mention only the most obvious examples. In fact, even if the climate problem were less urgent, such adaptations would still be highly beneficial.⁵⁹

A Unified Office

As mentioned above, the doctrine of *munus triplex* deals with *one* unified office. The kingly, priestly, and prophetic perspectives on climate change thus complement each other. It would be peculiar if the virtues of justice, love, and truth were mutually exclusive—the three actually belong together.⁶⁰ In concrete terms, this means that when it comes to combating the effects of climate change, the situation not only calls for a prophetic emphasis on truth-telling and a priestly one on self-sacrifice (i.e., behavioral change), but also for a “kingly” practice of stewardship—that is, responsible management.

This includes the pursuit of science in the interest of developing new technologies that may help us counter the dire effects of the current climate crisis. Some climate activists oppose this approach because depending on new technology would be a sign of *hubris* and/or might be inspired by the wish to avoid the changes in human behavior that the situation requires. But both of these considerations are not necessarily valid.

From a Christian point of view, developing new technologies is not necessarily hubristic but can be understood as part of the “cultural mandate” to “till and keep” the earth (Gen. 2:15). And the need for technological interventions should not be contrasted with that for behavioral changes. Perhaps the pending climate disaster can be avoided only when we make drastic behavioral changes *and* adopt beneficial technological developments. In any case, rejecting technological innovations to combat climate change as shallow “*techno-fix*,” and constant suspicion of technology, are counterproductive.⁶¹ But the reverse is also true: we should not use an appeal to kingly stewardship in order to avoid priestly self-sacrifice and prophetic critique. If we don’t curb our consumerist lifestyles, technological innovation will not be able to help us since we will continue to transgress planetary boundaries. In fact, it is this down-to-earth, both-and perspective that seems to be the most beneficial in our polarized situation.

Needless to say, the application of the threefold office scheme to today’s climate predicament will not give an answer to all kinds of specific questions. It will not tell us, for example, whether or not we should organize a highway blockade in order to hold a government or company accountable for furthering climate destruction. But we can let it shape us in learning the virtues that are needed to arrive at best possible assessments and policies in regard to climate change.⁶² The kingly, priestly, and prophetic aspects of our calling should not be played off against each other but should mutually reinforce and strengthen each other. For reaching this goal, we depend on a sustained exposure to the gospel of Jesus Christ, “our chief prophet and teacher ... our only high priest ... and our eternal king.”⁶³ It is this constant shaping and molding into the image of Christ that is unique and constitutive for the life of Christians and which should feed into their attitudes vis-à-vis climate change, even when that leads them toward close cooperation with others.⁶⁴

Concluding Reflections

Does the good news of the salvation in Jesus Christ, which is at the heart of the Christian faith, make a significant difference in the midst of the challenges that are associated with climate change? This is the question that Ernst Conradie asks himself in a recent essay about climate change and God’s acts of salvation.⁶⁵ Historically, the prospects for a positive answer are slim, Conradie admits. For things have gone wrong all too often. Nevertheless, he tries to answer the question constructively, as he considers the potential of each of the three traditional models of reconciliation: reconciliation as victory, reconciliation through satisfaction, and reconciliation as moral inspiration. Conradie’s conclusion is a sober one: at the very least, much solid work will need to be done if these models are to have practical value in the fight against climate change.⁶⁶

The same undoubtedly applies to the attempt to meaningfully relate the concept of the threefold ministry of Christ to the climate crisis. Yet, that is where it has to begin—with honest reflection on the question of who Jesus Christ is for us.⁶⁷ For Christians, he is not one more inspiring figure from a distant past, but he is still what he has always been: the prophet who reveals the painful truth about our lives, the priest who heals our broken relationships with the love-offering of his life, and the king who protects us and reigns in righteousness. We gradually learn to reflect this attitude in our lives and in our actions in the climate crisis. This, if anything, is what it means to “do what Jesus did.” It is far from easy or self-evident. Among other things, it means that we cannot bury our heads in the sand, with the idea that God is going to create a new earth anyhow. On the contrary, the eschatological completion of Jesus’s work of salvation will, in fact, motivate us to commit ourselves to participating in Christ’s threefold office for the sake of “the beauty of the earth.”⁶⁸ As Francis Schaeffer put it in 1970 (back then in gendered language):

On the basis of the fact that there is going to be total redemption in the future, not only of man but of all creation, the Christian who believes in the Bible should be the man who—with God’s help and in the power of the Holy Spirit—is treating nature now in the direction of the way nature will be then. It will not be perfect, but it must be substantial, or we have missed our calling ... we should exhibit a substantial healing here and now, between man and nature and nature and itself, as far as Christians can bring it to pass.⁶⁹

Thus, what Christians should do is not a speculative derivative of “what Jesus would do,” but a function of what Jesus actually did do and still does.⁷⁰

Notes

¹Steven Bouma-Prediger, *Earthkeeping and Character: Exploring a Christian Ecological Virtue Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019).

²Niels Henrik Gregersen, “Christology,” in *Systematic Theology and Climate Change: Ecumenical Perspectives*, ed. Michael S. Northcott and Peter M. Scott (London, UK: Routledge, 2014), 45. Cf. Niels Henrik Gregersen, “Deep Incarnation: Why Continuity Matters for Christology,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 26 (2010): 173–88, <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/tjt.26.2.173>, and a volume with responses to this concept: Niels Henrik Gregersen, ed., *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015).

³Cornelis van der Kooi and Gijsbert van den Brink, *Christian Dogmatics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 12–13. Bouma-Prediger has been criticized for building on a secular (Rawlsian) view of the virtue of justice as fairness, “rather than a more self-consciously biblical and theological account of justice,” thus relying on “philosophical commitments that subvert arguments for Christian virtue ethics elsewhere in the book.” E.g., justice-as-fairness is often seen as equality of opportunities, coupled with an economics of non-intervention. Joshua Heavin, “Book Review: Steven Bouma-Prediger, *Earthkeeping and Character: Exploring a Christian Ecological Virtue Ethic*,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 34, no. 3 (2021): 381–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09539468211010425>.

⁴Important aspects of the topic of climate change have already been discussed in this journal, such as Thomas Ackerman, “Global Warming: Scientific Basis and Christian Responses,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 59, no. 4 (2007): 250–64, <https://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2007/PSCF12-07Ackerman.pdf>; Janel Curry, “Christians and Climate Change: A Social Framework of Analysis,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 60, no. 3 (2008): 156–64, <https://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2008/PSCF9-08Curry.pdf>; and Rachel M. Roller and Louise Ko Huang, “Galileo and Global Warming: Parallels between the Geocentrism Debate and Current Evangelical Skepticism about Anthropogenic Climate Change,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 72, no. 1 (2020): 3–14, <https://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2020/PSCF3-20RollerHuang.pdf>. The present contribution to these various perspectives is a theological one.

⁵Esp. in the US, the call for climate concern is still often seen as part of an (anti-Christian) “leftish agenda.” See, e.g., Megan Basham, *Shepherds for Sale: How Evangelical Leaders Traded the Truth for a Leftist Agenda* (New York: Broadside Books, 2024), chap. 1. At the other side of the spectrum, there are those who urge that we should not speak about “climate change” as if it were a relatively innocent phenomenon, but about the “climate crisis,” or even “climate endgame.” See on the latter, Luke Kemp et al., “Climate Endgame: Exploring Catastrophic Climate Change Scenarios,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 34 (2022): e2108146119, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2108146119>. In my view, climate predicament might

be the best label, but in what follows I won’t take a stand on this issue and generally speak about “climate change”.

⁶Cf. World Economic Forum, “Is Climate Denialism Dead?,” August 15, 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/08/is-climate-denialism-dead/>.

⁷For this see, e.g., Katharine Hayhoe, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* (New York: One Signal Publishers, 2021); Roller and Huang, “Galileo and Global Warming”; and Wylie Carr et al., “The Faithful Skeptics: Evangelical Religious Beliefs and Perceptions of Climate Change,” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* 6, no. 3 (2012): 276–99, <https://doi.org/10.1558/jsrnc.v6i3.276>.

⁸See, e.g., “AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023,” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>.

⁹See Johan Rockström et al., “A Safe Operating Space for Humanity,” *Nature* 461 (September 23, 2009): 472–75, <https://www.nature.com/articles/461472a>; J. Rockström et al., “Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity,” *Ecology and Society* 14, no. 2 (2009): art. 32, <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-03180-140232>. It is only in the fight against the depletion of the ozone layer that so much success has been booked in recent decades that it is likely this process will remain within critical limits.

¹⁰Robert P. MacDonald et al., “An Interactive Planetary Boundaries Systems Thinking Learning Tool to Integrate Sustainability into the Chemistry Curriculum,” *Journal of Chemical Education* 99, no. 10 (2022): 3530–39, <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.2c00659>.

¹¹Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. 86, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01286.htm> (last visited August 9, 2024).

¹²Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 3, 8; the translation is taken from *The History of the Church: A New Translation*, trans. Jeremy M. Scott (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 51.

¹³Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 3, 12 (*History of the Church*, 51).

¹⁴John Chrysostom, “Homilia III in epistolam II ad Corinthos,” in *Patrologia series graeca*, vol. 61, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1862, 411. I owe these references to Eusebius and Chrysostom to Erik A. de Boer, “Christology and Christianity: The Theological Power of the Threefold Office in Lord’s Day 12,” *In die Skriflig* 47, no. 2 (2013): art. #682, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v47i2.682>.

¹⁵See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III 31, art. 2 (and also some of his biblical commentaries).

¹⁶For Calvin, particularly see his *Institutes* II 15.

¹⁷*Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord’s Day 7, answer 23.

¹⁸*Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord’s Day 12, question & answer 31. Cf. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, VIII 1; *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, question & answer 23; *Westminster Larger Catechism*, question & answer 42.

¹⁹This is probably the reason why Calvin, initially, when he was still a bit more biblicist (and for that reason, e.g., hesitated about classical formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity), wanted to speak of only two offices. In the 1536 edition of the *Institutes* and also in his *Catechism* of 1537/1538, he limited his exposition of the offices of Christ to those of king and priest. See Ivor J. Davidson, “Christ,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 463–64.

- ²⁰See Anthony Ekpo, "The *Sensus Fidelium* and the Threefold Office of Christ: A Reinterpretation of *Lumen Gentium* No. 12," *Theological Studies* 76, no. 2 (2015): 330–37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563915574666>. Cf. John Henry Newman, "The Three Offices of Christ," in *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day* (London, UK: Longmans, Green, 1898), 52–62.
- ²¹Michael Welker, *God the Revealed: Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 213, demonstrates how and where the doctrine also plays a role in Lutheran and Eastern-Orthodox theology.
- ²²For some preliminary outlines, see Van der Kooi and Van den Brink, *Christian Dogmatics*, 449–53.
- ²³Welker, *God the Revealed*, 215.
- ²⁴In his doctrine of reconciliation, Barth discusses Christ as Priest (*Church Dogmatics* IV 1), King (IV 2) and Prophet (IV 3), interweaving these expositions with his account of sin as pride (IV 1), sloth (IV 2) and falsehood (IV 3).
- ²⁵Taido Chino, "Theology's *Munus Triplex*? Reconsidering Theology's Relationship to the Sciences," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 20, no. 3 (2018): 335–58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijst.12310>. Taido discusses Karl Barth as an example of someone favoring theology's prophetic office with regard to the sciences (directed at critique and correction vis-à-vis the university's tendency toward reductionism), J. Wentzel van Huyssteen as highlighting theology's priestly role (aimed at mediation and transformation), and John Webster as assigning a royal vocation to theology (aimed at "restoring a theologically informed vision of reality in which all things find a divine coherence," p. 351). Chino suggests that theology has to navigate between these three roles depending on the circumstances.
- ²⁶Adam J. Johnson, "The Servant Lord: A Word of Caution Regarding the *munus triplex* in Karl Barth's Theology and the Church Today," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65, no. 2 (2012): 159–73, esp. 172, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930612000038>.
- ²⁷For a critique of this use of the doctrine, see Timothy Paul Jones, "Prophets, Priests, and Kings Today? Theological and Practical Problems with the Use of the *munus triplex* as a Leadership Typology," *Perichoresis* 16, no. 3 (2018): 63–86, <https://doi.org/10.2478/perc-2018-0017>.
- ²⁸Welker, *God the Revealed*, 215, with reference to Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. 3 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2012), 86ff. (part 4.1, note 3).
- ²⁹Welker, *God the Revealed*, 214. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, answer 23, explicitly states that the three offices pertain to Christ "both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation" (i.e., both pre- and post-Easter).
- ³⁰Cornelis van der Kooi, *This Incredibly Benevolent Force: The Holy Spirit in Reformed Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 99.
- ³¹How appealing the metaphor of anointing—symbol of empowerment by God's Spirit—still is, became clear during the coronation of Charles III as King of Great Britain on May 6, 2023; his bodily anointing was the central event of the liturgy during the Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey.
- ³²As formulated in *Our Faith: Ecumenical Creeds, Reformed Confessions, and Other Resources* (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2013), 79.
- ³³Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), part 1.
- ³⁴Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–07, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.155.3767.1203>.
- ³⁵See specifically, Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).
- ³⁶Thus, e.g., Douglas John Hall, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1986); Calvin DeWitt, *Caring for Creation: Responsible Stewardship of God's Handiwork* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998); and Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 204, 221; many more examples could be added.
- ³⁷In biblical imagery, the steward is not a master or owner but a member of the master's household. See Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo, *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 95.
- ³⁸Moo and Moo, *Creation Care*, 85.
- ³⁹Trees van Montfoort, *Green Theology: An Ecofeminist and Ecumenical Perspective* (London, UK: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2022), 172. For discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of the stewardship paradigm, see also the various chapters in *Beyond Stewardship: New Approaches to Creation Care*, ed. David P. Warners and Matthew Kupeus Heun (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin College Press, 2019).
- ⁴⁰Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology. Rediscovering the Communion of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 2–12, distinguishes no fewer than five criticisms, including that the metaphor suggests that Godself is not active in creation, and that it only has a limited biblical basis.
- ⁴¹Stephen Jay Gould, "The Golden Rule—A Proper Scale for Our Environmental Crisis," chapter 2 in *Eight Little Piggies: Reflections in Natural History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 48.
- ⁴²Van Montfoort, *Green Theology*, 169.
- ⁴³H. Paul Santmire, *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 120.
- ⁴⁴A recent example is Mark D. Liederbach, "Stewardship: A Biblical Concept?," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Ecology*, ed. Hilary Marlow and Mark Harris (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2022), 310–24.
- ⁴⁵Liederbach, "Stewardship," 319–21.
- ⁴⁶See sections 116 and 236 in *Papal Encyclicals Online*, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/>; for extensive support of the stewardship idea in the encyclical, see Calvin B. DeWitt, "Earth Stewardship and *Laudato Si'*," *Quarterly Review of Biology* 91 (2016): 271–84, <https://doi.org/10.1086/688096>. Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017) also discusses the encyclical (pp. 54–71), and argues with regard to human dominion and stewardship over the earth that if considered "in the light of humanity's role as divine image bearing, then such terms could not mean 'exploitation' but rather, careful service for the earth" (p. 23).
- ⁴⁷The quote is from answer 32 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*.
- ⁴⁸See the virtue-ethical approach in Kathryn D. Blanchard and Kevin J. O'Brien, *An Introduction to Christian Environmentalism: Ecology, Virtue, and Ethics* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), particularly chapter 5, "Justice." For eco-justice, also see Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 61–75.

⁴⁹See, e.g., “Contraction and Convergence,” Climate Change Connection, <https://climatechangeconnection.org/solutions/international-solutions/contraction-convergence/>; “Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage,” United Nations: Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/loss-and-damage-fund-joint-interim-secretariat>; and “Responding to Climate Change,” NASA Global Climate Change, https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation_mitigation/.

⁵⁰See, e.g., Elizabeth Theokritoff, *Living in God’s Creation: Orthodox Perspectives on Ecology* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2009), and cf. the analysis in Van Montfoort, *Green Theology*, 273–92; and John Chrysavgis, “The Earth as Sacrament: Insights from Orthodox Christian Theology and Spirituality,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92–114.

⁵¹For a more extensive examination of the biblical notion of priesthood, see Stefan Paas, *Pilgrims and Priests: Christian Mission in a Post-Christian Society* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2019), 173–92.

⁵²Of course, there are risks here, such as ignoring the ontological difference between Creator and creature that defines the monotheistic traditions, and the deification of nature. In an upcoming essay, “Is Nature Sacred? A Christian Perspective,” I attempt to weigh the pros and cons. See also Richard Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 13: “The Bible has de-divinized nature, but it has not de-sacralized nature.”

⁵³Norman Wirzba in his *This Sacred Earth: Humanity’s Place in a Wounded World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021), e.g., 63–89 writes instructively about this “inescapably embodied and symbiotic character” (p. 63) of all life forms. He emphasizes that this not only includes animals but also plants, bacteria, and the like.

⁵⁴On whether or not this means that we should call nature a “sacrament,” see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Creation and Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 220.

⁵⁵See, e.g., Wouter Peeters et al., *Climate Change and Individual Responsibility: Agency, Moral Disengagement and the Motivational Gap* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

⁵⁶Again, we are reminded here of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, which stipulates that conversion (or “the rising-to-life of the new self”) implies “a love and delight to live according to the will of God by doing every kind of good work” (answer 90; italics added).

⁵⁷Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, revised edition, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G.T. Thomson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), XVIII, 8 (p. 454). Cf. William den Boer and Riemer A. Faber, eds., *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Vol. 1 (Landrum, SC: Davenant Press, 2023); originally published in Leiden, 1625), XXVI, 39 (p. 300). With “doctrine legal and evangelical” is meant the teaching of the law and the gospel.

⁵⁸Instructive on both these aspects (i.e., the understandable and the disturbing sides of Christian skepticism about the sciences) is Josh A. Reeves, *Redeeming Expertise: Scientific Trust and the Future of the Church* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021).

⁵⁹See Pim Martens, *Planetary Health: The Recipe for a Sustainable Future* (Maastricht: Maastricht University, 2023), 8, <https://pimmartenscom.files.wordpress.com/2023/05/inaugural-speech-pim-martens.pdf> (last visited Febru-

ary 25, 2024). Here we find a funny cartoon of a climate summit at which measures such as preserving rain forests, creating green jobs, livable cities, and energy independence are recommended. The cartoon shows an angry man standing in the audience and asking, “What if it’s a big hoax and we create a better world for nothing?”

⁶⁰Arguably, the opposites of these virtues are sloth, pride, and falsehood respectively, as elaborated in Karl Barth’s doctrine of sin (see endnote 24).

⁶¹There is a vibrant Christian tradition (in part inspired by Martin Heidegger) that might be criticized as overly romantic here. This tradition ranges from Jacques Ellul’s famous *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Vintage, 1964) up to, e.g., Craig Gay, *Modern Technology and the Human Future: A Christian Appraisal* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018).

⁶²Here, the virtue-ethical approach referred to above has an indispensable role to play. See, e.g., Bouma-Prediger, *Earthkeeping and Character*; and Blanchard and O’Brien, *Introduction to Christian Environmentalism*.

⁶³*Heidelberg Catechism*, answer 31.

⁶⁴One of Basham’s criticisms in *Shepherds for Sale*, chap. 1, is that climate-activism is not distinctively Christian. Well, let us be grateful for that!

⁶⁵Ernst M. Conradie, “God’s Acts of Salvation for Us,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Theology and Climate Change*, ed. Ernst M. Conradie and Hilda P. Koster (London, UK: T&T Clark, 2020), 406–16 (p. 406).

⁶⁶Conradie, “God’s Acts,” 415.

⁶⁷Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today’s World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994).

⁶⁸Cf. Steven Bouma-Prediger’s “modern classic,” *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001; second ed., 2010).

⁶⁹Francis A. Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian Virtue of Ecology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1970), 68–69. Cf. Alister McGrath, *The Re-Enchantment of Nature: Science, Religion, and the Human Sense of Wonder* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002), 51.

⁷⁰I am highly indebted to Prof. Harry Cook for his translation of a Dutch version of this text as well as for his many perceptive suggestions that have found their way into this article. The Dutch version was published as Gijsbert van den Brink, “Koning, priester en profeet in een tijd van klimaatverandering: het *munus triplex* in verband met de ecologische problematiek,” in *Zoeken naar de dingen die Boven zijn*, ed. S. Stoppels et al. (Utrecht, Netherlands: KokBoekencentrum, 2023), 99–114. Also, I thank Jan Martijn Abrahamse, Sake Stoppels, Eva van Urk-Coster, three anonymous reviewers of this journal, and its current editor-in-chief for very helpful comments on previous versions of this text.