



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Assemblies of God

General Information

Assemblies of God was founded in the United States in 1914 in the midst of an international Pentecostal revival. Today, it is a member of the world's largest Pentecostal association: the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. It characterizes itself as having a fourfold mission: "evangelism, discipleship, worship, compassion."

More information about Assemblies of God, including the Church's beliefs, structure, and history, can be found by going to <http://ag.org/>

Number of Members in the US and Canada: 2.8 million

Number of Members Worldwide: 57 million

Official Statements on Animals

God created all life, but human life is qualitatively different from plant and animal life

- **According to Assemblies of God, the Bible's story of creation is factually and historically accurate. In this story, explains the Church, God created the universe in a calendar week. Although each step of creation was personally overseen by God, the creation of human beings was qualitatively different from the creation of other forms of life; for while God commanded the earth to bring forth plants and animals, God personally created the human race in his own image. Humans have not evolved from animals and are categorically different from them.**
- "Assemblies of God believers hold that the Genesis account should be taken literally. Admittedly, there is progression in God's creative work. But each step was concluded: 'And there was evening, and there was morning.' This points to a specific measurement of time. The most natural reading of the creation account therefore is to place it in parallel with a 7-day week.
--from General Council of the Assemblies of God, [Creationism](#).
- "Progress and a climax were a part of the biblical account of creation. Progress can be seen in the increase of personal attention God gave in His creative work. Of the vegetation we read that God said, "'Let the land produce vegetation' And it was so"

(Genesis 1:11, 12). Of the animals we read that God said, "Let the land produce . . . ' And it was so" (vv. 24, 25). But of the human race God said, "Let us make man. . . ' So God created man...; male and female he created them" (vv. 26, 27). The human race is thus a special and distinctive creation...humans are distinct from animals...God did not form Adam from some previously existing animal (1 Corinthians 15:39)... The account of creation is intended to be taken as factual and historical."

--from Assemblies of God General Presbytery, [The Doctrine of Creation](#).

God has given humanity dominion over the earth and all its creatures, but dominion is exercised properly only when we are in proper relation to God

- **Human beings are the pinnacle of creation and, as such, have been given dominion over animals and all the earth's resources. As bearers of God's image, humans are capable of exercising dominion with moral understanding and in fellowship with God. Nevertheless, human beings are "bent on evil" and frequently forget that creation exists to serve God's purposes, not humanity's whims. People find their "proper place in creation" only to the extent that they live in "right relation to God."**
- "Through Scripture we come to understand that the earth was created by God, and that the birds, fish, and animals were likewise His creation... We also see that mankind is given domain over all the earth, its resources, and other creatures... We learn that in spite of good, evil also exists, and that mankind by nature is bent to evil. But God has made provision for man to be freed from evil through the death of His Son Jesus."
--from General Council of the Assemblies of God, [Creationism](#)
- "God had purpose in creation. He created 'for his own ends' or for His own pleasure (Proverbs 16:4; Revelation 4:11) and for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). He wanted the earth to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). All creation is thus an expression of His will and His power.
"People are beings who are in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27): free, rational, capable of self-appreciation and self-expression, capable of moral and spiritual understanding, created for fellowship with God. They will find their proper place in creation only as they are in right relation to God through the redemption accomplished in Jesus."
--from General Council of the Assemblies of God, [The Doctrine of Creation](#)

Right relation to God requires an understanding that the earth and its animals are gifts from God that should be cherished

- **Although the earth will be renewed after Christ's return, Christians alive today "must act responsibly in their use of God's earth," acknowledging that the earth "as well as the animals...[are] gifts...to be appreciated and cherished."**
- "The Assemblies of God believes everyone needs to be a good steward of *all* God's creation—including the earth. As clearly indicated in Scripture, we believe the earth was created by God (Genesis 1:1-31; Isaiah 37:16). We also believe it serves as the

temporary home for all members of the human race (God's highest life form, made in His own image; Genesis 1:27) until eternity.

"Scripture indicates the earth will one day be consumed by fire and cease to exist (Zephaniah 1:18; Isaiah 51:6). We believe before this occurs Christ will return to earth for His church (those who have accepted and believe in Him). At that time Christians will enjoy a new earth presently unknown to mankind (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13).

"In spite of these future events, we feel Christians must act responsibly in their use of God's earth as we rightly harvest its resources. As stated in Genesis 1:27-30, we believe God has given mankind alone complete dominion (authority) over the earth's resources. These resources include the land, the water, the vegetation, and the earth's minerals; as well as the animals, fish, and fowl. Like the earth, we acknowledge these to be gifts from God to mankind; and as gifts they are to be appreciated and cherished. As Christians we believe dominion requires good stewardship of our temporary home—earth."

--from General Council of the Assemblies of God, [Environmental Protection](#).

God permits humans to use animals to satisfy vital human needs, but does not condone mistreatment of animals

- **God permits humans to use animals to satisfy our needs, including our need for food and medical research. However, the Bible does not give us permission to mistreat animals or to be abusive toward them.**
- "The Bible recognizes that animals are a source of food for humans. It also gives humans dominion over the animal world--and by implication over the plant world (Genesis 1:26, 28). There is also an instance in Scripture where selective breeding of animals took place (Genesis 30). Some recent research has sought to produce milk through genetic engineering that would be therapeutic and enriched for the benefit of those who drink it. Such research would seem to be acceptable as long as the animals used in the research are not mistreated. Animal life does not have the standing in God's sight that human life has, but there is no justification in Scripture for needless abuse and mistreatment of animals."
--from General Council of the Assemblies of God, [Genetic Alteration and Cloning](#).

Contemporary References on Animals

Human dominion should be exercised as "stewardship"--as "taking responsibility for the ...care of creation"

- **According to Assemblies of God, our stewardship duties require us to "care for the creation" and God will hold us accountable "for how we use His provisions."**
- "Stewardship is taking responsibility for the things God has called us to do, one of which is to care for creation. With 'environmental stewardship,' we take the commission in Genesis to care for the creation and become responsible to do that. God has given us

dominion over the earth to use it, not to abuse it....God goes on to say He's going to hold us accountable for how we use His provisions."

--from Tri Robinson, [Creation Stewardship](#), in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

Learning proper stewardship can provide children with both physical and spiritual benefits

- **When we take proper care of God's creation, we receive both spiritual and physical benefits. For example, playing outdoors and interacting with animals can help children's "cognitive skills and ability to learn." It also can reduce childhood stress, "obesity, diabetes, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and depression," while at the same time helping children learn "important life lessons like responsibility and compassion." In addition, interacting with the nonhuman world can provide parents with opportunities to talk with children about God.**

- "These days, a growing number of kids are simply staying indoors. Instead of observing ants in the grass or stirring puddles with sticks, they're watching television, scanning the Internet and playing video games.
 "...[W]hile today's youngsters are better informed about environmental issues than previous generations, they have little firsthand knowledge of the natural world. They can expound on rain forest ecology, but they've barely explored their own backyards.
 "...[I]t's no coincidence there are so many reports of obesity, diabetes, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and depression among juveniles.
 "'The natural world is an antidote to many of the things that are true threats to children. Time outdoors can affect cognitive skills and ability to learn. It can also reduce stress.'
 "'Being outdoors supplies the fresh air, sunshine and physical exercise children need for optimal health...Additionally, time outdoors helps children learn about the marvels of God's creation, instilling a sense of wonder for the natural world and providing opportunities for joy of discovery.'"
 --from Christina Quick, [Go Inside and Play: Today's Kids Favor Nintendo Over Nature](#), in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

- "From pets, children learn important life lessons like responsibility and compassion."
 --from Rose McCormick Brandon, [The Gift of a Loyal Pet](#), *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

- "[E]ngaging in outdoor activities with...children opens up conversations about spiritual topics. On a recent camping trip...a frightening bear sighting led to a discussion about backing away from certain situations in life.
 "'There's nothing like roasting marshmallows around a campfire and looking at the stars to get everyone in a contemplative mood... In that setting, the moments come when your kids really reflect on things. We're often able to talk about God in ways that aren't possible even during...daily family devotions at home.'"
 --from Christina Quick, [Go Inside and Play: Today's Kids Favor Nintendo Over Nature](#), in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

Proper stewardship also provides adults with physical and spiritual benefits

- **Caring for animals and other nonhuman members of God's creation also provides adults with physical and spiritual benefits. Having a pet "can help reduce elevated blood pressure and assist in driving away the blues" and some animals "can detect the onset of death and be alert to some early-stage cancers."**
 - "We are told by experts that having a pet can help reduce elevated blood pressure and assist in driving away the blues. These reasons seem to suggest that nearly everyone needs a pet of some sort. People who live alone may find a pet to be good company....Pets love you unconditionally. Share your love and time with them and reap the benefits."
--from [Adopt a Pet](#), in *Prime on Line*, Assemblies of God USA, Senior Adult Ministries,
 - "...[R]ecent study results show... animals can detect the onset of death and be alert to some early-stage cancers."
--from Rose McCormick Brandon, [The Gift of a Loyal Pet](#), *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

Proper stewardship is an important way to love our neighbor

- **Taking care of creation also provides us with a way to take care of each other, since degradation of creation causes suffering to our human neighbors.**
 - "When we come to Christ, we become other-centered. We love our neighbor. Therefore, we start to care about things that are hurting our neighbor. Misuse of the environment is causing people to suffer all over the world, especially in developing nations and in Third World countries where polluted waters are killing people. This should be an awakening point to the Church."
--from Tri Robinson, [Creation Stewardship](#), in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

Stewardship of creation and an appreciation of animals can help us build our own faith in God while providing a nonthreatening way to begin talking to others about the Lord

- **Creation reveals God's "invisible qualities," providing us with assurance of God's existence and with reassurance that God can be trusted in all things. Appreciating the nonhuman world can lead people to a belief in God and provide a "nonthreatening way to begin talking to people about the Lord."**
 - "Romans 1:20 says, 'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.' We have the assurance of God's existence because He has revealed himself through His creation. Therefore, every Christian should be concerned about the creation because it's a revelation of God, and it's a means to the unsaved world."
--from Tri Robinson, [Creation Stewardship](#), in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

- "As soon as you say 'Amen' at the end of a prayer, what do you do? Weeks or months may pass without a visible answer from God. Do you patiently wait or at some point start wondering, questioning God? ...

"Let the animal kingdom build your faith while you wait for that answer. Pick any animal, bird or insect. It doesn't matter what creature you choose. Since the Garden of Eden, its kind has followed whatever instincts God placed inside it.

"Certain birds and butterflies know when to migrate. Other animals know when to hibernate. Salmon know when to swim against the current, but not against the instincts God gave them. God clearly declared His control of the animal kingdom (see Job 38, 39). That told Job regardless of his situation God was still in control.

"While waiting for God to answer that certain prayer, let every sign of the changing seasons, every star, every animal following its instincts, help you trust God. Let them remind you He keeps the universe together with orderliness. Let them assure you He's also working right now on the best answer to your prayer."

--from William E. Richardson "[After you say 'Amen'](#)", in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).
- "I love observing and learning about all of God's creation... An appreciation for the wonders of nature can indeed lead people to a belief in God (see Romans 1), and it can be a nonthreatening way to begin talking to people about the Lord...When one enjoys God's creation, and shares it, it can open doors."

--from Ken Horn, [Creation Evangelism](#), in *Pentecostal Evangel* (Assemblies of God USA).

For more HSUS Religious Statements on Animals and other Faith Outreach resources, visit www.humanesociety.org/faith

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