

# Look Back | The Looming Storm: Taking Climate Change Seriously

*Editor's note: This article [first appeared](#) on July 26, 2013. At the time of publication, Randall was pastor of NorthHaven Church in Norman, Oklahoma.*

Recently, I awoke to flashes of lightning, deep rolling thunder and rain hitting my window.

As I lay in bed contemplating whether to check the weather on television, I thought this is nothing but a mild summer thunderstorm rolling through the city.

However, after this last spring in Oklahoma, I could not get out of bed fast enough to check the radar.

Living in Oklahoma and being a little bit of a weather junky, there is one thing I have grown confident in lately, the weather seems to be changing.

After getting out of bed and heading to work, I turned on my computer and read an article by NorthHaven's very own Bruce Prescott about our moral obligation to address climate change.

Here is an excerpt from his EthicsDaily.com [article](#): "The scientific evidence for anthropogenic climate change is clear and unequivocal. ... We have an obligation to God, to our children and our grandchildren, to all humanity and to the biodiversity of life on this planet to take immediate action to stop contributing to climate change.

"Each one of us has a responsibility to do whatever we can do to reduce our own greenhouse gas footprint. Do whatever you can to stop contributing to climate change. Make this a burning issue when you are in the voting booth to elect leaders. The future of life on this planet depends on it."

Bruce challenges people of faith to take climate change seriously, especially given the reality we are stewards of God's creation. How we treat the world often offers evidence to the kind of theology we believe and practice.

Some Christians believe we are to rule over the world, as suggested in Genesis

26. The Hebrew word used in this passage is “radah,” which means to rule over or to have dominion.

However, to rule over or to have dominion should never mean to rape. Ruling over has a deep responsibility for care and stewardship.

In the second creation narrative found in Genesis 2:4-25, we witness the Creator placing man into a garden with the instructions of “cultivating” and “keeping” it (Genesis 2:15). The Hebrew word translated to cultivate is “abad,” which literally means to work or to serve.

These two accounts and words complement each other, as humans are called to cultivate and care for the world as its ruler and steward.

We are not given the right to do with it what we want, raping and pilfering its resources for our gain without any regard to consequences.

The earth, like us, was created by God. Therefore, it too is a living organism.

As I listened to the rain drift away, I was thankful the storms were nothing more than a nice rain with a noisy entrance.

However, the weather is changing globally. As I have recalled before, you can ask all the scientists and meteorologists in the world, but I will always return to that Kenyan farmer looking out over his field.

Looking out over the dust collecting on his crops, taking an occasional glance toward the sky, he told me, “Pastor, the weather is changing. The rainy seasons that have watered our lands for generations are no longer. The weather has changed.”

For my Kenyan farmer friend, I hope to do what I can to help apply an ecological justice to this world for which I am called to be its steward.