

GOD'S HOUSE:

NOT OURS TO VANDALIZE

**Shitting on the carpetⁱ of God's House
is what happens when guardianship
is mistaken for ownership.**

God's House: *Not Ours to Vandalize*

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Opening

People all over the world have religion.
And do these religions not all have a creationist aspect?

So would not the world — this planet — be “God’s House”?

Every major religious tradition tells humans, in one form or another, that they are living in a space that is not theirs to despoil. The language differs. The metaphors change. The names of God vary. But the message is remarkably consistent: creation is entrusted, not owned.

You do not need to believe in God to recognize the force of this idea. You only need to accept that there are limits, that inheritance carries **obligation**, and that those who come after you will live with the **consequences** of what you leave behind.

This is a short book because the argument does not require elaboration. What it requires is honesty.

- We know what we are doing.
- We know what it costs.
- And we know who will pay.

What follows is not a sermon, a policy proposal, or a technological roadmap. It is an **accounting** of habits, excuses, and responsibilities — told plainly, without optimism and without despair.

Because absence of stewardship is how houses burn.

Table of Contents

Opening

Section I — Naming the Mess

- Consumption
 - Carbon
 - Denial
 - Delay
-

Section II — Naming the Alibis

- Markets
 - Inevitability
 - “Too Late”
 - “Too Small”
-

Section III — Naming the Responsibility

- Obligation
 - Restraint
 - Stewardship
 - Repair
-

End

Section I — Naming the Mess

Consumption

This is not a story about individual guilt. No one shops their way into planetary collapse alone. But it is a story about collective habits elevated into doctrine — about a civilization that mistook appetite for entitlement and convenience for innocence.

At its simplest, **sustainability** means consuming today without compromising tomorrow. Nothing more elaborate than that. It does not demand purity or self-denial, only honesty about **limits**. When we take faster than systems can regenerate, when we emit faster than they can absorb, we are not sustaining anything. We are borrowing without intent to repay.

Much of what we now call “sustainable” was invented to avoid this reckoning. Efficiency became a substitute for restraint. Innovation became a delay tactic. We learned how to consume less per unit while consuming more units overall - and called the result “progress.” The ledger did not balance. It was merely postponed.

What that postponement looks like, when translated into the language of the living world, is the systematic unraveling of life itself.

The unraveling of life on Earth is not the result of a single sin. It is driven by five **human** forces acting together: a) the conversion of land and sea for our use; b) the over-harvesting of plants and animals; c) the spread of pollution; d) the movement of invasive species across a globalized world; and e) climate change. Of these, **climate change** is not always the first blow—but it is the great multiplier, intensifying heat, drought, fire, flood, and ecological stress, and accelerating losses already set in motion. What once unfolded over centuries is now compressed into decades, and sometimes into years.ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱIf this world is God’s House, then consumption has been our most consistent form of trespass. Not dramatic. Not malicious. Just constant: furniture mistreated because it was replaceable; doors left open because energy was cheap; fires left unattended because fuel seemed endless.

We did not consume because we hated the house.

We consumed because we could — and because we denied the final consequences.

Carbon

Greenhouse gases are not the mistake. They are the record of the mistake.

For most of human history, carbon moved slowly — locked in forests, soils, oceans, and stone. We changed the tempo. In a few centuries, we learned how to unlock carbon sequestered over millions of years and return it to the atmosphere in a human lifetime.

Carbon is indifferent to intention. Once emitted, it accumulates. It persists. Physics keeps its own accounts.

We speak of carbon as a by-product, an unfortunate residue of progress. This is comforting fiction. Carbon is the invoice. The atmosphere became our ledger because we refused to keep one ourselves.

If consumption is the habit, then greenhouse gases are the **footprint**. They are the account of our choices, recorded in the atmosphere.

Carbon is the smoke alarm we disabled because it kept disturbing our comfort.

Denial

Denial is rarely ignorance. It is **management**, (albeit Machiavellian management)..

We knew early enough to act differently. What followed was not a failure of awareness but a cultivation of doubt, delay, and distraction. Denial conceded facts while rejecting implications.

In God's House, denial was insisting the smell was temporary, the warnings exaggerated, the alarms inconvenient.

Denial did not cause the damage.

Denial **delayed** action long enough for parts of the climate and ecosystem — ice loss, sea-level rise, and species extinctions — to become irreversible.

Delay

Delay is what follows when denial becomes untenable but **responsibility** is still refused.

Delay treats time as **neutral**. It is not. Carbon accumulates. Heat compounds. Options narrow. Delay does not preserve choice — it erases it.

In God's House, delay was finishing the meal before dealing with the fire.

Delay did not feel reckless.

It felt reasonable.

Section II — Naming the Alibis

Markets

Markets are tools. We turned them into absolution.

Markets do not perceive the future. They discount it. They price what can be sold, not what must be preserved.

Markets did not demand endless consumption. We did. But once demand was expressed, markets responded exactly as designed.

Markets did not fail us.

We failed by pretending they could replace judgment.

Inevitability

“Inevitable” is the language of **absolution**.

Nothing about our trajectory was preordained. It was chosen, reinforced, and defended until it felt immovable.

Inevitability is not a force of nature.

It is the after-the-fact **justification** for decisions already made.

“Too Late”

“Too late” is exhaustion masquerading as realism.

Worse, “too late” collapses moral time. It treats past failure as a reason for present **inaction** — because we did not act enough before, therefore we should act less now — because we waited too long, therefore we should stop trying altogether.

This is not logic.
It is exhaustion looking for permission.

It was never too late to act.
It was only too late to act without consequence.

“Too Small”

“Too small” sounds humble. It is not.

The “too small” argument says: “Because no single action can solve everything, therefore no action is worth taking.” Or, “Because one effort cannot guarantee success, therefore effort itself is dismissed.”

In God’s House, “too small” was the refusal to pick up the bucket because it would not stop the fire alone.

Every meaningful shift begins as “too small” to matter... until it is not.

Small actions do not **fail** because they are small.
They fail when they are never allowed to accumulate.

Section III — Naming the Responsibility

Obligation

Obligation is what remains when excuses are exhausted.

It does not ask whether action will be enough.
It asks whether **inaction** is acceptable.

Obligation proceeds despite uncertainty.

Restraint

Restraint is **discipline**, not deprivation.

Power without restraint is danger. Capability without judgment is harm.

Restraint is what keeps progress from becoming **destruction**.

Stewardship

Stewardship is responsibility extended through time.

It is **not** ownership.

It is guardianship.

In God's House, stewardship is not sentiment. It is guardianship. It is showing up after the novelty has worn off, when the work is repetitive and unseen. It is the **duty** to repair what others damaged, even when you did not cause the damage yourself. It is the duty to **protect**.

Stewardship does not promise gratitude.

It promises continuity.

Repair

Repair begins where innocence ends.

It does not erase harm. It limits its reach.

Repair does not first ask who caused the damage. It asks who is here now, who is able, and who will remain.

In God's House, repair is the refusal to walk away from the mess simply because it is no longer new, solvable, or convenient.

Repair does not promise redemption.
It promises responsibility carried forward.

We can be **builders**, rather than **vandals**.

End

i Shitting on the carpet = species extinction, devastating floods, giant wildfires, killing droughts, etc.

ii We are no longer losing one species a year – we are losing one or more species **every day** to man-made causes. This framing reflects the scientific consensus summarized by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

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