All the press coverage over Rick Santorum's idiotic suggestions that mainline Protestants aren't Christians, or that President Obama isn't a Christian, or that prenatal care increases abortion rates, or that people who favor prenatal care favor eugenics, have obscured his equally idiotic attacks on environmentalism:

> Santorum said that he was referring not to the president's faith but to environmentalism.
>
> "Well, I was talking about the radical environmentalists," he told Schieffer. "That's what I was talking about: Energy, this idea that man is here to serve the Earth, as opposed to husband its resources and be good stewards of the Earth. And I think that is a phony ideal. I don't believe that that's what we're here to do – that man is here to use the resources and use them wisely, to care for the Earth, to be a steward of the Earth, but we're not here to serve the Earth.
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> "The Earth is not the objective," Santorum said. "**Man is the objective**. I think a lot of radical environmentalists have it upside-down."

We've heard a lot about Santorum's supposed deep religiosity, but if he really believes that "man is the objective," then it might be better to term him a pagan, or at least an atheist. The touchstone of any religious worldview is that humanity is not the measure of all things: there are bigger and more important things in the universe than human beings, and thus that humility is part and parcel of an ethically appropriate worldview. If that's what Santorum means by people who believe that man is supposed to "serve the Earth," then in fact he is attacking most major religions.

In fact, the religious idea of humanity understanding its limitations is the essential idea of being the "steward of the earth." In Genesis, God's command to Adam to rule over the earth is not for *Adam's* sake: it is to preserve it for *God's* sake. We are servants of a higher power, who commands us to hold something in trust for Him (Her/It: Your Mileage May Vary). So *of course* we should not regard the Earth as simply something to satisfy our wants. Being a steward is not the same as being a tyrant. As I have written before, the Rabbis understood this: our right to rule over the Earth is only to the extent that we act as the Image of God. Santorum might not understand this, but It Is Not About Us.

I suppose it is superfluous to add that whatever “radical environmentalism” might mean, it is nowhere to be found in President Obama’s environmental policy. Wanting to mitigate and adapt to catastrophic climate change might be many things, but it is not radical. Unless of course, one regards as “radical” acting upon a scientific theory that has been repeatedly proved and accepted by virtually every scientist on the planet. Which might even be Santorum’s definition.

So I don’t know whether Santorum is a pagan, or an atheist. What is clear is that like most of the religious Right, he’s unconversant with the most basic ideas of what he claims to be his faith.