



3 Creation care is biblical mission (part 2)

Purpose: To relate specific biblical passages in the New Testament to the issue of creation care with a view to an appropriate mission lifestyle in our own community.



To set the ball rolling

Read aloud the following: *"The seas roar, the forests clap their hands, eagles fly, mice squeak, geese honk, pigs grunt and flowers bloom, perhaps their whole life long, unseen by any human eye – and this chorus of praise ascends to God, unmediated by any human interference... It is here that missionary earth-keeping begins and ends. The first obligation of every living creature is towards the Creator..."* (Peskett & Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, p 252)

The author of these studies, Alan Pain, writes: *"This quotation excites me every time I read it. I have no artistic ability myself (bottom of the class for Art in Year 8 with a memorable school report: 'not artistically inclined') but I can see something wonderfully alive in my imagination."*

Write down or draw pictures of things in creation that have excited you.



Introduction

The same God who is concerned with the renewal of the Church is concerned with the renewal of creation. The same Spirit who hovers over the Church hovers over the waters and wants to bring both into reconciliation under the headship of Jesus Christ."

(Howard A Snyder, *Kingdom Conference* 2005)



Using FAQ videos

Consider showing FAQ videos 5 and 6 before questions 5 and 6 as shown below.



For discussion

- 1 Read Hebrews 1.** The book of Hebrews was written to encourage a group of faltering Christians with compelling reasons why they should keep going. The unknown author takes some powerful Old Testament worship and offers it to Jesus. How might your discouraged and persecuted faith perk up after reading this chapter?
- 2 Compare Genesis 1 and John 1: 1-18.** How is the Old Testament creation story re-written? How is Jesus seen in the Genesis account? (See 1: 26)
- 3 Turn to Colossians 1: 15-20.** This is an early church hymn. What do verses 15-17 celebrate?
- 4 Taken together, how do these three New Testament passages add to our understanding of the Christian faith?**
- 5 Show FAQ video 5 What effects do you see of the environment groaning?**
Read Romans 8: 18-25. How does Paul picture creation here? See also Isaiah 65: 17, 66: 22 and Revelation 21:1-5.
- 6 Show FAQ video 6 Why bother to care for the earth if God is going to destroy it and start again?**
What conclusions do you come to as to how your renewal in Christ might empower you to seek renewal of all creation?



For further thought

In our celebration of communion, do we not eat bread and drink wine to celebrate a 'new creation' in which the risen Jesus is already at work? And how then can we be a community living in deliberate anticipation of the whole earth full of his glory?

3 Creation care is biblical mission (part 2) continued



Practical suggestions to consider for action by government, the local church and yourself as an individual

● Government

Support energy policies that help us transition away from oil and coal, and that encourage renewable energy generation (wind, solar, geothermal, fuel-cell). Look into the issues for and against nuclear energy as a 'cleaner' source of power. You may want to look into campaigns against new coal-fired power stations in the UK, or you may feel that these are justified as long as carbon-capture technologies are incorporated.

● Church

Encourage your church to hold an 'Environment Sunday', perhaps a whole weekend, with outdoor activities (nature walks, working party on a local nature reserve, litter pick, church picnic) as well as worship, focusing on God's creation. There are lots of ideas at www.arocha.org.uk under 'Environment Sunday'.

Consider asking your church to sign up to the EcoCongregation programme (www.ew.ecocongregation.org and www.ecocongregation.org/scotland).

● Individual

Write a prayer to Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of all creation, as well as your personal Saviour. You could use Colossians 1: 15-20 as a basis.

Next time you shop for food, take a little time to read the labels and see how much you can reduce your 'food miles'. Apart from Fairtrade produce, how much can you manage to source from within the UK?

If physically possible, are there times you could walk (or cycle, or use the bus) rather than drive? Try and see this as a spiritual discipline, using the time to pray as you walk or cycle.

If you have any other suggestions not mentioned here or in the other studies, please do not hesitate to send them to our Futureshape Green Forum by e-mailing mail@futureshape.org They will be posted on our website.