



4 Creation care is ethical mission

Purpose: To consider how a view of creation care as ethical mission might affect the way we live.



To set the ball rolling

Sufficiency means:

being content with what I have,
not wanting bigger, better or more,
not being jealous of others' possessions, holidays or buying power.

Sufficiency means:

living for today,
not worrying about yesterday or tomorrow,
not being obsessed with bank balances, fashion trends or with what others think.

Sufficiency means:

putting others first,
forgiving much and travelling light.

How does this compare with the way you live now?



Introduction

"The time has come when we must divert the focus of science and technology from industrial innovations and centre it upon understanding the vulnerabilities of the environment. No more important books can be written in our time than those which bring home these truths in a simple manner to a widespread audience..."
(John W Klotz, *Ecology Crisis: God's creation and man's pollution*)

The big question for ethics must ultimately be practical. How shall we live? What shall we do?



Using FAQ videos

Consider showing FAQ videos 7 and 8 before questions 1 and 2 respectively. Consider showing FAQ video 9 after question 4.



For discussion

1 Show FAQ video 7 *How do we begin to reduce our consumption?*

It has been said that if everyone lived as we do in the UK, consuming what we consume, it would need three earths to sustain us. Our consumptive lifestyles have put the earth out of balance. Think of ways in which you are a consumer. In what ways would it be possible for you to consume less?

2 Show FAQ video 8 *What are the effects of consumerism and globalisation on vulnerable people?*

How does consumerism increase the gap between the worlds' rich and poor? If we live a life of sufficiency, how might the poor benefit?

3 Read Psalm 67. How can we be grateful to God for his life-sustaining gifts even if we don't have personal prosperity?

4 How can we be more humble in the way we respond to the vision of authority and stewardship as set out in Genesis 1: 26-28?

Show FAQ video 9 *How can we start caring practically for creation as Christians?*

5 Is having enough for the day – and only enough – reasonable or realistic in a world of future planning, risk assessment, upgrading, insurance and pension plans?

6 Why should we expect to have more than those for whom insurance and pension plans will never be an option?



For further thought

How can we bring gratitude, humility and sufficiency together (with many other positive values) into a powerful expression of ethical mission? What difference might we expect to be noticed by our friends, family and local community?

4 Creation care is ethical mission *continued*



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

● **Government**

The damaging effects of climate change are already devastating for many poor communities, and are predicted to increase. Encourage local and national politicians to stop putting off dealing with this, and tell them if you are prepared to make necessary economic sacrifices. Perhaps unlimited economic growth has become a false idol in our culture, and needs to be challenged.

● **Church**

As a church community, challenge consumerism by holding a 'Freecycle Swapshop' where church members and the local community are invited to bring things they don't need or want, and exchange them – no money to change hands.

Why not start up a church (or home group) 'lending library' scheme to share items that people only need to use occasionally (mowers, hedge-trimmers, camping equipment, maybe even bicycles). Why do we each need our own?

● **Individual**

Gratitude: Take time to count your blessings, in terms of literally listing before God all that you have (not comparing with those who have more or those who have less but simply spending time in God's presence). Only after doing this, reflect on Jesus' words that 'from those to whom much is given, much will be expected' (Luke 12: 48).

Humility: What of your possessions are you proud of (house, car, clothes, books, collections of...)? How much of your value lies in these? Do you dare, in prayer, to give them back to God – who gave them to you anyway – without any guarantee that he'll let you keep them? Ask God to show you where your true value before him lies.

Sufficiency: How can you live more lightly – with 'enough' rather than 'more than enough'? Walk around your house asking yourself 'how would Jesus live?' and also 'how would a developing world Christian feel about these things?'

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.