



5 Creation care is jubilee mission

Purpose: To see how the idea of jubilee might help us to integrate creation care into the way we understand mission.



To set the ball rolling

Imagine you are a bird that has been set free from a cage or an animal released from captivity back into the wild. How did you feel when you were imprisoned and after you had been released?



Introduction

In the Bible the year of Jubilee is a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon. In Leviticus, a Jubilee year is commanded to occur every 50 years – a year in which slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts forgiven and the mercy of God shown.

However, jubilee was intended to be a continuing way of life for the whole community with vital priorities.

Isaiah 61 and 35 use jubilee language to describe the year of the Lord's favour, the promise of release for captives and a vision of transformation, which is to symbolise God's vindication of his people.

Jesus' dramatic 'mission statement' announced in Luke 4: 16-21 uses the very words of Isaiah, which were themselves influenced by jubilee concepts. It would seem reasonable to conclude that the concept of jubilee influences Jesus to integrate his words with good works towards those enslaved by spiritual and physical poverty.



Using FAQ videos

Consider showing FAQ videos 10 and 11 as options before the discussion time.

FAQ Video 10 How is climate change affecting countries like India and China?

FAQ Video 11 How responsible are China and India for climate change?

Consider showing FAQ video 12 after question 5.



For discussion

1 Read Leviticus 25. In the light of the concept of jubilee, how were God's people to treat:

- God himself
- other people
- the poorest and most vulnerable in their community
- all of creation?

2 How does jubilee introduce a new dimension to creation care (Leviticus 25: 2)?

3 How does jubilee forge a vital link between creation care and social justice (Leviticus 25: 13, 25-28, 35-43)?

4 How might we become jubilee people?

5 What might be the distinctive features of a jubilee spirituality?

Show FAQ Video 12 How should we encourage governments to respond to climate change?

6 If we were to adopt more of a jubilee dimension to our lives, how might the physically poor and spiritually poor benefit?



For further thought

Finish quietly by reflecting on some words of Maria Harris, written in 1996:

"Jubilee ushers in an era of forgiveness, freedom, justice, and jubilation. It begins, however, with a not-doing; the decision to pause and to let the land lie fallow. It begins in stillness. It begins... with a sabbath that readies us for the next decade, the next century, and the next millennium."

(Proclaiming Jubilee! A spirituality for the 21st century, p 16)

In your personal life, your family, your church or your community, what could you leave to lie fallow and not do?

5 Creation care is jubilee mission *continued*



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

● **Government**

Encourage the UK Government to exceed the UN target of 0.7% of GDP in development aid. In particular, encourage Government to fund projects that help the poorest countries both mitigate and adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

● **Church**

Could your church be a catalyst (working with others) to your local community becoming a 'transition town / community'? This is a rapidly growing movement helping communities move away from carbon- and oil-hungry ways of living, and towards a more local basis for energy and food supplies. (<http://transitiontowns.org>)

Start a weekly 'eco-hint' on your church's newssheet (or even better project it onto a screen and save paper). You can find suggestions on the Friends of the Earth website (www.foe.co.uk).

● **Individual**

Consider the clothes that you wear (NB Matthew 6). Who made them, from what raw materials, and in what conditions? Could you decide to (for example) buy organic Fairtrade cotton (better for the health and income of the workers, and for the health of the environment)? Next birthday / Christmas could you request vouchers for ethical clothing stores (there are several on-line)?

If you have a car, how green is your driving? Could you drive at a steadier speed, and brake and accelerate more gradually to save fuel and reduce emissions? If you need to replace a car, consider getting the greenest possible model (www.eta.co.uk will help).

Look at your finances – where you bank, and how you invest any savings. If all creation is God's, could you bank or invest more ethically – seeking to build God's Kingdom and store up eternal treasure?

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.