

6 Creation care is world mission

Purpose: To consider that the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20) incorporates creation care as part of our mission to the world.



To set the ball rolling

Put yourself in the place of someone who was born and lives in the developing world. Your home is no bigger than the shed in your back garden. You have a large family to feed, clothe and provide for. Your home gets flooded once a year; the flooding is getting worse and there's nothing you can do about it. Work is on a day-to-day basis, if you're lucky.

What would you like someone in the West to do to help improve your situation?



Introduction

It's hardly controversial nowadays to insist that all mission is world mission, even when it happens on your own doorstep. Local mission is world mission. It's also a natural process to accept that, however locally we operate, creation care is world care; environmental concern is world concern in search of a radical and global response to the great biblical question, "Who is my neighbour?" Whenever we act locally, we need at the same time to be thinking globally.

If we want also to argue that creation care is integral to mission, and so to world mission, do we not need to accept it as part of our mandate to the world, irrespective of the fact that some communities are not yet able to grasp the issues as urgent for their present or their future?



Using FAQ videos

Consider showing FAQ videos 13 and 14 before questions 1 and 4 respectively.



For discussion

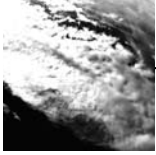
- 1 Show FAQ video 13 *Who will be most affected by climate change?*** and ask what contributes to the condition known as "compassion fatigue" when people are turned off by world need?
- 2** How much responsibility do we have to care for people who may not be in a position to care for themselves?
- 3** What partnership can we make with non-Christians who may see environmental issues from a perspective very different from our own but who long "to do something about it"?
- 4 Show FAQ video 14 *Shouldn't we be more concerned about helping the poor than worrying about the extinction of frogs and polar bears?***
Many poor and rural communities rely on the natural cycles of the food chain for survival. How far should we help them maintain a natural balance with their local environment?
- 5 Read Matthew 28: 18-20.** What aspects of lifestyle would you say are integral to being a disciple of Jesus?
- 6** How might you expect a world mission agency to express creation care responsibly?



For further thought

"Are we prepared to see mission as ultimately about the renewal of all things in Christ? The transformation of individuals by the good news of the gospel is still and always will be central, but the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ is also good news for all creation, and our mission must see individuals transformed in order to see transformed communities and signs of the transformation of creation itself. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Dave Bookless, A Rocha



6 Creation care is world mission *continued*

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

● **Government**

Lobby politicians to encourage an effective global treaty that will rapidly reduce CO₂ emissions in Western nations, gradually reduce the emissions of fast-developing nations (such as China and India), and at the same time support the poorest nations in developing sustainably. Many Christian organisations are supporting the Stop Climate Chaos initiative (www.stopclimatechaos.org) in this area.

● **Church**

Encourage your church, in its mission giving and prayer, to support a Christian mission project or organisation that is caring for creation.

Have a 'Green' notice board in your church, informing people on international, national and local issues, and giving practical links to grants and advice.

● **Individual**

'Adopt' a country or city already affected by climate change – ideally using links you already have (or using a BMS World Mission or A Rocha project). Keep informed as to what is happening, and pray regularly for that situation. Get involved more practically, or financially, if appropriate.

Connect with creation in your locality! This might be through gardening, growing food, keeping a list of wildlife you see, or regularly prayer-walking your local park whilst noticing changes in the seasons. See all this as part of your worship – imaging God in your relationship with creation.

If you haven't yet, sign up to www.livinglightly24-1.org.uk as a way of continuing to make regular steps towards reducing your impact, and leading towards a lifestyle that reflects your relationship with God.

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.