

Green
Lithograph



document
wallet

FOOLSCAP/MADE IN ENGLA

new thing, but makes 'all things new'.

(Edward P. Echlin, author of *Earth Spirituality, Jesus at the Centre*, Arthur James, 1999)

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.' (Gen. 8:22).

Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realise that we cannot eat money.

(North American Cree Indian.)

The following collect and affirmation of faith both come from Christian Aid Harvest Anthologies.

Harvest Collect

God our creator,
you have made us one with this earth,
to tend it and to bring forth fruit;
may we so respect and cherish
all that has life from you,
that we may share in the labour
of all creation
to give birth to your hidden glory,
through Jesus Christ,
Amen.

(Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, 1988,
WIT and MOW.)

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that Creation is a gift of God,
an expression of our Creator's goodness.
We believe that as human beings we are part of this creation
and that we share in a special way in the creative power of God.
We believe that the resources of our land and waters and air
are precious gifts from our Creator,
to be used and looked after with loving care.
We believe that there is a rhythm to God's creation, like a drum beat;
When we lose the beat, or the drum is damaged, the music is out of tune.

(Pacific Women's 'Consultations on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation'.)
from *Prayers and Poems, Songs and Stories*, WCC 1988.

An Alternative Presentation

All too often Harvest Festival becomes an occasion for waste if fruit and vegetable gifts cannot be given away quickly. An alternative is to hold up, or present, examples of signs of 'Caring for God's World' with appropriate words spoken.

The children present their gifts

Minister: We bring these gifts of food, and give thanks to God.

All: O Thou who hast blessed us with abundance of food: we offer thanks for our prosperity, for the skill and perseverance of the farmer, and for thy gifts of fertility and growth. We pray thee so to implant thy word in us, that faith may grow to full maturity, and our lives bring forth much fruit in good works.

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All: O Thou who are the Creator of all beautiful things: we offer thanks for the beauty of flowers in park and garden and hedgerow. Grant us also so to manifest thy glory that the desert places of life may blossom as the rose.

Morning Prayer - Centring Music - Bach

2. Free form version of psalm 17. (said by all)
Loving Creator, hear our prayer
and listen to our call made in the spirit of truth.

You know what we are,
and that we seek to be faithful to you:
We search your word to find our way.
Let us walk in your footsteps
so that our feet do not slip.

We call on you, O Creator of life
and you answer us.
Listen to our voice and show us
your loving kindness, O saviour of all who flee evil.

Strengthen us in the struggle to do your will.
Let our reward be to see you face to face,
and come into your loving presence.

Short silence

Taizé CD Veni Sancte Spiritus

God has created me.
God is my Lord,
having dominion over me.

God is also my strength,
for I can wish to do nothing
good without God.

Through God I have living spirit.
Through God I have life and movement.
Through God I learn, I find my path.

If I call in truth, this God and
Lord directs my steps;
setting my feet to the rhythm of
his precepts.

I run like a deer that seeks its
spring. Hildegard of Bingen

Final blessing (All)

Ever-loving God,
may we, the people of the bread,
live for a world in which no one hungers;
may we, the people of the vine
live for a world in which no one is excluded;
and may all who have shared in
the body and blood of your Son
love our brothers and sisters
rejoicing to know that you loved us first.

Christian Aid

Short Silence

Loving God, All your creation calls you blessed.
In love you have formed a universe, so diverse yet so related.
and into its web you call us forth
to walk the land and swim the sea
with all our natural brothers and sisters.
To the stars we seem no more than blades of grass.
Yet to you, each of us, as each blade of grass and each star,
is an irreplaceable treasure, an essential companion
on this journey of love.

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Christian Aid

recognising our proper place as part of your creation.
Grant us the strength and courage, we pray,
for such radical transformation into your Kingdom.
Then we, too, with the very stones will shout, "HOSANNA"!

HYMN

Blessing

May the Father,
who fed his children with bread and honey in the wilderness,
strengthen you in your pilgrimage to the Promised Land. **Amen.**

May the Son,
who gave his flesh for food and his blood for drink,
keep you in eternal life and raise you up on the last day. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into all truth,
help you discern the Lord's body
and empower you to proclaim his death until he comes. **Amen.**

And the blessing

The 'Thanksgiving' is from 'Prayer for Global Restoration' by Michelle Balek of Pax Christi USA.

The 'Blessing' is by Michael Perham in *Patterns of Worship*, Church House Publishing. (10T29)

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Notes and Additional Material and Resources.

Harvest is a time to reflect on and respond to our creative role within God's creation and our responsibilities, under God, for all God's creatures. Harvest Festival is still one of the best loved church festivals, although the days when whole village communities worked together to bring in the harvest disappeared with the coming of the combine harvester.

How our food is produced is a hot, topical issue. Even people who have never grown a radish are worrying about pesticide residue on carrots, growth hormones in milk and genetically engineered soya. Many feel that current farming practices are providing cheap harvests today by putting at risk the mechanism God has set in place to ensure there will be harvests 'tomorrow'. Many farmers are on the margins of economic survival.

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Danthe Pratt

Afternoon Group Sessions

Session One B Sarah de Nordwall

Session Two A Mary Grey

Worship Points in the Church

Look out for, and interact with, four worship points which are based on the four themes of the day:

- Letting loose hope
- Pioneering practical discipleship
- Equipping prophetic witness
- Empowering agents of change

Timetable

10 am — Coffee/Tea served in Queen Mother Centre; viewing exhibition of CEL's past in south aisle of church; informal worship at four worship points in church; join in with singing in church.

11 am — **Service of celebration and thanksgiving** led by Alison Adam of the Iona Community.

11.30 am — **Storm of Hope Forum** with Mary Grey, Ann Pettifor, Dave Bookless and Chris Walton, chaired by Peter Day.

12.50 pm — **Lunch**

2 pm to 3 pm — **Afternoon Groups** session one
(short break to change rooms)

3.15 pm to 4.15 pm — **Afternoon Groups** session two

4.30 pm — Wine/Juice and cake served in the church, live music and toasts to CEL's first 25 years by Dr Tim Cooper and to CEL's future by Paul Bodenham.

4.50 pm — **Final act of worship**

5 pm — Close.

Storm of Hope

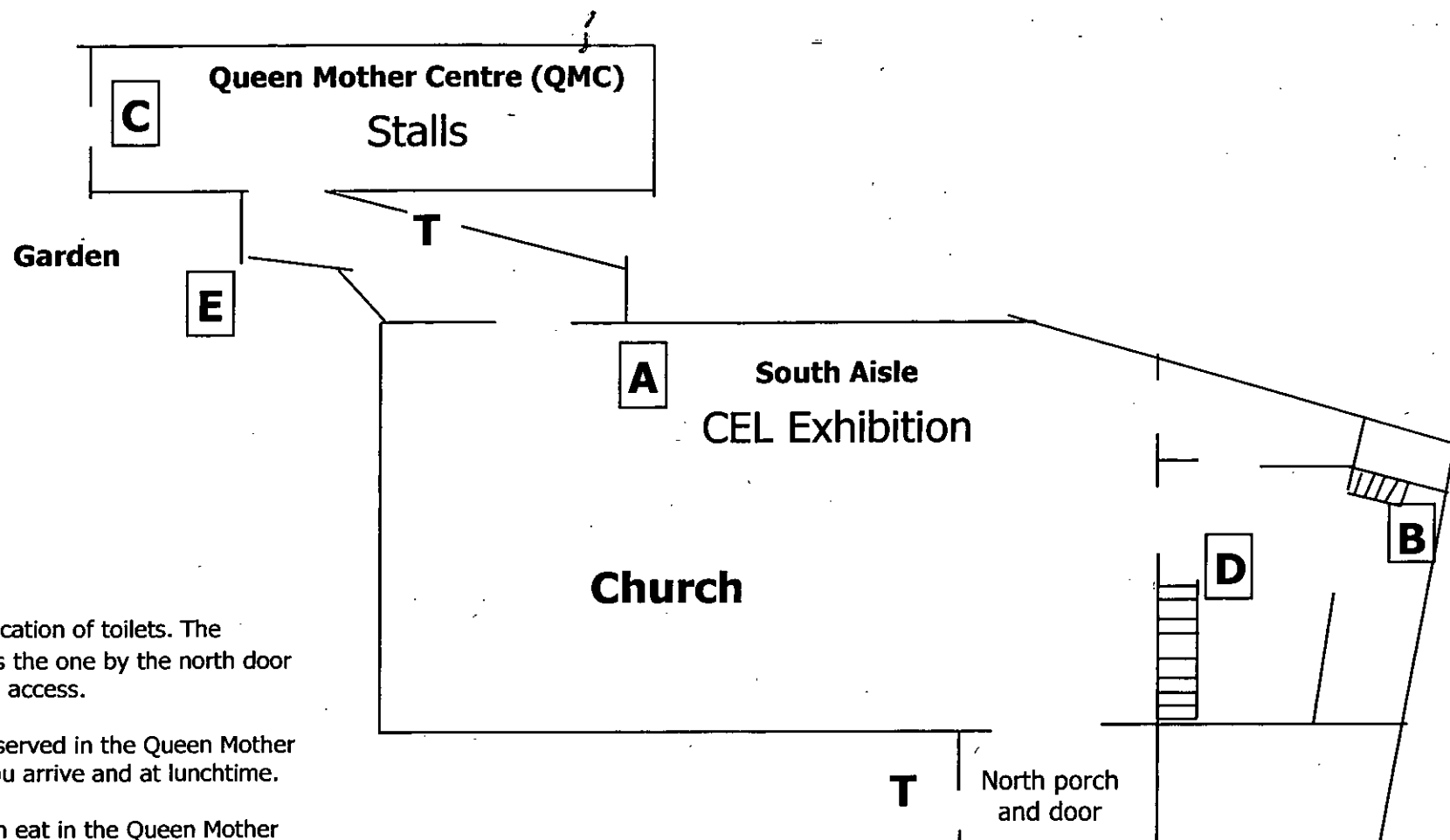


Saturday 7th July 2007
All Hallows-by-the-Tower Church, London

See back of this sheet for your afternoon group sessions and timetable for the day. See inside for plan of church, location of afternoon groups and toilets.



Christian Ecology Link, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER. 01524 33858. info@christian-ecology.org.uk www.christian-ecology.org.uk
Company Reg. No. 2445198 Reg. Charity no. 328744.



T marks the location of toilets. The disabled toilet is the one by the north door and has a ramp access.

Drinks will be served in the Queen Mother Centre when you arrive and at lunchtime.

Lunch: You can eat in the Queen Mother Centre, the church, the garden, the paved area outside the church and across the main road in the park.

If you have not brought any food there are plenty of cafes and food shops around All Hallows by the Tower church.

Mini-workshops: If you have chosen the mini-workshop option go into the church where there are sheets for you to sign up to the mini-workshop you prefer. This option only runs in the second afternoon group session.

Afternoon Groups

Letters on the plan refer to the different groups. For groups **B** and **D** the letters show the location of the staircases leading to the Crypt (B) and Porch Room (D).

A Mary Grey — south aisle of church

B Sarah de Nordwall — Crypt. Entrance down stairs under the tower.

C Ann Pettifor — Queen Mother Centre

D Dave Bookless, Jo Rathbone & Nicholas Grey — Porch Room. Entrance up the stairs from the recess at the back of the church.

E Mini-workshops — various locations. Meet in the garden and you will be taken to the right place for the group you will have chosen on the day.

We sing the chant below, which is a Yoruba poem from West Africa:

Enjoy the earth gently,
enjoy the earth gently,
for if the earth is spoiled
it cannot be repaired.

Four places of reflection - introduction to worship through the day

Looking forward

Prayers of concern

*hold our babies - on children's bodies, earth, our etc
with you then God -*
A reflection ending with words based on 1 Peter 2 : 4 - 10

Blessing

(said together)

God of the elements, bless us
breathe on us
wash us clean
warm us

root us in your good ground
and nourish our living with holy joy, amen.

*God says Come as living stones
(we are) who by Jesus
live. But to live it
Selfish & independent
Gus & you are a help
called to light -*

Song: Come with me for the journey is long.

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Litany from 'Iona Abbey Worship Book', ©Iona Community. Blessing from
'Cherish the earth' ©Ruth Burgess. www.iona.org.uk

Alison Adam, Worship Works, St. Mark's Centre, 22 Greenwich South St., London;
SE10 8TY. Tel: (0)20 8853 0565 mob/cell: 0798 929 0107
alison.adam@worshipworks.co.uk

Storm of Hope Christian Ecology Link celebrating 25 years

Remembering

Leader: In the beginning God made the world:
Women: made it and mothered it,
Men: shaped it and fathered it.
Leader: Filled it with seeds and with signs of fertility,
All: *filled it with love and its folk with ability.*

Leader: All that is green, blue, deep and growing:
All: *God's is the hand that created you.*

All that is tender, firm, fragrant and curious:
God's is the hand that created you.

All that crawls, flies, swims, walks or is motionless:
God's is the hand that created you.

All that screeches, sings, laughs, roars or is silent:
God's is the hand that created you.

All that suffers, lacks, groans or longs for an end:
God's is the hand that created you.

The world belongs to God,
The earth and all creation!

Cantai ao Senhor psalm 98

1.
Cantai ao Senhor
um cantico novo (x3)
cantai ao Senhor,
cantai ao Senhor.

2.
Rejoice in the Lord
and sing God a new song (x3)
Rejoice let us sing,
rejoice let us sing!

3.
The ends of the earth
have seen God's salvation;
(x3)
Rejoice let us sing,
rejoice let us sing!

4.
Break forth into song
with trumpet and lyre; (x3)
Rejoice let us sing,
rejoice let us sing!

5.
The rivers and mountains
join in the singing; (x3)
Rejoice let us sing,
rejoice let us sing!

6.
For God will return
and judge all the nations (x3)
Rejoice let us sing,
rejoice let us sing!

words: psalm 98, para. C. Michael Hawn, paraphrase © 1999, Choristers Guild.
music: Brazilian folk melody, arr. © Simeí Montiero, administered by Choristers Guild

Poetry by Sarah de Nordwall.

Litany This we know, the earth does not belong to us;
 We belong to the earth.

 This we know, all things are connected;
 Like the blood that unites one family.

 This we know, we did not weave the web of life;
 We are merely a strand in it.

 This we know, that whatever we do to the web;
 We do to ourselves.

 Let us give thanks for the gift of creation;
 Let us give thanks
 That all things hold together in Christ.

Reading Joel 2: 21-22 and 28

Celebrating

Prayers of thanks

Touch the earth lightly

1.
Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

2.
We who endanger,
who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive.

3.
Let there be greening,
birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.

4.
God of all living,
God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
teach us, deflect us,
Christ re-connect us,
using us gently and making us one.

words by Shirley Erena Murray, ©Hope Publishing Co.

Celebrating 25 years of CEL - Tim Cooper and other founder members

The gift of water is brought forward.

Minister: We bring this gift of water, and give thanks to God.

All: O Thou whose spirit didst brood over the great deep, and divide the waters from the waters: we thank thee for the gift of water, refreshing, vitalizing, cleansing. Grant that we, who are baptized by water and the spirit, may be so cleansed and renewed as to become a spring of water welling up to salvation.

Other examples of signs of 'Caring for God's World' which could be held up or presented during the Service.

Farming: grain and bread; grapes and wine; or seeds for the future.

Materials: an empty aluminium drink can as an example of a natural resource and an opportunity for recycling; or some object which has been reused.

Energy: an energy saving light bulb.

Transport: wheel in a bicycle.

A Children's Talk for Harvest

Seven people hold up a letter each which spells the word '**HARVEST**'. What makes a good harvest?

To answer this question the letters are rearranged to spell '**HAVE**'. List all the many things which we have from God for which we are grateful, including food and clean water; farmers to cultivate land; insects to pollinate plants, rain to help them grow and sun to ripen them.

The letters are then rearranged to spell '**STARVE**' as we remember the people who do not have the things we have and the birds who starve from lack of food when the insects which they normally eat are poisoned.

The letters are then rearranged to spell '**SHARE**'. We share God's earth with other people and with all other creatures. When we share what we have with those who starve — that is what makes a good harvest.

A 'Chain' Story

- * Knotgrass used to be a common farmland weed.
- * Weedkillers sprayed on cereal fields have made the knotgrass disappear.
- * A leaf beetle called *Gastrophysa polygoni* only ate knotgrass.
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- * Partridge chicks used to eat a great many *G. polygoni* leaf beetles.
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So the destruction of a weed indirectly affected the bird populations on our farmland

Bible Readings

Joel 2:21-28. Joel pictures the fullness of harvest with thanksgiving to God for sweet rains. Joel was familiar to the first Christians and quoted by Peter in his Pentecost sermon (Acts. 2:17). Humans are now interfering with the climate and changing rainfall patterns.

Isaiah 35:1-10. Isaiah pictures the flowering of the desert. Fertility is awaited in God's earth-inclusive kingdom.

Luke 12:13-21. Even though not the point of this parable, and written for a different world and culture, does it say anything to us today about supporting local small scale food growing?

Matthew 13:1-9. Jesus used the imagery of seeds in his parables. Until recently people saved their own seed to sow the following season. How as Christians can we help preserve local seed diversity in a world of large multinational companies?

Hymns

**We suggest that you use at least
some really traditional harvest hymns:-**

Come, ye thankful people come
We plough the fields and scatter.

Other suitable hymns:-

Now thank we all our God
Praise the Lord! Ye heavens adore him
Beauty for brokenness
God in his love for us lent us this planet
Now the green blade rises from the
buried grain
All creatures of our God and King
Sing with joy to the God of all creation
Let us with a gladsome mind.

Songs for Children.

Who put the colours in the rainbow?

Anthem for Choir.

'Look at the World', John Rutter,
(Oxford Easy Anthems, Oxford University Press, £2.00.)

The words of **Psalm 65** in the Order of Service are from the Church of England's draft 'Psalter 1998'.

Other Resources

Creation Harvest Service Book, produced by ICOREC for WWF, £2.00, including p&p. Available from ICOREC, 3 Wynnstay Grove, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6XG.

Church Services for the farming year for town and country, John Clarke, editor, The Arthur Rank Centre, 1988, £1.00, including p&p. This has traditional rural orders of service for Plough, Rogation, Lammas and Harvest. Available from the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ.

Christian Aid has produced several harvest anthologies with useful material in recent years. Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT.

**Arrange a Harvest Supper where all the food and drink is either locally
grown, organically produced or fairly traded.**

JOIN CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

Send £18 standard (low income £10) or £28 joint/family/corporate to
CEL, FREEPOST SE 8672, 9, Nuthatch Drive, Earley, READING, RG6 5ZZ
For more details about CEL contact CEL, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER.
Tel. 01524 33858. email info@christian-ecology.org.uk

You can send for copies of this Harvest material to CEL Publications,
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Please send a donation to cover cost of printing and postage.

You are welcome to photocopy it if you acknowledge CEL.
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(Edward P. Echlin, author of *Earth Spirituality, Jesus at the Centre*, Arthur James, 1999)

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The gift of water is brought forward.

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Let us with a gladsome mind.

Songs for Children.

Who put the colours in the rainbow?

Anthem for Choir.

'Look at the World', John Rutter,
(Oxford Easy Anthems, Oxford University Press, £2.00.)

The words of **Psalm 65** in the Order of Service are from the Church of England's draft 'Psalter 1998'.

Other Resources

Creation Harvest Service Book, produced by ICOREC for WWF, £2.00, including p&p. Available from ICOREC, 3 Wynnstay Grove, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6XG.

Church Services for the farming year for town and country, John Clarke, editor, The Arthur Rank Centre, 1988, £1.00, including p&p. This has traditional rural orders of service for Plough, Rogation, Lammas and Harvest. Available from the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ.

Christian Aid has produced several harvest anthologies with useful material in recent years. Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT.

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Main pages

Home
New Visitors
What's New
Site Map

Who we are

Story
Structure
People

What we do

Working Groups
Assemblies
Papers

The Network

Countries
Topics
Organisations
Publications
Stories

Participate

Join the network
Contribute material

Papers

Documents produced by the European Christian Environmental Network

Creation Time 2006

6 July 2006

Liturgical Material for Creation Time 2006 [More]

20 years on from Chernobyl

6 July 2006

A call to action, liturgical resources and briefings. [More]

More space for Creation in the Christian Calendar

20 April 2006

A consultation calls for more space to honour God as Creator and reflect on the preservation of the environment. [More]

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1 June 2005

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Sep 2007
[Daily Prayer](#)
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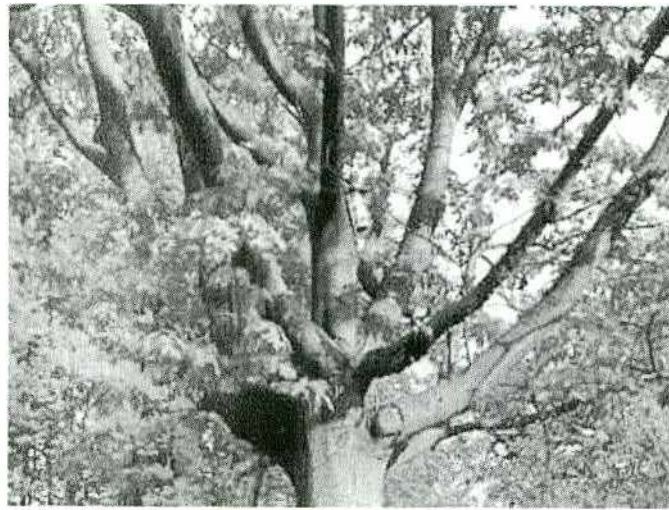
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[CEL home](#) > [Links and International](#) > [ECEN](#) > [Creation Time](#)

CREATION TIDE (Creation Time)

September 1st to the Second Sunday in October

(See also pages on harvest festivals and LOAF for useful links and resources))



A Time of Creation in the Church Calendar

*Resolution of the European Christian Environmental Network
adopted at its meeting in the Evangelical Academy in Loccum on
October 31 1999*

The Second Ecumenical European Assembly adopted the following resolution: "We recommend that the churches consider and promote the preservation of Creation as part of church life at all levels. One way would be to observe a common creation day, such as the Ecumenical Patriarchate celebrates each year. Rationale: The seriousness of the ecological dilemma for the future of the human race means that churches' consciousness of it must be raised. Commitment to preservation of the creation is not an issue among many others but an essential dimension of all church life."

The European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN), having considered and discussed this resolution, submits to churches and to all organisations and people concerned the following recommendation:

1. We welcome the resolution of the Second Ecumenical Assembly in Graz. We urge the churches to put it into practice through a common and concerted effort.
2. The theme of creation is present in the worship of all Christian traditions. For example, many Protestant churches celebrate harvest worship services and in the Roman Catholic Church the Day of Saint Francis is acquiring increased significance. The proposal of the Ecumenical Patriarchate adds a further

Children's CAFOD

Act justly, love tenderly

Introduction

Today's Gospel is a powerful example of Luke's commitment to the poor.

However, it is also a difficult story to use with children, as notions of punishment and Hades are not appropriate for their age level. The exchange between the rich man and Abraham does not add a huge amount to the first description, except to underline that there is a big gap between the rich man and Lazarus.

The name 'Lazarus' means 'God-helped' and God's compassion for him (and the poor generally) is further emphasised by his being carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

The last part, about the rich man's brothers, makes clear that this passion for the poor has always been part of Scriptural teaching. Hence the theme today which is taken from the prophet Micah.

Theme: 'Act Justly, Love Tenderly'

Display board: Use CAFOD posters and visuals prepared specially for the theme.

Preparing the space: This has to be comfortable with plenty to catch the eye and arouse interest. However the children sit (chairs or floor), circles and semi-circles are best.

Holy table: To make children feel that what they are doing is not second best, try to give them a child-friendly version of what the adults have in the main church – a sort of mini altar reflecting the theme, the season, and give pride of place to a decorated bible or lectionary. (If possible, the children should process in behind the lectionary.)

Gather

A brief word of welcome (particularly to new children), perhaps introducing the idea that God has a special place in his heart for those who are poor and that he wants us to be the same.

Song

'Come and Join the Circle' from *Share the Light* by Bernadette Farrell

Optional prayer

Father, thank you for all that you give us. Give us eyes to see the needs of the poor and hearts open to giving. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

'Listen to Jesus' from *Share the Light* by Bernadette Farrell

Any simple Alleluia that the children enjoy singing

We bless our heads, our lips and our hearts with the words:

Jesus, we think of you;

Jesus, we speak of you;

Jesus, we love you.

Scripture Reading: Luke 16:19-22

(shorter form, from the Children's Lectionary)

Jesus told this story to the Pharisees:

"Once there was a rich man who always wore the best and most expensive clothes. And he always ate the best and most expensive food.

"There was also a very poor man, named Lazarus. He was so poor that he used to sit outside the rich man's house and beg for food. He was even happy to eat the scraps from the rich man's dinner.

"This poor man, Lazarus, had sores on his skin and the dogs used to come and lick them. When Lazarus died, the angels took him to be with Abraham in heaven, and Abraham welcomed him and took him in his arms.

Later the rich man died too."

Telling this story to children

It will not help to get side-tracked on to discussions about heaven and hell.

The core of this Gospel is in the first part where the rich man fails to notice Lazarus. This can be demonstrated in a simple but dramatic way by inviting two children to take on the roles of the two characters.

The rich man should be adorned with finery and jewellery. Perhaps you could ask the children to list the things that rich people have (sports cars, big houses etc).

Lazarus should be sprawled nearby, perhaps in a piece of sackcloth or with a 'homeless and hungry' card. Get the 'rich man' to walk past him without even noticing. When Lazarus dies, move him to a special place or chair, remove his tatty clothes and give him a special robe.

Reflection and discussion

The aim of any reflection on this reading is not guilt. We are all in the West rich by comparison to the poorest of the poor. The aim is to ignite the strong sense of fairness that children have.

- What do you think about the rich man? Why doesn't he notice Lazarus?
- How do you think Lazarus feels? What could the rich man do to help?

- Why does God take such good care of Lazarus after he dies?
- What do you think God would like to say to the rich man?
- What should happen to the rich man?

Song

'Let there be Love'

'This is What Yahweh Asks of You'

'Share the Light' (Bernadette Farrell)

Drawing together

(using CAFOD pictures and perhaps a map or globe)

We might not see many poor people at our gates but we do see them every day on our TV screens. They are our brothers and sisters, even though they live in parts of Africa and Asia. We cannot do anything directly ourselves but we can make a lot of difference through supporting CAFOD.

Creed (optional)

We believe in God who gives us everything

We believe in Jesus who showed us how to love

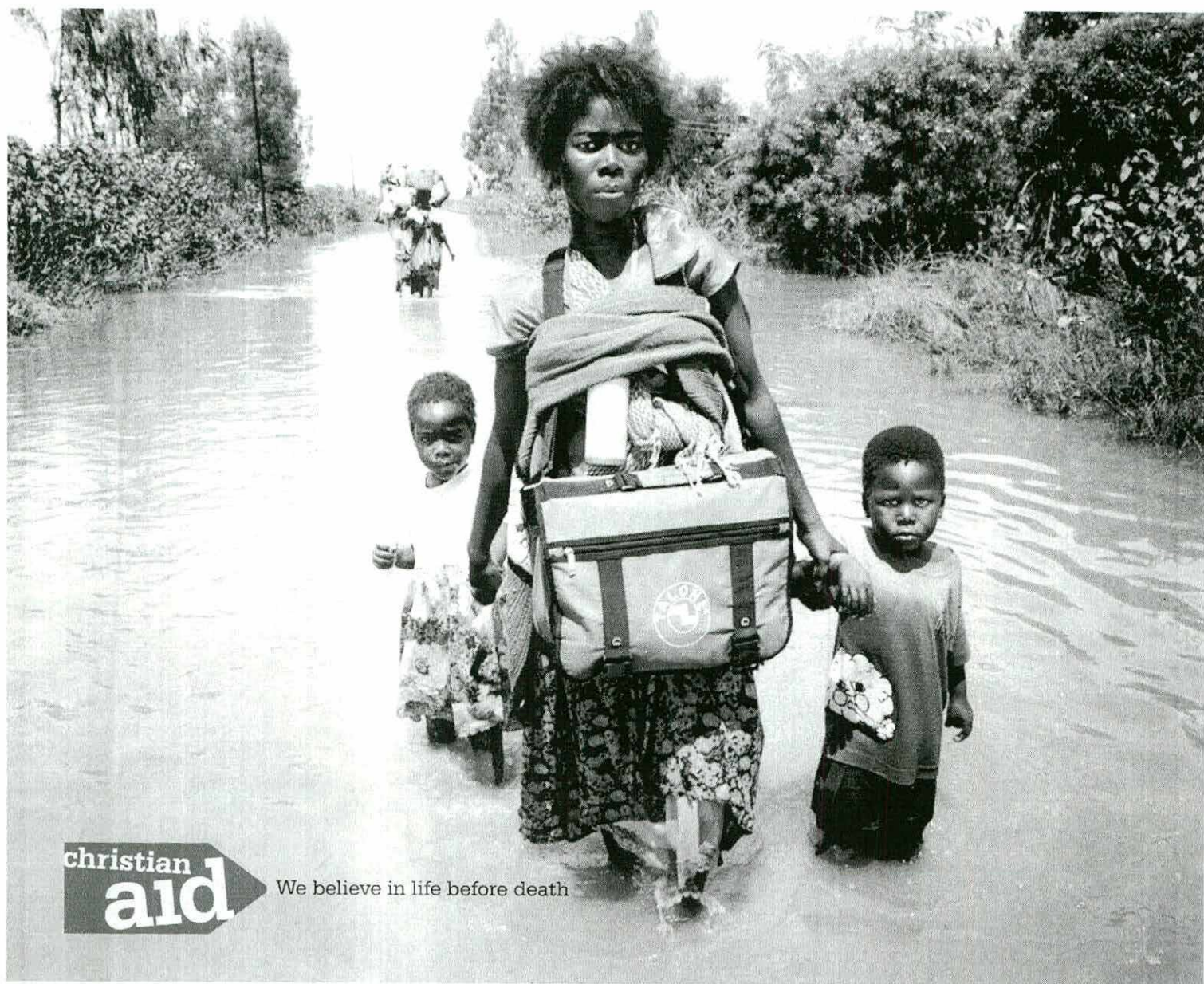
We believe in the Spirit who is with us now.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank you for giving us so much and help us to share with our brothers and sisters everywhere. Amen.

'All creation groaning': A theological approach to climate change and development

Paula Clifford



christian
aid

We believe in life before death

Contents

The injustice of climate change	4
The distraction of environmentalism: moving beyond stewardship and dominion	6
Climate change and relational theology	9
Christian hope: where does it lie?	13
Conclusion	19
Endnotes	20

All Bible quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version, anglicized edition © 1989, 1995. Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Front cover: Holding tightly onto her children, a mother looks for the safety of higher ground near Chokwe, Mozambique, during the floods that covered the country in 2000
Front cover photo: Tom Stoddart/Getty Images

**'All creation
groaning':**

a theological
approach
to climate
change and
development

Preface

The starting point of this report is the fact that climate change is above all a justice issue. The people who are already suffering most from global warming are those who have done the least to cause it, and have the least resources to do anything about it. So the basic question underlying the theological statements made here is not 'why should Christians care about the environment?' It is 'why do Christians care about injustice?'

The answer can be simply put. The gospels tell us not only of the coming of Jesus but also of his complete identity with the human condition, in particular his solidarity with the vulnerable, with those who suffer injustice. In the words of St Paul: 'He emptied himself taking the form of a slave' (Philippians 2.7). That solidarity is also reflected in Jesus' unambiguous command to care for those who are sick, hungry or thirsty, the strangers and the prisoners, because 'just as you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me' (Matthew 25:40).

In the light of our concern for justice, this report proposes a theological model based on relationships, set out above all in the New Testament, as a basis for taking action to try to limit the environmental catastrophe that threatens us. It also examines some of the recent approaches to climate change by Christian environmentalists and by the Churches.

Climate change is not mentioned in the Bible, nor has it so far been part of contemporary systematic theology. In formulating some of the theological principles that underlie Christian Aid's climate change work, I am not claiming that this is in any sense a final theological statement. It is rather a report on work in progress; our theoretical thinking will develop alongside our experience of the complexity of climate-related issues across the world.

The theologians who have inspired many of the ideas in this paper are all from the global North. This is something that will surely change in the future, but it must be remembered that for the poorest and most vulnerable countries, climate change is just one more thing they have to bear. To step back and reflect on its theological implications is therefore an impossible luxury for most.

I am most grateful to the very many people who have helped me formulate my ideas this far. They include participants in seminars and conferences in the UK, Europe and Africa, as well as friends and colleagues nearer to home. In particular, I have benefited from discussions at a Christian Aid seminar for scientists and theologians held at Christ Church, Oxford in June 2006, and from meetings of the World Council of Churches climate change working group in Nairobi in November 2006 and in London in April 2007. It goes without saying that any errors contained in this report are entirely my own.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:23-24)

Paula Clifford
Christian Aid
June 2007

The injustice of climate change

'My father rode a camel. I drive a car. My son flies a jet airplane. His son will ride a camel.'
Saudi saying'

Introduction

There are two key reasons why the crisis of global warming is first and foremost a justice issue. The first is that the people who are most vulnerable to its effects are those who have done the least to cause it. Today, these are overwhelmingly the poorest people in the poorest countries – for example, nomadic herders in northern Kenya, who trek hundreds of miles in search of water, only to encounter danger and conflict when they find some. Further examples include poor farming families in Bangladesh, forced by rising sea levels to leave their homes for temporary and illegal camps on embankments, where they cannot earn a living; and poor rural communities in Central America, who live with increasingly frequent and intense hurricanes. None of these people have more than a minimal responsibility for the CO₂ emissions that have caused, and continue to exacerbate, the current crisis.²

We should not imagine that this injustice affects only poor people in poor countries. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, it was the poorest people who suffered the most. The Catholic Bishop of New Orleans described his visit to the worst-affected areas as an abrupt initiation into social justice issues, saying: 'I was baptised in dirty water'. Nor will this

injustice end with the present generation: the next generations – our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren – will inherit an earth that is struggling for survival. Like today's poor people, tomorrow's children – both rich and poor – are at risk.

The second major reason for regarding climate change as a justice issue is that it comes at a time when the world's richest nations have reached a peak of development, while the poorest are still struggling to get on to the development ladder.³ While it is well within the means of rich countries to maintain their current levels of economic activity while adapting to climate change, the picture is very different for poor countries.

It is imperative that the development of poor countries should continue, and it must be recognised that this will present a challenge to the global North – a challenge that is, at least in part, an ethical one. As Juan Mayr Maldonado of Colombia put it:

It is the right time to re-think the development model... to establish a new social contract that leads down the path of poverty reduction and greater equality to sustainable development. It's also the right time to re-think the model of international aid. Without question, it's about an ethical commitment that can be put off no longer.⁴

Heat, drought and deforestation in Senegal⁵

The village of Seroume in northern Senegal lies on the banks of the Senegal River, which forms the border with Mauritania. The region is part of the Sahel, a transition zone between the arid north and the tropical green forest that borders the maritime coast. It is an area of sparse savannah vegetation; it has only 100-500mm of rainfall per year and this is slowly decreasing. The 70-year-old village chief, Abdoulaye Diack, describes how human activity has intensified the harsh effects of nature:

'There has been a huge change. Until 1970 we had a

really good life, with lots of forests and bushes and wild animals. My grandfather came here because of the proximity of water so he could cultivate the land. There was a lot of rain back then, the river was full of fish, and whatever you grew was successful. Then came the drought in the 1970s and desertification.

Desertification was caused by the drought, but also by human action. At the time of French colonisation it was forbidden to cut down trees, but after independence in 1960 the Senegalese government allowed it and the whole area became totally bare. Even worse, as woodcutters produced charcoal, it burnt and

damaged the soil, leaving it infertile. If you look at what's happening in the world today, there is also a lot of industrial pollution. We now see the effects of ships transporting chemicals. And there is just one atmosphere that affects everyone.'

Abdoulaye's daughter, Meniam, has similar memories: 'When I was a little girl there were lots of trees and now we can no longer talk about a forest. It is also much hotter than before. The heat is unbearable. And I remember, the annual flooding of the river would reach 2km around the village, and because of that we could grow sorghum. Today it's over. Instead, we get huge floods that bring lots

of rubbish and destroy the crops.'

Christian Aid partner Union pour la Solidarité et l'Entraide (USE) is working with the villagers, teaching them how to protect and replant trees. Besides providing fruit, the new forests will give some protection against the heat and the Saharan dust and sand storms. But while people in this vulnerable area are doing all they can to reverse the effects of local activities that have damaged their environment, they have done nothing to cause today's dangerously high temperatures and can do little about other forms of environmental pollution that are affecting their region.

'A theological approach to climate change must be rooted in the wider theology and ethics of development, rather than treated as an extension of Christian environmentalism.'

The 2006 Stern Review makes a similar point in economic terms:

The world does not need to choose between averting climate change and promoting growth and development. Changes in energy technologies and in the structure of economies have created opportunities to decouple growth from greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, ignoring climate change will eventually damage economic growth. Tackling climate change is the pro-growth strategy for the longer term, and it can be done in a way that does not cap the aspirations for growth of rich or poor countries.⁶

However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is less upbeat, referring in its May 2007 report to 'multiple barriers' that will have to be overcome if development is to be made more sustainable by changing development paths.⁷

Climate change impacts development programmes across the board, from disaster risk-reduction to food security and health. The injustice that has brought this about suggests that a theological approach to climate change must be rooted in the wider theology and ethics of development, rather than treated as an extension of Christian environmentalism.

A theological response

Over the last 20 years, poor countries have been adversely affected by major world issues, in particular the international debt crisis, unfair trade rules and the AIDS epidemic. In all these, the biblical basis for action is clear and its details will be familiar. The point of departure is the statement by Jesus in Luke 4, quoting Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me
To bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.
(Luke 4:18-19)

This preferential option, or bias, to the poor is also the starting point for much of the thinking of liberation theologians. And the imperative for Christians to translate this

bias into practical care for the vulnerable, in particular those who have suffered injustice, is set out in the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46.

While the duty to care for the weakest members of society – the 'alien, the orphan and the widow' (Deuteronomy 24:21) – is firmly established in Old Testament law, the ministry of Jesus establishes the restoration of justice as a key element of life in his kingdom. This hope for the future is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, not so much in its legal tenets as in the figure of the suffering servant in the second part of Isaiah, where we read of the servant who was 'despised and rejected' (Isaiah 53:3), 'oppressed and afflicted' (53:7), in short the servant who was in solidarity with the vulnerable, whose calling was to 'faithfully bring forth justice' (42:3). This is the same solidarity with the poor that is revealed in the ministry of Jesus, from his baptism, through his teaching and healing miracles, to his death on the cross.

However, the problem with this approach – which is thrown into sharp relief by the crisis of climate change – is that it assumes that the perpetrators of injustice will be led to change their ways. German theologian Jürgen Moltmann highlights this question when he asks 'How can unjust people become just?' This will be considered in more detail when we come to look at how some people have made a link between climate change and sinfulness. However, it is worth mentioning here Moltmann's argument⁸, that the Old Testament ideal of establishing justice for people deprived of it, needs to be related to the Pauline idea of the justification⁹ of sinners (those who have acted unjustly towards others), since they both have the effect of revealing God's mercy in the world.

It should be emphasised that with climate change it is not simply a question of acknowledging and addressing injustice – which is arguably the case with debt relief, where the crucial first step (though probably not the final one) is for rich countries to write off poor countries' debts and therefore stop their demands for payment. Climate change makes a double demand on us: first to recognise the link between human-induced global warming and poverty; and secondly to formulate a just response. The first has been hindered for years by a reluctance to view climate change as a 'people' issue rather than a purely environmental one, while the second raises ethical issues that have barely begun to be considered. It is imperative that theology offers a framework in which both these aspects of injustice may be adequately

The distraction of environmentalism: moving beyond stewardship and dominion

'Climate change is too important to be left to the environmentalists.'¹

Because climate change self-evidently has to do with the natural world, there is a tendency to look to the well-established Christian environmental movement for theological principles to contain it. Clearly, an approach to the climate crisis which calls for a just solution to an unjust problem is unlikely to sit comfortably in a framework that is geared more to conserving nature than to caring for people. But it is worth considering at this stage what environmentalists have had to say about global warming.

One initial problem is that environmentalism itself has not been given much attention by either Protestant or Catholic theologians. Indeed, it has often been regarded with a high degree of suspicion (see page 17). Where it is considered, it seems to be viewed as something of an add-on to the doctrine of creation. Perhaps for that reason, although there are now studies in creation theology that do have a New Testament basis, Christian environmental thinking is largely founded on a relatively few passages from the Old Testament, and lays a particular emphasis on human responsibility.

In the introduction to his excellent book *The Re-enchantment of Nature*, Alister McGrath draws attention to what he calls the 'special status' of nature.² He uses emotive terms such as 'loss of respect' and the 'pillaging' of nature, and is critical of writers such as Lynn White who (not without reason) has blamed Christianity for promoting a view that nature exists to serve humankind.³ McGrath's aim is to rescue environmentalism from some of the excesses of what he calls 'highly eclectic, domesticated and sanitised versions of Eastern religions' and to place ecological concerns firmly within Christianity. So what are the Christian environmentalists saying about nature, and how might this relate to climate change?

Nature reveals something of God

Genesis tells us that: 'God saw everything that he had made and, indeed, it was very good' (1:31). It is a very ancient part of Christian tradition that nature reveals something of God to humanity, in particular God's goodness and beauty. Yet it is worth pointing out that this cannot happen without human beings: people are a constant presence, even if it is an unseen presence, in such theological statements about creation and the natural world. There is, for example, the idea conveyed above all in the Psalms, that nature reflects the glory and beauty of God. 'The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork' (Psalm 19). This beauty depends on human perception, and the Psalmist finds

emotions in nature itself that are human emotions. So in Psalm 104, which refers to the living things that God has created, we read: 'When you hide your face, they are dismayed'. In the Psalmist's view of creation, God's action causes nature to react in a very human way.

In much the same way, as Alister McGrath has observed, our human view of the beauty of nature is not a perception of creation in its raw state. McGrath comments that: 'The "natural" landscapes and vistas that Wordsworth so prized are actually the outcome of the human transformation of nature.'⁴ These landscapes, cherished, let's say, as typically English and 'unspoiled', are the result of centuries of agricultural work that has somehow tamed nature, along with the occasional building, such as a nice old stone church. There's nothing wrong with this: we just need to recognise that when we refer to nature and its conservation, we are acknowledging that nature is not complete in itself. It is perceived in relation to the human beings who live and work in it as well as to God the creator.

Even in the Old Testament, nature as we would now perceive it is not all good. The sea is the symbol of chaos. It is the deep that was covered in darkness before creation began (Genesis 1:2) and home to unspeakable monsters – 'the dragon that is in the sea' (Isaiah 27:1). It is only in the concluding chapters of Revelation that this is brought under control: 'the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more' (21:1).

So already we have to recognise that beauty in nature – even the beauty of God himself – is dependent on human perception, which in turn is culturally determined. The vision of nature in Genesis and the Psalms is an idealised one, and while it is undeniable that very many people do look at the beauty of nature and see in it the hand of God, this does not alter the fact that nature changes: it is not autonomous, and it is dependent on human beings for its beauty and religious significance to be perceived.

Stewardship

If there is one word that the majority of Christians would probably come up with when asked about the relationship between human beings and the natural environment, it is 'stewardship'. This is not a biblical term. Genesis says that the newly created human species should 'have dominion' over every living thing (1:26); and there is the further detail in Genesis 2:15: 'God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it'. These verses have generally been taken to be the basis for the idea that humans have a certain responsibility

Nature is more than just the object of human duty

to the earth, although there is little detail as to what form that should take, beyond the good agricultural practices set out, for example, in the Sabbath principles in Deuteronomy.

Integral to this is the idea that the land belongs to God and not to us: 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it' (Psalm 24). At the beginning of Leviticus 25, God tells Moses on Sinai that he is giving the people of Israel their land, and follows this with a long list of instructions on how to look after it. Whether such a gift remains in the possession of the giver is a moot point. According to US theologian Paul Jewitt, since God made the world, 'we live in the world as his tenants',⁵ a statement which seems to downgrade the role of human beings in the created order, and conveniently overlooks the fact that tenants care much less for land or property than does an owner.

It is surely stretching the purpose of what used to be called the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16 (in modern translations he is more appropriately referred to as a 'manager') to see in it an allegory of God the Creator confronting humankind's failure to care for the earth. Yet traditionally, theological statements about creation have tended to focus on a certain human duty that arises out of respect for God's creation, alongside the response of worship that creation evokes. In this view, conservation has mainly been seen as a Christian duty, and one that is based on a fairly slight biblical foundation. And the natural environment has been viewed as something quite separate from human beings, with no real suggestion of any close interaction or interconnectedness.

Yet nature is more than just the object of human duty (with all the tediousness and possibly guilt that it implies) and it is

not solely a vehicle for God's glory to be displayed. In fact, there has always been more to it than this in scripture. If we are willing to look, there are many examples of God working through and with nature to communicate with human beings: think of the rainbow after the flood, or God speaking to Moses out of the burning bush (Exodus 3:3), or the darkness that fell on the earth at the crucifixion. In general there is a much closer relationship between God, human beings and the created order than has generally been acknowledged by environmentalists. For Christians to take climate change seriously, we need to bring out this relationship of interconnectedness and set it at the heart of our faith.

Dominion

In February 2007, one of the UK's main terrestrial TV channels screened a programme called *God is Green*. Among those interviewed was a US millionaire who had made his fortune in mountain-top coal mining. A conservative evangelical Christian, he had no doubt that, for all the carbon emissions his activities caused, he was exercising a God-given right. In Genesis, he argued, God gave Adam 'dominion': nature is ours to control and exploit for our own benefit – an example of the attitude that provoked Lynn White's hostility to Christianity mentioned earlier. In other words, the mining entrepreneur saw in Genesis a neat hierarchy: God – Adam – nature. There is no concept here of any kind of special relationship between human beings and the natural environment. This should not really surprise us. The biblical writer's main interest, as far as relationships go, was in the relationship between human beings and God.

Why should churches care for the environment? (extract)⁷

Seven motivations for action

1. We believe in God in three persons, God the Creator, God the Saviour and God the Sustainer...

Our responsibility for the environment is a logical consequence of this belief.

Environmental issues must be discussed at every level... The concept of caring for the

environment must become an integral component of all church education and training programmes.

2. God's concerns are for the whole created order, and so our decisions are taken in solidarity with other world regions.

In particular we wish to open ourselves to the experience of people in other parts of the world, who often live a simpler lifestyle and use appropriate technologies.

A high quality of life is not synonymous with our own model of prosperity with its inherent waste of resources.

4. The Earth belongs to the Lord and so we should respect the life of plants and animals.

Church property and land should be designed to provide habitats for plants and animals.

6. Jesus said: 'I have come that you may have life in fullness' but he did not say: I

have come that you can live life in material excess.

Therefore we suggest that churches adopt the four principles:

- Reduce (eg reducing energy consumption by five per cent per year)
- Refuse (eg refuse to buy virgin paper products)
- Reuse (eg use china instead of disposable plates and cups)
- Recycle (eg recycle printer cartridges).

Some modern commentators have tried to distance themselves from the idea of human beings dominating nature. One example is Gerhard von Rad, who suggests that the concept elevates nature rather than subjugates it. Von Rad argues that with the creation of human beings, non-human creatures are given a new relation to God. 'Because of man's dominion [the creature] receives once again the dignity belonging to a special domain of God's sovereignty'.⁸ While the details of this argument seem somewhat tenuous, it does at least have the merit of positing a relationship between God and nature, albeit a relationship that still depends on human mediation.

It is when the New Testament is taken fully into account that such arguments become unnecessary. As will be argued in the next chapter, the coming of Jesus into the world reveals his identification with the whole created order. Old Testament concepts of stewardship and dominion give way to what Moltmann calls 'solidarity christology' or, more simply, relationships of divine love.

Climate change and environmentalism

It is only in the last few years that Christian environmentalists have paid much attention to climate change. As recently as 1999, the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) published a statement (reissued in 2006) headed *Why Should Churches Care for The Environment?*. This sets out seven biblically-based 'motivations for action', but contains no mention of climate change or its effects in poor countries, and is generally unambitious in its aims (see extract in the box on page 7). Worryingly, developing countries appear to be seen here as an enviable model for simple living. And while ECEN is becoming much more active in encouraging churches to work on climate change and making links with development agencies, this document is not untypical of statements produced by a variety of Christian groups.

Where Christian environmentalists do consider climate change, they typically see it in terms of human disobedience: a collective failure to care for our world, coupled with the sin of greed in creating for ourselves polluting luxuries such as gas-guzzling motor vehicles and long-haul flights. This is necessarily an over-simplification. It is not generally made clear which biblical command is being disobeyed, nor is it obvious at what point human inventiveness and creativity became sinful. But while, to their credit, Christian environmentalists have been urging action to halt damage to the atmosphere, plants

and animals for some time, the human suffering brought about by climate change, and the injustice that underlies it, has to date not featured on their agenda. Trying to integrate this into an already flimsy theology risks creating a distraction from the urgent tasks of exposing environmental injustice and rectifying it.

Climate change and relational theology

'When it comes to rich, high-polluting countries fulfilling their obligations, the difference between rhetoric and reality gets wider the deeper you go.'¹

Drawing largely on passages from Genesis and the Psalms, Christian environmentalism teaches us something about the relationships between God and humans, God and nature, and human beings and nature. It does not, however, show us anything about relationships between human beings themselves – which is crucial in discussing the unjust effects of climate change – or the interconnectedness of God, human beings and the natural world. And, hindered perhaps by an insistence on stewardship and dominion, environmentalism does not hint at the complexity of these relationships either. Yet it is this very complexity and this interconnectedness that theology needs to explore in order to tackle climate change, which has the potential to affect every area of our lives.

As suggested earlier, a theology of development that takes particular account of the relationships between human beings (rich and poor) and (sinful) injustices that lead to those relationships breaking down has its starting point not in the Old Testament but in the New. When we take into account as well the three-way relationship between people, God and the natural world, a New Testament theology of relationships is likely to be more appropriate to our understanding than an environmental theology that has its origins in the book of Genesis.

It is, after all, in the Gospels, particularly the Gospel of John, that we find the most profound statement of interrelationships. John tells us that Jesus came into the world that 'came into being through him' (1:10), and records Jesus' prayer that his followers might enter into the relationship of oneness with each other and with God through his son (17:22-23). This is echoed in Paul's vision in Colossians 1:20, where humankind takes its place among 'all things, whether on earth or in heaven' that are reconciled to God through the blood of the cross. Indeed, some theologians have taken this verse to mean that not only humankind but all of creation is redeemed by the cross. This approach requires that the environment be taken into account in theological discussions of the atonement (redemption).²

In addition, a theology that has its roots in the New Testament will necessarily express the resurrection hope that is at the heart of the Gospel, and will contain principles on which we can act, if we are to make that hope real to a suffering world.

Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*

A very helpful theological expression of creation and relationships is set out by Karl Barth in his monumental work, *Church Dogmatics*. Barth also has much to say on the subject

of community – a useful context in which to consider human interrelationships.

In summary, Barth takes the concept of covenant relationships between God and human beings (familiar to us from stories of the Old Testament patriarchs) and suggests that such a relationship existed from the moment of creation. For Barth, creation and covenant are inextricable, a relationship that finds expression in the incarnation. As he puts it: 'The purpose and therefore the meaning of creation is to make possible the history of God's covenant with man which has its beginning, its centre and its culmination in Jesus Christ. The history of this covenant is as much the goal of creation as creation itself is the beginning of history.'³

It is against this background that we are to see the relationship between people and God, and relationships between human beings. There is a oneness and an interconnectedness between people, creation and God that has been present since human history began. The model for this oneness can be found in the insistence of Barth and his followers that all three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are present at creation and take part in the act of creation.

And it is surely in this context of relationships that we are to view human sinfulness. For sin lies in the breakdown of human relationships, revealed in the unjust distribution of resources which creates a chasm between rich and poor. Sin also lies in the loss of connectedness between human beings and the environment, which has brought about the crisis of global warming. And in all this there is, too, the breakdown of the relationship between us and God.

Barth's 'life of the children of God'

Barth first presents his view of the Christian community in volume I of *Church Dogmatics*. In essence he argues that people who receive God's word are compelled to act in accordance with it. He understands human life as made up of *being* (its inward aspects) and *doing* (its outward aspects in fellowship with others). So 'community' is equated with action, which unites believers. While the Psalmist views creation as praising God, Barth suggests that human praise of God is to be found elsewhere: 'No praise of God is serious, or can be taken seriously, if it is apart from or in addition to the commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Praise of God must always be understood as obedience to this commandment.'⁴

Barth's insistence that Christian unity is centred on this commandment, and his conviction that love of one's neighbour

'No praise of God is serious, or can be taken seriously, if it is apart from or in addition to the commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."'

is not a matter of choice, provides a helpful formulation of the necessity for action that arises out of the interconnectedness of the whole created order. While his work on covenantal relationships offers a framework for describing the current climate situation, his emphasis on Christian love and action should inspire a movement for change.

Sin: the breakdown of relationships

As already discussed, when environmental damage is seen in terms of a failure of human stewardship, sinfulness is equated with human disobedience. However, other explanations of sinfulness have emerged, particularly in relation to climate change.

One approach is that offered by the Orthodox tradition. This view emphasises the beauty of God's world above all. There is a natural harmony or equilibrium to the created order, and it is sinful to disturb that natural equilibrium. How do we know if we are doing that? The Orthodox reply is that we human beings have an instinctive knowledge: if we go down the route of 'abusing' nature we are sinners. A statement by the Patriarch of Constantinople in September 2006 puts it like this:

God instilled in every beneficial relationship between man and creation feelings of joy and pleasure. Furthermore,

Who is my neighbour? Life as an environmental refugee

One of the most worrying predicted consequences of climate change is the likelihood of huge numbers of environmental refugees. Bangladesh could lose up to 18 per cent of its landmass as sea levels rise and rivers flood, forcing millions of people to migrate in search of food, clean water and shelter. But this is not just a problem for the future: people are already living as environmental refugees.

Amina Begum and her family have already had to move three times, as their home has been pushed

back by the River Ganges. The river bank is rapidly eroding as more Himalayan snow melts each year, filling the river and leading to increased flash flooding. Up to half a kilometre of land is lost each year as a result.

'We lived in Kaijertak for ten years but we lost our land to river erosion. When the erosion started, I was worried we'd lose the house, so we dismantled it and moved to Bagoyta. We were there for another ten years. Then we lost everything again. The erosion happened suddenly so we lost our house, too. Sometimes the land can

just disappear into the river in the space of two hours.

Through a relative's financial help, as well as some savings, we managed to buy a piece of land. The government gave us no help at all. And we were charged more than we should have been because we were in a desperate situation, so we had to take out a loan as well.'

Amina joined a local community organisation set up by Christian Aid partner the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB). They gave her a small loan to buy a couple of goats, and she has been able to expand the

family's income by raising livestock. She comments: 'Since we first lost our land to the river we never had enough food or clothes. But now we have much more food and better clothes and we have been able to install a latrine.'

But the outlook is grim: 'This place is only about one-and-a-half kilometres from the river bank, so one day it will be taken, too. Nobody can predict when it will happen, so we are saving money so that we can buy land somewhere else. The trouble is we can't go too far because the land further away costs so much money.'

This 'proper measure of things' is what, in the Middle Ages, was seen as moderation. However, medieval writers did not see this as something innate, but more realistically as something to be worked at and developed.

Of all the world church leaders, Patriarch Bartholomew I has most forcefully articulated the perceived link between sin and environmental degradation. In 2005 he wrote that the dangers threatening the earth and the natural environment have been brought about by 'the natural ramification of human acts but, mostly, by the moral consequences of human crimes'. He clearly states that climate change is a moral issue, although other commentators will be rather more guarded in their language. But what exactly are those crimes that have such a devastating effect?

Back in the Old Testament, Genesis 1 points to the sin of Adam, aspiring to be God by eating the apple of the tree of

knowledge. Is this how we are to see industrialisation and globalisation – as humankind playing at being God? If this is so, it remains difficult to discern when the sheer human ingenuity and skill involved in creating aeroplanes or the internet ceased to be a legitimate source of wonder and became a matter of condemnation. Where did we go wrong and how should we have known before it all became too late? Is it not asking too much of human wisdom to expect us to understand the future consequences of our actions that until recently were unimaginable? In his film *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore quotes Mark Twain: 'What gets us into trouble is not what we don't know. It's what we know for sure that just ain't so.' We thought we knew there was no connection between human activity and our planet's climate. We weren't playing God: we just got it wrong.

Perhaps a better Old Testament source for understanding human shortcomings is in Genesis 4 and the sin of Cain – not this time a matter of mental aspiration, but an act of violence that results from the complete breakdown of human relationships. Interestingly, the medieval mystic, Hildegard of Bingen, saw this act as affecting all creation: 'When Abel's blood was shed, the entire Earth sighed and at that moment was declared a widow. Just as a woman without the comfort of her husband remains fixed in her widowhood, the Earth was also robbed of its holy totality by the murder committed by Cain.'

In other words, creation and human beings are intimately connected in a special relationship. Hildegard's view is very much from a New Testament perspective, her words reminiscent of St Paul's in Romans 8, where he writes of human suffering being echoed by all creation 'groaning in labour pains'. The suffering of one engenders suffering in the other, even when the natural world is not the direct recipient of human violence. This is seen most significantly in the New Testament at the crucifixion – the bleakest moment in human history – when darkness falls upon the earth.

Structural sin

'Do not put your trust in princes.' (Psalm 146:3)

There are many warnings in the Bible of what happens when individuals shift responsibility from themselves to society at large, in other words, when their relationship with God becomes somewhat flawed. 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

is Cain's famous retort to God after he has murdered his brother (Genesis 4:9); in Psalm 20, the Psalmist warns of the consequences of trusting in the major social structures of the day rather than in God.

Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses,
But our pride is in the name of the Lord our God.
They will collapse and fall,
But we shall rise and stand upright. (Psalm 20:7-8)

So when in 2006 an Anglican bishop proclaimed that travelling by air was a sin, he did not receive much serious attention, possibly because even the most faithful Christians could not readily understand where personally they were going wrong and what they could do about it. However, if we switch our attention from individual actions to collective ones, the picture becomes much clearer.

John Macquarrie helpfully separates individual sin from what he calls 'the massive and wrongful orientation of human society'. He describes the danger of this 'structural' sin as follows: 'The collective mass of mankind in its solidarity is answerable to no one and has a hardness and irresponsibility that one rarely finds in individuals.'

This is echoed by Jürgen Moltmann who warns that 'the doctrine of the universality of sin can lead people to perceive a limitless solidarity'.⁸ Moltmann is also critical of Protestantism's emphasis on the individual, which has led to a failure to recognise the importance of structural sin. In other words, if everyone else is doing something, the impulse to question one's own behaviour quickly dies away and is replaced by a feeling of powerlessness: there's nothing I can do that will change anything, so why should I bother?

Moltmann's experience of living through the Nazi period in Germany lies behind his question: 'How can unjust people become just?' This question is relevant to climate change because we cannot simply repent of our acceptance of, and contribution to, structural sins of injustice, and be assured of forgiveness. We are also obliged to become just, to do what we can to heal our broken relationship with the natural environment.

Conclusion

If the climate change crisis is to be properly addressed, the concept of structural sin urgently needs to be highlighted. In relational terms, this means that while individuals seek to heal

Christian hope: where does it lie?

'Forget about making poverty history. Climate change will make poverty permanent.'
Nazmul Chowdhury¹

their imperfect relationships with others and with the world around them, the breakdown of the relationship between society as a whole and the natural world must also be urgently addressed. Indeed, global warming and its consequences can only be combated satisfactorily if society in general, and its representatives in national government and international institutions in particular, take this on board. This lays a great responsibility on the Christian community as the active children of God to recognise the structural sin to which they have contributed, and a still greater responsibility on their leaders to influence other leaders in the society of which they are a part.

Love in action

The promise of the gospel is of hope and healing. And the ministry of Jesus shows us that this is not some kind of pious hope, but a very real offer of change for the better. Nor is it a promise for the distant future, for the afterlife: as the healing miracles demonstrate, it is a promise for the here and now.

So it is important that we understand the vision of 'a new heaven and a new earth' in Revelation 21 as a promise for our time and for future generations. Just as the resurrection body of Jesus bore the marks of suffering, so our new earth will be scarred by irreversible damage: dried-up rivers, new expanses of desert, areas rendered uninhabitable by extreme heat. Yet we have the potential for healing. We can mend our relationship with the natural world by drastically reducing our emissions of carbon dioxide. We have it in our power to say 'this far and no further'. The challenge is to find the will to respond, as our theology shows us we must.

For this reason it is worth going back to basics. In Luke 10, Jesus asks a lawyer how he understands the law, to which the man replies, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart... and love your neighbour as yourself' (10:27). This is the crucial teaching underlying the parable of the Good Samaritan that answers the question: 'Who is my neighbour?' To love God is to love his creation. In the context of climate change, to love our neighbour is to care for the people we have damaged while we

were harming God's creation, however unwittingly. 'Do this,' says Jesus, 'and you will live' (10:28).

Action is a key message of the resurrection. If we look at the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection appearances, we see that in most cases their purpose is twofold: they convey the information that Jesus has risen from the dead, and they also command us to act: feed my lambs (John 21:15), go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19), forgive people's sins (John 20:23). In other words, the hope of the resurrection is not something for us to keep to ourselves; we must pass it on to others, especially now the millions of people affected by poverty and global warming, by taking the necessary actions to address their needs.

In other words, hope for the future – both the future of the earth and the future of the millions of poor people to whom it is an increasingly fragile home – lies in the action we take now to heal and restore relationships. For Christians this means repenting of both structural and personal sin and acting accordingly. A restored relationship with God must entail a change in relationship with others. In the context of climate change I have stressed that this means restoring our relationship with those who are vulnerable to its effects. But once we take structural sin into account, it must also include the relationship between us and our immediate society, in order for that society to mend its own relationship with those who suffer, with the natural world and, ultimately, with God.

Greenhouse development rights: a shared response to the climate crisis

EcoEquity and Christian Aid are jointly developing a new approach to the global climate regime called greenhouse development rights (GDRs). Grounded in climate science, this approach asks: 'What do we need to do to have a good chance of preventing a climate catastrophe?' The response is that global emissions must peak within the next decade and then start racing downward. It is too late for the slow, measured,

incremental approach that most nations of the North would favour.

The GDRs approach is designed to recognise the urgency of the climate crisis while embracing the fundamental right to human development. It acknowledges that the North cannot impose any obligations on the South which would siphon resources away from poverty alleviation. A climate protection regime will only succeed in engaging poor countries if it helps them focus their energies on human development rather than mitigation.

The GDRs approach calls on rich countries to provide the resources that would allow society to move to clean, efficient, low-carbon economies. It allocates obligations to nations according to their responsibility (their historic contribution to the climate problem) and capacity (their ability to dedicate resources to the problem).

Based on complex calculations, this approach imposes parallel obligations on developing countries. Recognising that there are vast intra-national disparities in wealth (India and South

Africa, for example, are home to some very rich as well as some very poor people), it calculates national obligations in a manner that is sensitive to this income structure.

GDRs is intended as a reference framework – a standard of comparison between what is happening and what is urgently needed. It demands commitments from nations above and beyond what they currently seem inclined to accept, and illustrates just how costly this change is going to be.

For more information on GDRs, visit www.ecoequity.org

Despite the heritage of their work overseas, the major Christian denominations are failing to make the link between climate change and development.

There is little doubt that such change will be costly. There could be no resurrection without crucifixion. The double imperative of reducing our own carbon emissions and enabling the developing world to continue to develop will affect personal lifestyles in the global North in a way undreamed of by previous generations. Healing relationships means engaging in unpopular and demanding action and adopting a wholly new way of looking at things, as the greenhouse development rights project, outlined from the previous page, makes clear.

For there to be true hope, this needs to be experienced in the lives of individuals as well as, perhaps less tangibly, in their communities and wider society. While we may feel more comfortable in directing action and resources towards individuals – it makes us feel good if we can see we are making a difference – this must not be at the expense of the national, international, and even global actions that need to be undertaken in the current crisis.

Hope must also become part of our own lives in a new way. Our hope, and that of future generations, lies in our will and commitment to reduce our own carbon emissions and do whatever is in our power to improve the lives of the poor people and communities who are suffering now as a result of the emissions we have each been responsible for in the past.

In terms of an everyday understanding of hope, this does not sound particularly hopeful. And it is worth constantly reminding ourselves that the task ahead will be very costly. But we should ask ourselves whether Mary was lacking hope when she took the infant Jesus to the Temple for purification, only to be told by the priest, 'This child is destined... to be a sign that will be opposed... and a sword will pierce your own soul too' (Luke 2:34-35). Hope flourishes in the most difficult of places.

If it is a key message of Jesus' resurrection appearances that we in our actions are the bearers of hope, what form will those actions take in the current crisis?

Climate change and the churches

While all the major Christian denominations have had something to say about climate change, none of them have been particularly forceful in saying it. There has to date been no papal encyclical; no very public attempt to influence world opinion by heads of the major churches; and no call for justice for the poor that has echoed outside its own constituency. Some of the major churches have recognised, either implicitly or explicitly, that their calls for action need to be based on

integrity: they must show that they are changing themselves before attempting to change others. However, all too often they get stuck at this point. It is certainly easier to create lists for church members that deal with ways of cutting their own emissions (eg, install low-energy light bulbs, share lifts to church) than it is to produce a clear policy on global warming and call on their leaders to advocate that policy internationally. Yet as already argued, both must happen if the crisis is to be addressed and both must happen if the Christian voice is to be heard and listened to attentively.

It would be helpful if the churches could unite behind a single message, not least because this would ensure that they convey the message more effectively to those who need to hear it. Yet in a publication by the Australian faith communities,² no fewer than nine of the 16 chapters were concerned with the different views and approaches of nine Christian denominations or groups. It seems that where the churches are not silent they are reluctant to surrender their individuality. Whether or not this is a fair comment, the question that each of them must answer honestly is concerned with the message of the hope they are presenting for the restoration of justice, and the healing of relationships – between rich and poor, humans and creation, human beings and God. Just what are the churches doing on this? And what are the chances of them doing it together?

The Roman Catholic Church: a eucharistic theology

While much Roman Catholic writing has focused on the environment rather than climate change, there have been some discernible undercurrents warning of future problems. In 1977, Pope Paul VI's message for the fifth Worldwide Day of Environment called for 'a conversion of attitude and of practice so that the rich willingly use less and share the earth's goods more widely and more wisely'. The Pope's biblical point of departure was Genesis 1:31 ('God saw everything he had made and behold it was very good') and he quoted one of his own speeches about a two-way relationship between human beings and creation: 'The environment conditions in an essential way the life and development of man and... man, in turn, perfects and ennobles his milieu by his presence, his work and his contemplation.'³

Papal statements in particular have drawn on the theology of the Eucharist to express these relationships between humans and creation. At the end of Pope Benedict XVI's statement on the Eucharist in February 2007,⁴ there is a paragraph entitled

'The sanctification of the world and the protection of creation', which reminds Catholics that 'in giving thanks to God through the Eucharist [they] should be conscious that they do so in the name of all creation, aspiring to the sanctification of the world... The relationship between the Eucharist and the cosmos helps us to see the unity of God's plan and to grasp the profound relationship between creation and the "new creation" inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ, the new Adam.'

However, by its very nature, this theology does not allow for the fracturing of that relationship. For Catholics, Christian hope lies in just glimpsing the new heaven and the new earth of Revelation 21, thanks to our Christian lives that are 'nourished by the Eucharist'. In this constant striving towards perfection, climate change could be seen as an unwelcome distraction, which may explain why the issue tends to be treated independently of this theology. Pope John Paul II, for example, appealed to the stewardship argument in referring to the need to protect the natural resources of Oceania, while at the same time taking care not to offend business interests. In 2001 he wrote: 'It is important to recognise that industry can bring great benefits when undertaken with due respect for the rights and the culture of the local population and for the integrity of the environment.'⁵ This is a view that the climate change crisis should surely have radically altered.

Catholic bishops seem to be treating climate change as an ethical issue, rather than a theological one. While this should encourage concern for the vulnerable people affected by the crisis, in practice the main emphasis tends to lie elsewhere. For example, the Catholic bishops' 'position paper', presented at a climate change conference in Australia in 2005, sets out some of the science and predicted consequences of climate change and includes a list of 20 'ethical principles for the environment'. Poor people are not mentioned until number 19 on the list – 'The richer nations have an obligation to dismantle structural forms of global poverty and to help poorer nations experiencing social or environmental problems' – while principle 20 refers to future generations who 'should not be robbed or left with extra burdens, for they have a claim to a just administration of the world's resources by this generation'.⁶

Not surprisingly, the message that climate change is affecting the world's poorest people does not seem to be filtering through very effectively to the laity. A letter in *The Tablet* in March 2007 deplores that fact that 'the environmental movement has become synonymous with climate change'. The writer pleads for recognition of the loss of species and habitats

that, she claims, has 'nothing to do with burning fossil fuels but rather with our lifestyles, our sheer numbers and our greed'. The letter concludes: 'So if you doubt the science behind climate change, then that is fine, don't believe it.'

Finally, a conference held in Vatican City in April 2007 called 'for a papal encyclical on the subject. But according to the press office, the main message to come out of it was that 'God wants believers to be green' and again theological concerns and the interests of the poor appear to have been downplayed. Other publications and speeches by Catholic leaders have, on occasion, drawn attention to the challenges facing developing countries, but this has usually been on an ad-hoc basis and in the context of ethics rather than of theology. Michael McCarthy, environment editor of *The Independent*, has called on the Catholic Church to wake up, criticising its leaders for treating the environment as 'a quality-of-life issue'. He concludes: 'As the environment becomes a life-or-death issue for the world, the Church is going to find itself overtaken by the historical process, helpless and uncomprehending, just as it was by socialism, just as it was by fascism.'⁷

The Orthodox Church

As already suggested,⁸ the Patriarch Bartholomew I has been the most outspoken of Christian leaders on the subject of climate change. Much of what he has said reflects the ascetic ethos that is integral to Orthodox Christian spirituality – as we can see in this comment from a reflection on 'transformation':

In learning to give up, we gradually learn to give; in learning to sacrifice, we essentially learn to share. So often our efforts for reconciliation and transformation are hindered by an unwillingness to forego established ways as individuals or as institutions, by our refusal to relinquish either wasteful consumerism or prideful [sic] nationalism. A transformed worldview allows us to perceive the lasting impact of our ways on other people, especially the poor, as the sacred image of Christ, as well as on the environment, as the silent imprint of God.⁹

In various documents over the last ten or 15 years, the Patriarch and others have emphasised the need for repentance and have advocated a solution to environmental problems that lies in 'the liturgical, eucharistic and ascetic ethos of the Orthodox tradition'.¹⁰

The language of these documents is typically very emotive.

Interestingly, healing is a key theme¹¹ although the 'healing of community', and therefore of relations with the poor, is treated separately from 'healing of the earth'. So while the real problems of social justice are not ignored, there seems to be a constant move towards abstraction, moving the focus onto a higher plane of sin, repentance and divine grace. In short, while the Orthodox teachings may be a source of spiritual inspiration, they are not necessarily conducive to action.

A specific statement on climate change illustrates this tendency to the abstract:

There is a close link between the economy of the poor and the warming of our planet. Conservation and compassion are intimately connected. The web of life is a sacred gift of God – ever so precious and ever so delicate. We must serve our neighbour and preserve our world with both humility and generosity, in a perspective of frugality and solidarity alike.¹²

There is much that other denominations can learn from the great Orthodox tradition of spirituality, not least the 'spiritualising' of contemporary issues. But that does, I suggest, need to go hand-in-hand with a much more explicit call to action, if its eloquently expressed desire for change is to be realised in our world.

The Protestant Churches

The Protestant Churches as represented in Britain and Ireland have produced a variety of responses to the climate change crisis that have mainly focused on care for the immediate environment, along with an Old Testament-based environmental theology. Unlike, say, the Catholic Church, the major Protestant denominations have encouraged action at a local level, for example through schemes designed to persuade churches to monitor and reduce their fuel bills, such as the Church of England's 'Shrinking the footprint' scheme, and the work of the Eco-congregations movement. There remains, however, an urgent need to move people's thinking on from environmental projects such as care of churchyards, however admirable these may be, to a thorough awareness of the implications of climate change for poor people.

This need is illustrated by the information on the home page of the Methodist/URC Environmental Network's website, *Creation Challenge*.¹³ This network invited people to complete the following sentence: 'Environmental issues are important

to me because...', and published five responses. The first is simply: '...there will be no planet left otherwise'; and while three respondents used the word 'stewards' or 'stewardship', none made any reference to justice or poverty.

The Methodist Church has, however, produced an environmental policy which highlights relationships. For example:

Christian mission includes sharing in putting right the relationships within God's creation that have gone wrong, and growing towards the balance and good stewardship envisaged in the biblical vision of the world as it is meant to be.¹⁴

Hopefully, this will be expanded to reflect the very real concern for social justice that has characterised Methodism in recent years.

In 2005 the Church of England published its '*Sharing God's Planet: a Christian vision for a sustainable future*'.¹⁵ A substantial part of this is given over to a selection of biblical and theological material that is considered relevant to environmental issues. Interestingly, the report quotes Luke 4:18-19 as an example of the prophet's call to speak out, but the crucial detail of good news for the poor passes without comment: 'It is a prophetic role to speak of the beauty and goodness of creation; to make people see things as they really are; and to free the earth (in this context) from the oppression of exploitation, ignorance and plunder'.¹⁶ While the writers go on to state, somewhat presumptuously, that 'Christians are key to the salvation of the earth', it is unfortunate that this report fails to draw on the concerns for justice and solidarity with the poor that are central to Christian belief.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, despite the heritage of their work overseas, the major Christian denominations are failing to make the link between climate change and development. Consequently, most official statements and calls to action are focused on local environmental initiatives. While the churches are clearly well placed to convince a significant number of individuals and communities to change their ways, and so contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions, they are missing a trick when it comes to highlighting the effect of climate change on poor communities (who are after all part of the worldwide church). In other words, they are failing to use their prophetic voice to make a difference where it really counts.

American evangelicals: a change of heart

In an article published in June 2000, John Jefferson Davis examined what he called the 'ecological blind spots' in evangelical theology. He looked at 20 theology texts, published by evangelicals since 1970 (mostly in the US), to see how much space was devoted to environmental concerns under the key headings of 'creation' and 'atonement'. He found that while around one-third of the texts had some reference to creation science, only one per cent discussed the implications of the doctrine of creation for environmental concerns. His conclusion was that even after Lynn White's 1967 criticisms, when many evangelicals began to pay more attention to environmental issues, 'a significant minority of evangelicals... remained (and continue to remain) indifferent toward or even hostile to environmental concerns'.¹⁷

An important contributing factor to this neglect has been the traditional evangelical stress on personal salvation, which has no place for non-human creation. A further, arguably more important, factor that Davis does not mention is the conservative evangelical emphasis on the literal truth of Scripture. Thus, until very recently, US evangelicals in particular have clung to the notion that they have a divinely appointed right to do what they will with the earth in their exercise of 'dominion'. A further view – although one which is losing ground – comes from the dispensationalists, who claim that the end of the world is near, so there is no point in worrying about environmental degradation. In 1981, James G Watt, President Ronald Reagan's first interior secretary, argued before Congress, 'God gave us these things to use. After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.'

However, there have been some much-publicised changes of opinion among the so-called Christian right, as people come to understand more about global warming and its likely impact. In October 2005, the National Association of Evangelicals, which boasts a membership of some 30 million Americans, adopted a 'call to civic responsibility', that emphasised every Christian's duty to care for the planet and the role of the government in safeguarding a sustainable environment.

Nonetheless, there remains a deep suspicion of environmentalists. While evangelicals are open to being good stewards of God's creation, they believe people should only worship God, not creation. This may sound like splitting hairs. But evangelicals don't see it that way. Their stereotype of environmentalists would be Druids who worship trees.¹⁸

For this reason the term 'creation care' has been adopted by evangelicals. It is becoming increasingly widespread, and enables evangelicals to differentiate themselves from the 'liberals, secularists and Democrats' that the word 'environmentalism' means for them.

However, as Davis' work underlines, evangelical theology has a long way to go before it incorporates creation care in any systematic way. Yet while most Americans have focused on the concept of stewardship in their arguments for caring for creation, the vulnerability of poor countries is not going unnoticed. Revd Jim Ball of the Evangelical Environmental Network is reported as saying that the strongest moral argument he made to fellow evangelicals was that climate change would have disproportionate effects on the poorest regions in the world. And he continued: 'Christ said, "What you do to the least of these you do to me." And so caring for the poor by reducing the threat of global warming is caring for Jesus Christ'.¹⁹

Given the influence that US evangelicals have on conservative evangelical congregations around the world, their changing views are important. It is also imperative that more of them should take on board the development issues around climate change and use their undoubted influence in the US administration to bring about change.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and other ecumenical networks

It might be argued that international ecumenical bodies are better placed than national churches to deal with climate change, as they are more able to appreciate its impact worldwide. However, this is not a sound argument for several reasons, not least because Christians regard themselves as members of the (worldwide) body of Christ, and subscribe to the Pauline teaching that when one member suffers, all suffer with it (1 Corinthians 12). Nonetheless, it is the WCC, particularly through its former climate change coordinator Dr David Hallman, that has done most to integrate the vulnerability of poor communities into its statements on the crisis.

Justice, in terms of inequitable sharing of resources, features prominently in WCC communications on climate change, even though their theological underpinning remains firmly rooted in the creation stories of Genesis. However, the WCC appears to lack the resources to make its message heard sufficiently loudly.

Yet there are repeated calls at major climate change conferences for faith communities to speak out, and the international and scientific communities are very open to hearing ethical issues discussed. There is an urgent need for a communications strategy that will enable world Christian leaders to speak out on climate change, injustice and poverty.

Ecumenical networks that are working at the national or regional level tend to be environmental networks that have incorporated climate change issues into their activities, as is the case with the European Christian Environmental Network mentioned on pages 7-8. However, in practice this does not work well, because the established environmental concerns remain the priority – albeit in the context of global warming – and the needs of people, particularly those in developing countries, is for many a step too far.

Conclusion

Where, then, does hope lie? Karl Barth's vision of a human being in the community of the church is of someone who is 'united in society as an individual with the whole Church, related, of course, to God, but in God to others'.²⁰ The challenge for the churches is to confront their understanding of relationships: to consider not only their members' relationship with one another and with God, and by extension, with the worldwide church, but also relationships with society in its widest sense, from local community to national government, and from local individuals to the so-called international community – especially its weakest and most vulnerable members.

If building relationships between Christians has been a struggle in the past, how will the churches establish much wider and more demanding ones? The fourth IPCC report stresses the importance of moving away from local, individual responses:

Voluntary actions [by corporations, local and regional authorities, NGOs and civil groups] may limit GHG emissions, stimulate innovative policies, and encourage the deployment of new technologies. On their own, they generally have limited impact on the national or regional level emissions.²¹

A global problem demands a global response. So where are the Christian leaders in all this? All too often they have focused on local issues and internal structures. Now is the time to put those structures to good use, to enable the Christian prophetic voice to be heard around the world.

Working together effectively is probably the greatest challenge facing the churches today, and, it is suggested, one they have barely begun to address. If Christian hope is to be translated into action, the churches must move and move quickly.

Conclusion

Abdoulaye Diack from Senegal, featured on page 4, has undergone a remarkable transformation. He used to cut down trees for construction, to make charcoal and to feed his cattle, and he admits that: 'I am among those who have destroyed the land'. Now he is a crusader: he has learnt about the importance of trees in helping to prevent drought and is anxious to pass this knowledge on to his community. 'When you plant one (tree), even just one, you are reviving. I hope that the seed we are planting today will help to bless future generations.'

Abdoulaye is a living parable of what it means to live with climate change, and offers a good example of how the relationship between human beings and the environment may be healed. The aim of this report has been to set out a theological basis for action and to indicate where Christian hope may be found in the face of impending catastrophe. That hope lies in the transformation of human activity at every level, to restore and heal relationships between human beings, nature and God.

One of the biggest challenges for Christians today lies in how the churches can work together, not in isolated joint events, but in a continuing and deepening commitment to combat climate change as it affects the world's most vulnerable people. Congregations need to be better informed and act accordingly, while church leaders must be supported in making the Christian voice heard in places where it matters.

Al Gore comments in *An Inconvenient Truth* that 'political will is a renewable resource'. That is not true of Christian will: we cannot simply replace people when we do not agree with their views. Hearts and minds must be changed, so that the lives of the poorest people may not simply be saved but ultimately transformed. Only then can we say with St Paul, 'in hope we were saved' (Romans 8:24).

Endnotes

The injustice of climate change

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2 A calculation by the Dutch agency Kerkinactie puts average Western European emissions at 12 metric tonnes *per capita* per year, compared with less than one metric tonne for a Zambian family (and 24 metric tonnes for an average US citizen).

3 In 2005 Niger was at the bottom of the Human Development Index and Norway at the top. The bottom 24 countries were all in sub-Saharan Africa, a region that is extremely vulnerable to climate change.

4 Juan Mayr Maldonado, Foreword to *Up in Smoke? Latin America and the Caribbean*, Third report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development, August 2006.

5 *The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*: summary of conclusions, HM Treasury, 30 October 2006, page viii. Available online at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

6 IPCC, *Fourth Assessment Report* (Working Group III, 4 May 2007), paragraph 27.

7 Based on a Christian Aid internal report, May 2006.

8 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: a universal affirmation* (Munich, 1991), trans M. Kohl, SCM Press, 1992, chapter VI, sections 1-3.

9 'Justification' is the theological term used (particularly in the phrase 'justification by faith') to indicate the process by which God declares that sinners are saved.

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1 Comment by a delegate to the World Social Forum in Nairobi, January 2007.

2 Alister McGrath, *The Re-enchantment of Nature*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2002, p xviii.

3 Ibid. McGrath cites White's article 'The historical roots of our ecological crisis', *Science*, Volume 155 (1967), pp 1203-1207.

4 Ibid, p 134.

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6 Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (9th ed), SCM Press, 1972, p 60.

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4 Karl Barth, translated by GT Thomson and Harold Knight, *Church Dogmatics I, 2: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1955.

5 Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch, Protocol No 856, 1 September 2006.

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7 John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (revised ed), SCM Press, 1977, p 262.

8 Jürgen Moltmann, translated by M Kohl, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, SCM Press, 1992, pp 126-128.

Christian hope: where does it lie?

1 Quoted in Christian Aid's *The Climate of Poverty: Facts, Fears and Hope*, May 2006, p 34.

2 The Climate Institute, *Common Belief: Australia's Faith Communities on Climate Change*, 2006.

3 Message to the Conference on the Environment, Stockholm 1972.

4 *Sacramentum Caritatis* – 'On the Eucharist as the source of summit of the Church's life and mission' (post-synodal apostolic exhortation, 22 February 2007).

5 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 22 November 2001.

6 'Climate change: our responsibility to sustain God's earth', Catholic Earthcare Australia climate change conference, 18-20 November 2005.

7 'On the edge of the precipice', *The Tablet* 25 March 2006.

8 Page 10, above.

9 'Reflections on the theme of the WCC 9th Assembly: God in your grace, transform the world', 26 January 2006.

10 'The Orthodox Churches and the Environment': conclusions of the Inter-Orthodox Conference on Environmental Protection, Crete 1991.

11 For example, in the Patriarch's communication 'Transformation calls for metanoia', 26 January 2006.

12 Statement by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for the WCC Working Group on Climate Change, 12 August 2005.

13 See www.methodist.org.uk

14 *Environmental Policy for the Methodist Church*, special report, 2006.

15 Church House Publishing, 2005.

16 Page 23.

17 'Ecological "blind spots" in the

structure and content of recent evangelical systematic theologies', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43/2 (June 2000) p 274.

18 John C Green, Director of the Ray C Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, quoted in Blaine Harden, 'The Greening of Evangelicals', *Washington Post*, 6 February 2005.

19 Quoted in Laurie Goodstein, 'Evangelical leaders swing influence behind effort to combat global warming', *New York Times*, 10 March 2005.

20 *Church Dogmatics* I, 2, p 369.

21 IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, Summary for policymakers, paragraph 22.

'Working together effectively is probably the greatest challenge facing the churches today and one they have barely begun to address. If Christian hope is to be translated into action, the churches must move and move quickly.'

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Republic of Ireland charity number CHY 6998, Company number 426928

F1429

Information on the ECOLOGY CRISIS

Meteorological research shows that climate change today much more extreme than cyclic shifts could produce

Higher sea temperatures in the Atlantic producing increasingly severe hurricanes of Katrina/New Orleans 05. Ice caps and glaciers retreating fast. Weather becoming increasingly volatile.

Increased sea levels in the Indian ocean will soon make low lying islands uninhabitable. Corals and fish are dying off around S E Asia and Australia. London and other coastal cities could be under water by the end of the century if nothing drastic is done.

Drought in S. American tropical forests leading to many larger trees dying.

Many plant species becoming extinct, yet plants have much potential for new medicines.

Deafforestation releases CO2 into the air.

Beginning of 20thc 70% of Philippines covered by forest - now only 2.5% - leading to mud avalanches destroying towns etc. rapid desertification in North China etc

Coping with the crisis.

Building sustainable homes.- China is doing this with building a sustainable Olympic city for the next games. GLA official buildings in London now have to be sustainable. There is a Norwegian prototype of a rig successfully pumping CO2 into substratum under the sea.

individual action eg turning down thermostats, minimising car transport, offsetting flying emissions by funding sustainable energy and reafforestation projects (see www.climatecare.org): converting homes to lessen emissions/produce energy eg by solar panels or efficient boilers. (if you are not on the internet to access such information you probably have a friend who is)

Spreading information on the gravity of the ecological situation - . Bombarding MPs and government ministers on aspects of the subject. Involving your parish not just in Fair Trade but in facing climate change. Joining Christian Ecology link www.christian-ecology.org.uk - they have useful leaflets and their campaign Operation Noah www.operationnoah.org is a good way of getting change started. They have just produced a new report "Faith and Power: the case for a low consumption, non-nuclear, energy strategy". Also new is Christian Aid's Report "The Climate of Poverty - facts, fears and hope" which is a good quarry for material to get discussion started: it can be downloaded from their site. Green Peace and Friends of the Earth also have useful material. Summary of conclusions of the Stern Review on the economics of climate change through Google.

public policy - alternative energy sources - wind and solar farms, biofuels, harnessing tides etc. A cheaper and safer alternative to new nuclear power stations is local generation - loses much less energy and costs less. Been successfully put into operation in Woking (more info on the internet through Google - Woking + trigeneration) Higher taxation of gas guzzling cars. Compulsory water meters. Better public transport etc etc..

the above Information has been taken from the TV documentary of David Attenborough "Can we Save Planet Earth", Sean McDonough's "The Death of Life: The Horror of Extinction" and input from expert panel on climate change at a recent GLA meeting on the future of London.

Briefing paper compiled by **St. Joan's Alliance**, c/o 36 Court Lane, London SE21 7DR
e-mail lumen@globalnet.co.uk for a copy or photocopy this paper copy.

Creation and Christian co-responsibility with the Creator

Readings for discussion.

"The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord" ps 33.5

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.. in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of . We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now" Rom 8.19, 21-22

We need to reinterpret the phrase ""have dominion" to mean not humanity above nature - exercising mastery over it, but **with** nature, serving and keeping it, which is the kind of dominion Jesus showed. We are there to show, in our care for the cosmos, the maker's care. "We are called to be stewards of God's creation...we connect with the earth and its creatures through our serving and preserving them. We connect with God's creation when we recognize the interrelatedness of all creatures and their interdependence" (from *Like a Garden: a biblical spirituality of growth*- Sara Juengst)

The context in which we experience consumer abundance in the Western world "is one of a widening gap between the well-off and the poor of the world, as well as an increasing deterioration of the "resources" (the natural world) that fund our abundance"...few christian churches have suggested alternative visions of a new way of living and understanding "abundant living" which is a major task of Christian discernment. The whole world is God's *oikos* (household - this is also the root of ecology, economics and ecumenism - the right management of the *oikos*) which calls for sustaining the integrity of nature and equitable sharing of resources.

"We were created in God's image, in the image of love, and our goal is to grow more fully into that image by loving each other and the world in concrete, practical daily ways: in other words, in just and sustainable ways. (from "Life abundant: rethinking theology and economy for a planet in peril". Sallie McFague).

Sean McDonough, the ecological theologian, in his "*The Death of Life*" draws attention to the John Paul II document on "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation", 1990, which speaks of duty towards nature and the creator as an **essential** part of the faith. Sean in his book points out that species extinction and other destructive activities could sterilise the planet "if this generation does not act, no future generation will be able to undo the damage that this generation has caused to the planet" and this endangers even the sustainability of human life.

Discussion pointers for groups on Creation and our responsibility

1. Are we too engrossed with church internal matters or our own spiritual search and ignoring what is happening to our planet?
2. What is our relationship and responsibility for planet earth? Should we be giving priority to seeking changes in the consumer society both in our own lives and through pressure on both secular and religious life?
3. what is the role of prayer in the current ecological situation?
- 4 Bishop Chartres of London recently said cheap flights were a sin. To what extent are we morally called upon to curtail our activities?