

WHOSE WORLD?



FIVE STUDIES ON GOD'S WORKS
IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION

These Studies have two aims:

- ◆ To show that creation care is an integral part of the Christian faith. It is not merely an option for a minority.
- ◆ To demonstrate that we have a part to play, however implausible this may seem in view of the scale of the problems.

They are **not** a guide to environmental problems nor a handbook to sustainable living. There are plenty of aids for these. Rather, the studies are an introduction and background to a neglected part of Christian thought, a neglect which limits our ability to respond as people of Christian faith.



This study guide was commissioned by LondonSCARE (London and Southwark Churches Action re the Environment) for use by Churches and Christian Groups across London, and it was devised by Professor R.J. (Sam) Berry, DSc, FRSE of University College London - a member of the LondonSCARE Steering Group.

LondonSCARE is to be replaced by the London Churches Environmental Network during 2007 and like its predecessor will be an Affiliated Member of The London Churches Group for Social Action.

Downloadable version available at www.london.anglican.org/SocialJustice and www.southwark.anglican.org

For further information contact:

Rev Barry Goodwin

Social Responsibility Adviser, Diocese of Southwark, St Matthew's House, 100 George Street, Croydon, CR0 1PJ

Email barry.goodwin@southwark.anglican.org Tel: 020 8256 9637

Rev Chris Brice

Adviser for Social Justice Diocese of London, London Diocesan House, 36 Custom Street, London SW1P 4AU.

Email: chris.brice@london.anglican.org Tel: 020 7932 1121

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Introduction

Using the Guide

There are plenty of practical reasons for caring for our environment. To damage it is to steal from our children and grandchildren; it has been said that we do not own the earth, we only have a full repairing lease. We read 'To the Lord belong the earth and everything in it, the world and all its inhabitants' (Ps 24: 1), but we are also told 'The heavens belong to the Lord but the earth he has given to mankind' (Ps 115:16). Where does that leave us? Do we as Christians have any special responsibilities? What is the Church's teaching on the environment? What does the Bible have to say about it? Do Christians have anything to say on the subject to outsiders? We are not helped by the fact that Christians are often blamed for environmental damage. We are accused of regarding the Earth as being given to us by God to use as we want. In God's time (the argument goes), He will take us to Himself and destroy our grimy world.

Each Study is complete in itself, but the five Studies are intended to link into a progressive course. Although individual sessions can be used wholly as Bible and discussion meetings, greater benefit will follow if members of the Group (or at least, the Leader) can obtain the background information about local conditions suggested at the beginning of each Study. The questions at the end of each Study are intended to promote discussion. Some Groups may find them unhelpful.

Prayers are suggested for each Study, but Groups may want to pray informally or compose their own prayers about local issues. For Groups who include singing as part of their meetings, there are plenty of relevant hymns or songs in the normal sources - both traditional hymns (such as Thou Whose Almighty Word, For the Beauty of the Earth, Be Thou My Vision) and modern songs (such as Jesus is Lord! God is Our Strength and Refuge, Over All the Earth).

Other material for worship is conventionally associated with Harvest Festivals and similar occasions, but many such events are increasingly distant to urban congregations. Some Groups may find such additional material useful while others find them unnecessary or even distracting. The first Sunday in June is frequently observed as 'Environment Sunday' (5 June is designated as 'World Environment Day' by the UN); following the Orthodox tradition, some churches treat 1st September to the 2nd Sunday in October as 'Creation Time'.



Study One



Study One

How has your neighbourhood changed in the last hundred years? In the last ten years? Think about this in preparation for this first study.



The first words of the Bible are 'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth'. There was nothing before God; there was nothing for God to use to make the universe. He created 'out of nothing' (*ex nihilo*).

Read Genesis 1:1–2: 3

This passage can be (and often is) read as if God created everything in six 24 hour periods; the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 and in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 suggest that this took place about 6000 years ago. In contrast, calculations from the rate of decay of radioactive minerals imply that the Universe is 4.6 billion years old. It is unhelpful to get worked up about this apparent problem. In the 4th Century, St Augustine of Hippo wrote 'A non-Christian knows something about these topics....It is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, supposedly giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these subjects'. In fact the aim of the author of Genesis is primarily to emphasize the sovereignty of God through time and secondly to counter the mythical assumptions of

ancient religions. The 'days' in this passage may be literal 24 hour ones, but they could equally be simple indicators of the passage of time, a literary device, or even 'days of instruction' for the scribe who wrote down the text.

The original text uses two words for God's work. The commoner one is a general word for making or doing, changing something which is already present. The other word is **bara**, which always means a specific act of God in the Bible. It is used in this passage for the creation of matter, the great animals, and human beings, suggesting that these each represent a particular divine action.

Note:

- We are not told how God creates, only that He says or speaks, reminding us that later in history He sent another and living Word (John 1:1). In general, the Bible tells us **why** God works but not **how** he does. Read Job 38.
- The Creation story ends with the Sabbath, not with humanity. It anticipates the situation which makes work the purpose of human life, and shows that we will fulfil our humanness only when we look to the Creator.

**'In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth'**

Genesis 1:1

Study One

Questions for Discussion

- ❖ We tend to regard 'nature' as good, but it is certainly 'red in tooth and claw'. Discuss what you understand by good in this context.
- ❖ 'Science is thinking God's thoughts after him' (Kepler). Is this true?
- ❖ Arguments about evolution have prevented the Church developing a mature doctrine of creation. Comment.

Prayers

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants,
give you most heartfelt thanks
for all your goodness
and loving kindness to us.
We thank you for our creation,
preservation, and all the blessings of this life,
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world
by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

Give us, we pray,
that due sense of all your mercies
That our hearts may be
unhesitatingly thankful
and that we demonstrate your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives;
by giving up ourselves to your service
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
To whom with you and the Holy Spirit
Be all honour and glory, world without end.
(Book of Common Prayer)

'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it'.
So we sing, and so we also acknowledge.
Yet we know, Lord,
that while the earth is yours,
You have appointed us stewards
of your property.
Keep us faithful to our trust
and make us mindful of our responsibility
both to conserve the earth's resources
and to distribute its benefits
justly and unselfishly,
For the good of mankind
and for your greater glory.

(Frank Colquhoun)

Study Two



Study Two

Find out about the work of groups working for the environment in your neighbourhood: Wildlife Trust, Council for the Protection of Rural England, National Trust, local amenity groups.



Read Luke 19: 12-26

The story is about obedience and responsibility. Note the condemnation of the man who did not use his talent: the nobleman punished the servant who did not actively manage the resource entrusted to him

Re-read Genesis 1:26-30. God's first promise and command to the human race was 'to have dominion' over the rest of creation. The word translated 'dominion' is one often applied to royal rule, but it is not a mandate for unfettered control or greed:

- The Hebrew ideal of kingship was that of a caring shepherd like David or Jesus himself, not a grasping despot.

Read 1 Samuel 3: 5-14 and Psalm 72

- The promise was made to the one 'made in God's image and likeness', the one characteristic which distinguishes humanity from all other creatures. God's image can be taken to be his reflection in mankind, which binds Him in relationship to us and implies that we are trustworthy, responsible to our Creator and Master. God commits the creation to us to use. It is not sacred or divine – God-in-nature is pantheism, not Christianity

Dominion over Creation is given to all humankind: it is not a trait confined to believers nor is it an optional extra for some. God has appointed us to be His stewards for creation. Some object that 'stewardship' implies an absent landlord and prefer to think of us as gardeners (Genesis 2: 15), trustees, factors, managers, co-workers. All these pictures are incomplete: the inescapable conclusion is that God trusts us to look after His property here on Earth. We are His creation 'care-takers'.

Questions for discussion

- ❖ Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote 'Nature is never spent'. Is this true?
- ❖ Give examples of environmental crises which illustrate that 'where you sow, so shall you reap'.
- ❖ How do we prevent a proper awe and wonder as we approach Creation becoming an improper worship?

'Well done. You are a trustworthy servant. You have been faithful to what I entrusted to you'

Luke 19:17

Study Two

Prayers

O God, your fertile earth is slowly being stripped of its riches

Open our eyes to see

O God, your living waters are slowly being choked with chemicals,

Open our eyes to see

O God, your clean air is slowly being filled with pollutants

Open our eyes to see

O God, your creatures are slowly dying and your people are suffering

Open our eyes to see

God, our Maker, so move us by the wonder of creation

That we repent and care more deeply

So move us to grieve the loss of life

That we learn to cherish and protect your world.

(Iona Community Creation Liturgy)

Almighty and Everlasting God

We confess our lack of care for the world you have given us

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

We confess our selfishness in not sharing the earth's bounty fairly

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

We confess our failure to protect resources for others

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

(New Patterns for Worship)

Study Three



Study Three

Before this study, contact your Local Authority and enquire about their responsibility for sustainable development and how they are implementing this. In what ways are they working together with voluntary organisations? Do you think the Church should be involved?



Read Romans 1:19-25

Paul had Genesis 1-3 in mind in this passage. He wants to show how humans have violated the very structure of the created order itself, not merely a 'law' (such as the Ten Commandments) given at some point in history. In Genesis 1 our ancestors are commanded to be fruitful and charged with bringing God's order to the world, acting as stewards of the garden and all in it. Our current out-of-jointedness is the result of following lust and greed wherever it leads, listening to the creature rather than the voice of God. When God gave us responsibility, he meant it. When we (that is the whole human race) worship something that is merely another created being and hence subject to decay and death, we diminish our essential humanness, our image-bearingness (Read Isaiah 44: 14-20).

Read Genesis 3:13-19

However we interpret the story of the 'Fall' in Genesis 3, we have to admit that the world is in a mess and that much of the damage is the result of human actions.

Note that the 'death' suffered by Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God (Genesis 2: 16) was separation from God; physically they lived on and all their family were born outside Eden. This separation from God was removed by Christ's atoning work: see 1 Corinthians 15:21; Ephesians 2:1-5; 1 Peter 1:18-19. Moreover, the disjointedness in our relation with God also affects our relationship with others (Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27, 28; 1 John 3:14) and with our environment (Genesis 3:19; Deuteronomy 11:8-17; Isaiah 43:18-21; Romans 4:13-17).

The idea that our disobedience is connected with environmental problems is a complicated one. It is related to the covenant that God made with his people at creation (implied by Job 38:8-11; Jeremiah 33:25, 26), declared to Noah (Genesis 6:18, 9:8-17), renewed with Abraham (Genesis 15: 18) and on other occasions (e.g. 1 Chronicles 16:14-18), and dealt with in a new way in the New Testament (Galatians 4:1-6). The 'Promised Land' is covenanted land; when the Israelites crossed the Jordan from the wilderness into the land, they were entering into God's gift. The vicissitudes of the Israelites in the 'Promised Land' form a major part of the Old Testament see Deuteronomy 29: 19-28). As we shall see in the next study, Paul in the central part of his Letter to the Romans (Chapters 6-8) had in mind the Old Testament journeying, from wilderness (Chapter 6), the giving of the Law (Chapter 7) to

'I am about to do a brand-new thing... I will make a pathway through the wilderness for my people to come home. I will create rivers for them in the desert'

Isaiah 44:19

Study Three

the new Exodus into the life of the Spirit (Chapter 8); he is recalling the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham (Genesis 15: 5), pointing out the ultimate fulfilment of the covenant. In the New Testament the idea of a physical holy land has vanished (in Romans 8: 22, Paul is speaking

of the whole Creation): the whole world is claimed by God as 'holy land' and is promised to those with faith as their inheritance. The promises of material blessing and fruitfulness as a result of obedience (Leviticus 26) prefigure the state of the restored people of God.

Questions for Discussion

- ❖ 'If man obeys God, he would be the means of blessing to the earth; but in his insatiable greed and short-sighted selfishness, he pollutes and destroys it. He turns a garden into a desert. That is the main thrust of Genesis 3'. Is this a fair comment?
- ❖ Is damaging the environment a sin?
- ❖ The Church recognises five 'Marks of Mission': to proclaim the good news of the kingdom; to teach, baptize and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to seek to transform the unjust structures of society; and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Are all five marks necessary ?

Prayers

A version of Psalm 24:

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Lord, your world is in danger.

The enemy is hiding behind vested interests and sceptics, waiting to plunder and rape your earth.

We cry to you, Lord, protect your creation, defend the work of your hands.

Save our generation from our addiction to fossil fuels.

Wash our hands of their clutch on dirty energy, clean our hearts of our desire for more and more. Turn our souls away from materialism and our desires from taking and taking from your sacred, limited world.

Give us a vision of the blessings we will receive if we turn away from idolatry of the economy and bow to wisdom and truth.

Let man and woman-kind see that true happiness rests in enjoying your earth as you intended, not according to the lies of the enemy.

Show us that a kinder and simpler lifestyle will allow us to see your glory more clearly.

Let the glory of the King of glory shine through your kingdom.

Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors,

that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory?

The Lord Almighty – he is the King of glory.

(Ruth Jarman)

Father in heaven, you created us to be wise stewards of the earth

Forgive us for neglecting responsibility for our planet

Lord, have mercy, *Lord, have mercy*

Lord Jesus Christ, you became one of us to reconcile us to God,

Forgive us for treating people, animals and the earth as things to be used and exploited.

Lord, have mercy, *Lord, have mercy*

Holy Spirit, you are the breath of life who renews and restores us,

Forgive us for resisting your promptings and being deaf to your voice.

Lord, have mercy, *Lord, have mercy.*

Creator God, you give light and life and express delight in your creation,

You commanded us to till and care for your garden,

but we have abused the beauty of the creation and the keeping of your word:

We acknowledge our plundering of finite resources

We acknowledge stealing from our descendants

We acknowledge our pollution of land, sea, and air

We acknowledge the churches' lack of concern for the well-being of creation

We acknowledge our own excesses in our lifestyle

In a moment of quiet we confess our greed and lack of concern.

Study Four



Study Four

How much have your travels in the past year cost you in fares, fuel costs, depreciation? How much have they cost your neighbour in pollution, congestion, or affecting climate change?



Read Colossians 1:9-20

In this passage, Paul links the reconciliation of all things to the Father as a result of Christ's atoning death on the Cross. We tend to associate salvation with humanity. In the familiar words of John 3:16 ['God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that everyone who has faith in him may not perish but have eternal life'], the Greek word translated 'world' is *cosmos*. God's love extends to the whole of Creation, not merely to the human part of it. The good news (or gospel) is that God's reconciling work applies to Creation as well as human beings.

Read Romans 8: 19-24

When the Psalmist writes about animals and trees, mountains and weather 'praising the Lord' (e.g. Psalm 148), he is speaking of the whole Creation fulfilling the purpose for which God made it. Similarly, when Paul talks of the non-human Creation 'groaning', this can only have meaning if it refers to its failure to act together in 'praising the Lord'; it is the situation he described in Romans 1:18-32. But Paul goes from this failure to speak of '**our** adoption, **our** liberation from mortality' (Romans 5:20), which is the precisely the 'justification' and 'deliverance' that has already come to those with faith (5:1, 8:2). One of the key beliefs of the early Church was that God had already kick-started the 'age to come', even though the 'present age' was still in some sense continuing. We **are being** transformed into Christ's likeness 'through the power of the Lord who is the Spirit' (2 Corinthians 3:18). 'Eternal life' refers to our contemporary times in which the Creator renews all things, not to some timeless and spaceless future. Creation 'groans' because we have not taken up the role which God gave us as those made in his image (Genesis 1:26; see Study no. 2). There is hope for it **if** we accept our part as stewards - conductors of God's chorus. The renewal of God's covenant leads to the renewal of His creation; in talking of the work of Christ and the Spirit, Paul explicitly uses 'new covenant' language.

'We ask God to give you complete understanding. Then the way you live will always honour and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others'

Colossians 1:9a, 10

Study Four

Questions for Discussion

- ❖ Give reasons for why we fail to link 'justification by faith' with the making of a 'just society'.
- ❖ 'It is likely that conventional Christianity has always wanted to talk about Yahweh and neglect land. And secular humanism wants always to talk only of land and never of Yahweh. And most of us live in both worlds and settle for an uneasy schizophrenia because we don't know what else to do' (Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*).
Do you agree? How can we escape this 'uneasy schizophrenia'?
- ❖ God sent His Son to reconcile 'all things' to Himself. The first President Bush refused to take any environmental decisions which might harm his country's economy. Was this legitimate?

Prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven
*And who is at home also in the air, soil,
forests and oceans*

Hallowed be your name
By the care we take of your creation

Your kingdom come
Because all you see is very good

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Your will is for us to till and care

Give us this day our daily bread
*That all may have sufficient to live on in
fullness*

Forgive us our trespasses [sins]
*Our greed, our exploitation, our lack of
concern for other species and for
future generations*

As we forgive those who trespass against us
By reconciliation in justice and peace

Lead us not into temptation
*The temptation of equating dominion
with domination*

But deliver us from evil
The evil of destroying your gift of creation

For yours is the kingdom
Yours Lord, not ours

The power and the glory
In the cross and the resurrection

For ever and ever.
You were the beginning and the end .

Lord of the harvest, we rejoice in the bounty of
your world;
We thank you for the rich harvests it produces.
As we do so, we remember those who do not
have enough,
the thousands who are daily dying of hunger.
We pray for those who have more than they
require, for ourselves and our churches,
show us what needs to be done and how to
share the world's harvest more fairly.
Above all, help us to set our hearts on your
kingdom of love and justice,
and to seek to do your will here on earth as
servants of Jesus Christ our Lord.

(After Christian Aid)

Study Five



Study Five

It may be appropriate to conclude this series with a shared meal. Add up the miles each item of food has been transported in order to reach your table ('food-miles'). Have all these journeys been really necessary?



Read Revelation 20:11-21:8

Entering the kingdom of heaven does not mean 'going to heaven after death', but belonging in the present to the people who steer their earthly course by the standards and purposes of heaven (Matthew 6:10 - "In earth as in heaven").

Note v.21: 'New Jerusalem **coming down** out of heaven from God'. We are not told that we will escape **up** to heaven. Heaven is God's dimension of the created order (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 115: 16; Matthew 6: 9), whereas 'earth' is the world of space, time and matter as we know it. It is normally hidden from us, but it is occasionally revealed (e.g. 2 Kings 6: 17; Revelation 1, 4-5). A God separated from the present earth who occasionally intervenes on earth is closer to the 'Divine Watchmaker' of deism than the constant upholding God of the Bible (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1: 3), who feeds the ravens (Luke 12: 24) and is obeyed by the

winds and the waves (Mark 4: 41). The implication of this passage is that the time is coming when a renewed earth and heaven will be integrated, not separated. The dislocation produced by the 'Fall' will be no more. When Peter writes of 'an inheritance reserved in heaven for you' (1 Peter 1: 4) or Paul tells us that we are 'citizens of heaven' (Philippians 3: 20), they are underlining the certainty of our salvation which will come *from* heaven for us. Isaiah had much the same message centuries earlier (Isaiah 66: 18-23). Citizenship is a status (or privilege) given to all who have faith in Christ (e.g. Philippians 3: 9), not something which we will only acquire after death.

Christians tend to be uncomfortable with the 'last things' (eschatology), which are often associated with uncertain interpretations of the Book of Revelation, but it is harder to ignore the repeated emphasis of the New Testament that we should be alert for the Lord's return, particularly when Jesus himself speaks about it (see Matthew 25: 1-13; Luke 21: 34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3: 14) - and that we will be judged. Understanding is not easy. The Bible writers often use 'cosmic' language about earthquakes or darkness where we speak of 'earth-shattering' events. For example Revelation 6:14 says that "every mountain and island was dislodged" but this did not destroy all life - the next verse tells us that "all men hid themselves in caves and under mountain crags". We have to steer a course between Gnosticism (which taught that the physical world is evil and to be destroyed) and Stoicism (that the cosmos will burn up and we will be reborn in exactly the same form). Many people are confused whether the end will come after a peaceful and prosperous millennium

'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared'

Revelation 21:1

Study Five

(*postmillennialism*) or after a serious degeneration of life on earth (*premillennialism*). Probably most believe that the events described in the Book of Revelation should be interpreted symbolically and thus deny that there will be a historic period called the millennium (*amillennialism*). The key is whether God will destroy (or perhaps, allow to be destroyed) the present earth or whether He will in some way renew it in some way. In other words, will there be continuity or destruction?

Read 2 Peter 3:3-13

Peter emphasizes that the world is not unchangeable and a future change is to be expected (v. 7). However the flood did not completely destroy the existing world (v. 6); likewise the fire promised for the present world (v. 10) can be regarded as a cleansing rather

than a consuming agent (compare 1 Corinthians 3: 11-15). In v. 14, Peter uses the Greek word *kainos* which means 'newness in nature' rather than the word *neos*, which implies 'novel'. His language points to the scrutiny of human deeds rather than the annihilation of the earth. Indeed the same events as those spoken of by Peter are described in Matthew 19: 28 as a regeneration (*paliggenesia*) and in Acts 3: 21 as a restoration (*apokatastasis*)

The author of Revelation, like Peter, points to God as Judge, but repeatedly praises Him as Creator (Revelation 3: 14, 4: 11, 10: 6, 14: 6-7). God's ultimate goal for humankind is located on earth. The Godhead descends to the new earth (21: 3-4, 22: 3-5). The natural world suffers (8:7, 9: 3-5, 11:6, etc) not because it is unconnected with human destiny but because it is so closely interwoven with us.

Questions for Discussion

- ❖ 'Beliefs about heaven influence attitudes to the earth'. Give examples.
- ❖ How can we best prepare for the Lord's Second Coming?
- ❖ Are climate change and global pollution 'signs of the last times'?

Prayers

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of our land as your love would make it:

a land where the weak are protected and none go hungry or poor
a land where the benefits of civilized life are shared and every one can enjoy them
a land where different races and cultures live in tolerance and mutual respect
a land where peace is built with justice and justice is guided by love

And give us the inspiration and courage to build it.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Based on Psalm 28:

To you I call, O Lord my Rock; do not turn a deaf ear to me.

For if you remain silent, all our efforts to defend our climate will be worthless.

Help us to stand against the culture of our times where people speak cordially with people they meet while living lives that will destroy the lives of people they will never meet.

Where institutions show no regard for the works of the Lord and what his hands have done, may you tear them down and never build them up again.

Where corporations are getting fat by consuming our children's inheritance, repay them for their deeds and their evil work and transform them to respond to your divine calling and regard your creation with reverence.

Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.

My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

The Lord is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.

Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever.

(Ruth Jarman)

What next?

Suggestions for moving forward

Background and Further Reading

These studies are no more than an introduction to creation care and do not deal with many topics of intense debate – such as farming methods (organic, factory), treatment of animals (not forgetting the over-exploitation of fisheries), deforestation (which often produces instability and landslides), extinctions, technologies, (nuclear power, genetical manipulation), water availability, pollution, climate change. They are intended to provide a basis for better understanding of these practical issues.

Introductory

Jones, J. (2003). *Jesus and the Earth*. SPCK

Prance, G.T. (1996). *The Earth Under Threat*. Wild Goose Publications

Tillett, S. (ed.) (2005). *Caring for Creation*. Bible Reading Fellowship

In 2005, the Church of England produced a major report for the General Synod, *Sharing God's Planet*

More advanced studies

Berry, R.J. (ed.) (2000). *The Care of Creation*. Inter-Varsity Press

Berry, R.J. (ed.) (2007). *When Enough Is Enough*. Apollos

Gnanakan, K. (1999). *God's World*. SPCK

Environmental Theology

Berry, R.J. (2003). *God's Book of Works*. T&T Clark

Brown, W.P. (1999). *The Ethos of the Cosmos*. Eerdmans

Northcott, M.S. (1996). *The Environment and Christian Ethics*. Cambridge University Press

Useful Links and Contacts

There are a number of national Christian environmental organisations which can help and support individuals or congregations.

A Rocha UK is a Christian conservation organisation. It produces valuable material each year for worship on Environment Sunday, the first Sunday in June. 13 Avenue Road, Southall, Middlesex UB1 3BI (www.arochoa.org.uk)

Christian Ecology Link is a campaigning group to encourage Christians to integrate their faith with awareness of environmental impacts; it produces a regular magazine, *Green Christian*. 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER (www.christian-ecology.org.uk)

Eco-Congregation provides environmental resources to individual churches within the context of the Christian faith. It is based within A Rocha in Southall. (www.ecocongregation.org)

John Ray Initiative brings together scientific and Christian understandings of the environment. Room QW 212, Francis Close Hall, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ (www.jri.org.uk)

Operation Noah is a project of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Christian Ecology Link to campaign for climate justice (www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah)

The Christian development agencies all deal with environmental issues, and produce helpful material:

Christian Aid, 35 Lower Marsh, London SW1 7RL (www.christian-aid.org.uk)

CAFOD, Romero Close, London SW9 9TY (www.cafod.org.uk)

Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 8QE (www.tearfund.org)

Other Organisations

Carbon Trust, 3 Clement's Inn, London WC2A 2AZ (www.carbontrust.co.uk)

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR (www.defra.gov.uk)

Ecological footprint, c/o Worldwide Fund for Nature, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XR (www.wwf.org.uk)

Eco-Schools, ENCAMS, Elizabeth House, The Pier, Wigan WN3 4EX (www.eco-schools.org.uk)

Energy Saving Trust, 21 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BP (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

Good Energy, Monkton Hill, Chippenham SN15 1EE (www.good-energy.co.uk)

Stop Climate Chaos, 2 Chapel Place, London EC2A 3DQ (www.icount.org.uk)

And then ...

Ecological Footprints

An eco-footprint is a measure of your environmental impact. It measures the amount of the earth's resources needed to support the way you live - including the area of land to produce what you eat, the area taken to dispose of your rubbish, the number of trees to absorb the carbon dioxide emissions from your car or the plane you took for your holiday. The average UK footprint is 5.3 hectares per person (about six football pitches). If everyone lived like that, we would need three Earths.

To reduce your footprint:

- ◆ Buy local food; this reduces food miles
- ◆ Fly less; by 2030 air travel is predicted to make up one third of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions
- ◆ Recycle more and reduce the amount you consume; buy fresh food, not prepacked
- ◆ Use your car less
- ◆ Make your home more energy efficient (Get a home energy check)
- ◆ Replace your electric light bulbs with energy-saving ones
- ◆ Don't leave electric equipment on standby

A Final Thought

Psalm 19 describes God as the author of two Books: a Book of Words (the Bible) and a Book of Works (Creation). They are written in very different languages but He is the author of both. Four centuries ago Francis Bacon wrote: 'Let no one think or maintain that they can search too far or be too well studied in the Book of God's Words or in the Book of God's Works, but let all endeavour an endless proficiency in both'. Let us make that our own aim.

