

The Place of Environmental Theology:
a course guide for seminaries, colleges
and universities



Edited by
John Weaver and Margot R Hodson

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**"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors
but borrow it from our children"**

Native American proverb

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Preface

This publication has arisen out of a conference jointly hosted by the European Christian Environment Network (ECEN) and the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) held in Prague in August 2006.

The Conference brought together participants from various parts of Europe to explore the theology of creation care and how seminaries, theological colleges and faculties, and Christian training courses across Europe could be encouraged to build a concern for the environment into every aspect of the life of Christian communities – in learning and living as the people of Christ.

ECEN and this conference

From the side of ECEN, the first impetus towards holding such a conference came from the ECEN Consultation on Creation Theology held at the John Knox International Reformed Centre in Geneva in 2004. That conference gathered together 25 theologians from different disciplines, traditions and parts of Europe, who reflected on: Creation in the Old and New Testament; the contemporary understanding of Creation in the three major confessional traditions in Europe as well as new theological approaches, such as eco-feminism; and Christian (ethical) responses to the ecological crisis. The papers, together with a survey of the main themes of Creation Theology, were published in *Listening to Creation Groaning* (ed. Lukas Vischer, 2004, John Knox Series, Geneva). ECEN hoped that this would help to bring Creation theology further to the fore, not least in theological education. The findings of a second ECEN consultation on Creation Spirituality are also being published.¹

Secondly, the Education Group meeting at the ECEN Assembly in Basel in 2005, with a majority of participants from Central and Eastern Europe, expressly requested help in introducing more Creation theology into the curricula of theological education and more eco-practice into the life of theological institutions. This conference has sought to address that request. The findings of two more ECEN consultations are also being published.²

IBTS and this conference

The impetus from the perspective of IBTS comes through attempts over the past few years, to develop and live as an eco-seminary. This has included developing a module in our applied theology Master's degree, courses in our Certificate programme, practical work through our campus Environmental Management group, co-operation in seeking to develop renewable energy possibilities with our colleagues at the Orthodox Academy in Vilémov and in promoting to our sister institutions in the

¹ *Spirituality, Creation and the Ecology of the Eucharist*, John Knox Series No 18.

² *Spirituality, Creation and the Ecology of the Eucharist*, John Knox Series No 18

Witnessing in the Midst of a Suffering Creation, John Knox Series No 19.

consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools (CEBTS) a desire to place a theology of creation care firmly in their curriculum.

As we anticipate the Third Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania, in 2007 we have been recalling the outcomes of the Second Assembly in Graz, where environmental concerns featured. What is clear to us all is that the hearts and minds of Christians in congregations and parishes express real concern about the care of God's creation, but as one participant in our Prague conference put it " we need theological grounding and stimulus for the practical outworking of this concern".

So, it is clear to us that a key task is to stimulate theological educators and Christian residential communities, including monasteries, to develop holistic programmes that introduce this important biblical theme in worship, educational curriculum and practical community living at every possible level.

This modest book is an attempt to provide resources to meet that need based on material delivered at the conference and on the outcomes of the workshops during the conference.

We are very grateful to John Weaver and Margot Hodson for bringing together this material and editing it. We provide a list of the participants at the conference and each one deserves our thanks for the stimulus given to this project.

Keith G Jones
IBTS

Ruth Conway
ECEN

Prague, Czech Republic
September 2006

Introduction: scopes and aims

The International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Prague, which is working hard to become an eco-seminary, was the venue for theologians and environmentalists from all over Europe to gather for a conference on “Creation Care: Christian Environmental Stewardship”. The main aim was to create material to introduce a theology of creation care into seminaries, colleges and other institutions.

Professor Graham Ashworth, President of the Federation for Environmental Education, addressed the importance of the church being involved in environmental issues. In his paper he presents the basis for the growing concern over environmental degradation and the challenge to the Church to respond. He concludes that this response must include concerted effort to ensure that graduates from seminaries and theological colleges emerge with an understanding of Christian involvement in creation care and the ability to deliver this message through their ministry.

The communication of a theology of the environment to students is the theme of John Weaver’s paper. Dr Weaver lectures in the area of science and theology at Cardiff University, South Wales, and consciously seeks to create a dialogue between Christianity and the results of modern scientific research.

The section on examples of good practice includes a variety of challenging examples.

- *A Rocha* has been working since 1983 in the area of practical science-based conservation projects inspired by a biblical understanding of the earth, and of our role as stewards of creation. We include an example of *A Rocha*’s operation in the Czech Republic as well as reporting on the work within theological education in the UK as summarised by Revd Dave Bookless, UK *A Rocha* Director.
- The work of the *Orthodox Academy at Vilémov* in Moravia, as described by Magister Roman Juriga. This has involved the development of a variety of sustainable energy projects linked with theological understanding, which in turn provide a practical and spiritual base for their environmental education courses and consultancies.
- The *European Christian Environmental Network* (ECEN) as introduced by Revd Dr Peter Pavlovic, Study Secretary of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches. Founded in 1998, the aims of ECEN are outlined as working towards the development of sustainability at all levels, community, regional, national and European. This embraces not only the ecological, but also the social, spiritual, political and economic dimensions of life.
- *Eco-congregation* as described by Dr John Biggs, from Cumbria, UK. This programme is designed to enthuse and equip churches to weave environmental issues into their life and mission.
- The work of the *John Ray Initiative* (JRI) in connecting the Christian faith to the science of the environment is described by Dr Martin Hodson.
- Dr Paula Clifford from the British aid and development agency, *Christian Aid*, explains the impact of global climate change on the poor and the response of the agency and its partner organisations.
- Also included is an introduction to the research and development work of *Tearfund*, a UK-based Christian relief and development agency, although this

organisation was not represented at the conference. We are grateful to Rachel Roach, their policy officer on climate change, for providing this outline of the activities of Tearfund.

- **IBTS** outline their environmental policy, which embraces the notion of sustainable development, something that is different from sustainability and more accurately reflects an understanding of being made in the image of God and invited by God to be partners with God in both the maintenance and development of God's creation.

One important aspect of creation care that was recognised through the various contributions to the conference was the link between the environmental crisis and issues of poverty and justice. The effects of climate change are most damaging and most acutely experienced by people living in the developing world, whereas it is caused predominantly by the rich industrialised countries. It is also recognised that the efforts of people in the developing world to alleviate poverty and for their countries to repay debts owed to western financial institutions, often leads to greater environmental damage. Therefore, any attempts at addressing the global environmental crisis also need to deal with the justice issues, such as, fair trade, the cancellation of international debt, the alleviation of poverty in the developing world, and the responsibility of the developed nations to cut drastically their carbon emissions.

The workshops programme was designed and led by the Revd Margot R Hodson. The aim of the workshop sessions was to explore the issues of integrating environmental concerns throughout the curriculum of a theological college. The workshops were an attempt to think through a more integrated approach, and followed four strands:

- Doctrinal and biblical
- Ethical
- Mission
- Worship

The resulting discussions and conclusions from each workshop are presented together with the outcomes from a plenary session. This closing session explores possibilities, to see visions and dream dreams of where our Christian concern for the environment may be put into practice.

Creation Care and the Church: the call to a sustainable lifestyle

Professor Graham W Ashworth CBE DL

Introduction

In the familiar Gospel story of the Prodigal Son who had wasted his inheritance in a life of hedonistic, rebellious behaviour, we are not told what brought him to his senses and the realisation of his perilous state. Did someone speak words of warning or wisdom? Was there a kindly counsellor who showed him the inevitable consequences of his careless abandon? We do not know and never will.

What we do know is that just in time he recognised the gravity of his situation and set out to do something about it. The story's ending is well known to us. Celebration is the overriding emotion, even though there is the bitter anger and jealousy in his elder brother's reaction. The prodigal's rejection of his wild ways was seen as the only course of action he could take if disaster was to be avoided and there was rejoicing.

Before we consider what the church's involvement in the environment should be we need to note the state of the world. Like the Prodigal, we live in a generation that has grown wasteful of the precious inheritance we have from a generous Creator God who has seen fit to engage us as partners or co-workers in the management of that inheritance.

And we do know the voices that have uttered words of concern and warning.

The History of Concern

Any examination of the gospels and the life of the early church will see in Jesus and the disciples a proper respect for the physical world in which they lived. Jesus drew so many lessons from the natural world. Later St Francis of Assisi had a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of relationship with God, one another and the natural world.

It is with the Age of Enlightenment and the move from everything being centred in God to being centred on human beings that a cavalier attitude towards the Creation begins to emerge and for the last 350 years the notion that we can simply take from the natural world what we want (as opposed to what we need) has flourished. With one or two notable exceptions it has only been in the last 60 years or so that a foreboding concern has emerged.

Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring*³ to share her anxiety about the impact of pesticides on the rivers of the world. Then in the 1960's a group of thinkers (known as the club of Rome) published, in a pamphlet entitled "Limits to Growth"⁴, their concerns about unrestrained population growth and unbounded development. This sparked

³ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Hamish Hamilton 1963)

⁴ an ambitious study published in 1972 under the title *The Limits to Growth*. Based on a technique known as *systems dynamics*, developed by Professor Jay Forrester at MIT, a large-scale computer model was constructed to simulate likely future outcomes of the world economy.

international concern that has continued and increased. So today there is real fear for the future of the planet as we have known it.

Ongoing Concern

Global Warming (a natural phenomenon in planetary history) is exacerbated by our burning of fossil fuels and the increase in carbon emissions. There are unmistakable signs of climate change, (violent storms, flooding, melting polar icecaps). Though now recovering since a reduction in the number of CFC's being emitted, the ozone layer has been dangerously thin and, in places, punctured, giving rise to concerns about health problems resulting from increased levels of radiation. There is extensive deforestation with its effect on rainfall and we are losing wetlands and bio-diversity at alarming rates. We use irreplaceable natural resources and fail to manage the vast quantities of waste we create. Some facts and figures drawn from the UN and EU are presented as appendix 1.

Few Solutions

In the face of all this concern there have been few solutions offered. In fact there have only been two responses of note. One of those was to suggest that we could rely on technology. In the 1960's Professor Barry Commoner⁵ was the first to maintain that the problems created by technology and increased industrialisation would be solved by further technology. In the first years of this new century there is little evidence that that optimistic view can be sustained. So we have begun to place more emphasis on the other response: what has become known as "the precautionary principle" – until you know the outcomes of your projected action, proceed with caution!

Related Concerns

We should also note two related concerns which though they are not strictly within the usual range of environmental issues are important in the context of contemporary lifestyles and any changes that we should consider making to those lifestyles.

One is a concern for the poor. There are a great many people living lives of desperate deprivation whose situation should no longer be ignored, but must be measured against the relative comfort and security of the rest of the world. This is especially true when we recognise that their plight is a result of the greed and carelessness of that "rest".⁶

The other concern is associated with one of the projected solutions for feeding the poor: the development of Genetically Modified crops.

⁵ Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology* (Random House, 1971)

⁶ See the contributions to this publication from Christian Aid and Tearfund

Sustainable Development

So we must turn to a more cautious approach and embrace the notion of Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This is the official definition contained in the publication of the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*.⁷ We should note that Sustainable Development is not just about green issues or the conservation of nature but also about economic vitality and social inclusion.

Sustainable Development will only be achieved as it is accepted by ordinary people going about their everyday lives. For that to happen it must be expressed in a simple practical way: a code of conduct.

A few years ago I was asked by the then UK Government to develop such a code. Here is what my colleagues and I devised.

The Green Code

Cut Down on Waste – by adopting a programme that secures a reduction in waste (particularly packaging), the re-use of materials (such as bottles), and recycling (finding ways of using materials in a new way such as PET, Polyethylene terephthalate, from beverage bottles for outdoor clothing).

Save Energy and Resources – for example, by turning off electrical equipment when it is not in use and only using as much water as is necessary for making hot drinks or cleaning teeth

Travel Sensibly - this does not mean no cars but ensuring that each journey is maximised. Walk or cycle, if possible. Share transport

Prevent Pollution – more air pollution comes from domestic fires, garden bonfires and badly maintained motor vehicles than from Industry

Care for Surroundings - good environmental practice is not a catalogue of “don’ts” but involves improving surroundings with trees and landscaping

The adoption of a Sustainable Lifestyle provides us with the capacity to ask others to do so and the consequence is good news for the planet. That is sound social policy so why does the Church need to get involved?

The Challenge to the Church

⁷ The World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987)

When the concerns about the environment began to emerge two people related it to the Church. Dr Lynn White attacked the Judaeo/Christian tradition for having taken the notion of “dominion” to mean liberty to take from nature whatever and whenever we please.⁸ Francis Schaeffer, on the other hand, expounded the theory that the local church should be the “pilot plant” setting before human society a picture of the way life was meant to be.⁹

To respond to both these authors requires that we accept that there is a theological rationale for creation care that embraces (a) the notion of stewardship and the call to be partners or co-workers with God and (b) that such an essential part of our discipleship is taught in the churches. Seminaries and colleges should also ensure that their graduates emerge with an understanding of Christian involvement in creation care and the ability to deliver this message through their ministry.

The Theological Rationale

The theological rationale for all this is straightforward enough.

It is God’s world – not ours! (Genesis 1: Psalm 24: Leviticus 25:23)

All things were created by Christ, for him and hold together in him (Colossians 1:16, 17)

God loves his world (Psalm145)

He loves it so much he gave his Son for it (John 3:16).

We are stewards of God’s world (Genesis 2:15)

We are a conduit for global salvation (Romans 8:22)

As a redeemed people we are called to live in a certain way (Titus 2:12)

If it is so self-evident why are we having such a struggle to communicate these truths to our churches? We need our seminaries and colleges to revisit this aspect of discipleship and incorporate it into their curricula.

Reasons for neglect and indifference

There are several possible reasons for the neglect and indifference to the biblical challenges for us to engage in Creation Care. These include:

- the emphasis on personal salvation and the neglect of collective redemption
- Western theological tradition, which has had a singular view of the nature of being
- the misunderstanding or misinterpretation of “dominion” and its perceived conflict with the idea of stewardship.
- the dualism that separates Body and Soul, the material and the spiritual
- the perception of matter as evil, despite Christ’s interaction with the physical world.
- the failure to understand the nature and significance of incarnation

⁸ Lynn White, ‘The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis’ (*Science*, 155, 1967) pp. 1203-1207

⁹ Francis A Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man* (Tyndale House, 1970) pp.81-93

- the Apocalyptic vision of the Church and a limited Eschatology.

Conclusion

It is not my intention here, to spell out the “how” of the Church’s involvement in creation care. Nor will I spell out the nature and form of theological education to equip disciples (ordained and lay) to lead their churches into such practices as will indicate their care for a world which God loves. But the imperative is there! We dare not ignore the responsibility. If Christ came not only to save the world and us but, in St Paul’s words to Titus (Titus 2:14) “to create for himself a people eager to do good,” then here is one fundamental area where we must demonstrate our allegiance to God and God’s calling on our lives. (Incidentally Lynn White would be pleased to see such a commitment because he recognised that whilst for him religion was the source of our environmental difficulties it was also the place where we should find the solution.)

As Christians we can indicate clearly that our concern to care for God’s world does not flow from a fear of death or destruction but from a love of God who himself cares deeply for his world – cares enough to give us Jesus. As we play that vicarious role in the world’s redemption, as we become, in Christ, what we were always meant to be we will lead the world into a place of rejoicing at the rediscovery of our Father’s goodness to us, of the unbelievable richness of his kingdom and our place in it. It will be a Prodigal’s experience for us all.

Appendix 1. Contemporary Concerns: Facts & Figures¹⁰:

- half the world's original forest now cleared: another 30% is degraded or fragmented
- over the last 50 years cropland reduced by 13% and pasture by 4%
- 75% of world fish stocks fished at or beyond sustainable levels
- global demand for water tripled since 1950; 500 million people live in countries that are 'water scarce;' estimated to reach 2.4 to 3.4 billion by 2025
- climate change: CO₂ levels 16% higher than 1960; tides raised, temperatures higher, storms more severe
- rapidly growing consumer class (1.7 billion people), eating meat, using paper, driving cars, consuming energy; meanwhile 2.8 billion survive on less than \$2.5 per day
- in 2000 1.1 billion people had no access to safe drinking water and 2.4 billion lived without even basic sanitation. As a consequence there 1.7 million deaths per year in the developing world
- USA population is rising by 3 million per year; the Indian population by 16 million, but, measured by CO₂ emissions, the USA impact is three times as great
- fewer families living under one roof results in increased land, water and energy demand. In the USA each one-person household used 17% more energy per capita than a two-person household
- the European picture is no more reassuring: waste increasing by 5% per year; most seas over-fished; there are 300,000 potentially contaminated sites; and there is a 54% increase in goods travel and 45% passenger travel by road since 1980
- situation in Eastern Europe even worse but no reliable data is available.

¹⁰ UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) Website: www.unep.org

Teaching Environmental Theology

The Revd Dr John Weaver

Introduction: A Theology for Earthkeeping¹¹

In the West we live in a throwaway society. So much of what we use for our daily lives, be it milk cartons or cars, electrical goods or felt-tip pens, is disposable, designed to wear out or be put in the rubbish bin. This extends sadly even to our natural resources: coal, oil, natural gas, forests and fish. Worse still, our society has a similar attitude to people and their needs or skills. So much of the way in which we live is controlled by short-term economics. In suggesting that we need to move away from a materialistic lifestyle, Gregg Easterbrook is right to point out that “men and women cannot reform nature unless they first reform themselves.” He goes on to challenge: “If the human soul is to be saved, the materialist age must be overcome: Green thinking, now focused on opposition to industry and development, will eventually focus on the more subtle and telling question of the harm materialism does to humanity, not nature.”¹²

Lynn White was right to point out that “what we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship.”¹³ For White the problem in large part was down to one Christian view of creation, which suggested that every part of creation was there to serve the purposes of human beings. He did however concede other Christian views, in that St Francis can be seen that the patron saint of ecologists.

Richard Foltz suggests that the greatest obstacle to meaningful discussion of the environmental crisis is the lack of a strong public conviction that it actually exists. Western consumerism and advertising are not channels of the truth about the situation. For example, advertising encourages North Americans to buy SUVs (four-wheel drive sport utility vehicles) to enjoy the world of nature, which through their use we are helping to destroy.¹⁴ There is often a failure on the part of the media to link the effects of global climate change with the causes. For example hurricanes in the Caribbean and mud slides in the Philippines are presented as effects of global warming but no mention is made of their connection with our global use of fossil fuels through increased road and air travel.

In 1989 there was a great outcry gathering momentum about the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. Viewed from our side of the Atlantic it made good sense to call for a moratorium - the destruction of the rain forest was causing environmental destruction, not only in Brazil, but also to the global atmosphere, which meant that we also would suffer through the effects of global warming. However, in Brazil it looked a little different - I remember the newspaper headline in one of the leading newspapers, which I read in Brasilia: “Has anyone asked the British and other Europeans where their forests have gone?”

There is a self-centred paternalism or worse hypocrisy, when rich western nations

¹¹ Some of the material in this paper first appeared in my work John Weaver, *Earthshaping Earthkeeping. A Doctrine of Creation* (London, SPCK/Lynx, 1999) pp.116-130

¹² Gregg Easterbrook, ‘The New Nature’ in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology* (Belmont, California, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003) pp.54-55

¹³ Lynn White, ‘The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis’ (*Science*, 155, 1967) pp. 1203-1207

¹⁴ Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.4

want to prevent the poorer developing nations from doing what they have already done, in using natural resources to further their economic development. The just answer would be for the rich nations of the world to share their resources with the poorer nations to enable them to develop without further destruction of the environment.

A further example of selfishness and injustice on the part of the western nations was seen in the Kyoto Earth Summit in December 1997, when North American business interests influenced politicians so that any reduction in harmful emissions would be kept to a minimal level. Then in a more bizarre twist, they suggested that the richer, industrialised nations should be allowed to buy the harmful emissions quotas of the poor underdeveloped countries, so protecting their own continued, environmentally harmful, industrial production.

There are important questions for the Christian church to address here: conservation; pollution; ecology; stewardship; and justice, as we seek for a theology for earthkeeping.

We perceive creation as God's creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-21) and recognise that we and the universe exist through the outworking of the love of God.

The human-centred model of control and exploitation of creation has been challenged by modern ecology, which recognises that we are intimately involved with creation. We are challenged by the recognition that human impact on the world may be triggering irreversible and catastrophic changes in the environment.¹⁵

Sarah Tillett¹⁶ notes that the decline in biodiversity affects the capacity of the earth to sustain human needs and reduces the resources of plant and animal species. "The environment is an issue of justice, and when the environment is damaged it is often the poor who suffer most."

As a means of teaching students and church congregations about environmental issues I begin with a review of the current situation before moving on to an analysis of the facts, a consideration of biblical and theological perspectives, and concluding with some thoughts about Christian responses.

But, as we seek to help people to discover the connection, we need to hear a caveat from David R Loy, who laments that a few hours in the classroom is useless against "the proselytizing influences that assail them [his students] outside the class – the attractive (often hypnotic) advertising messages on television and radio and in

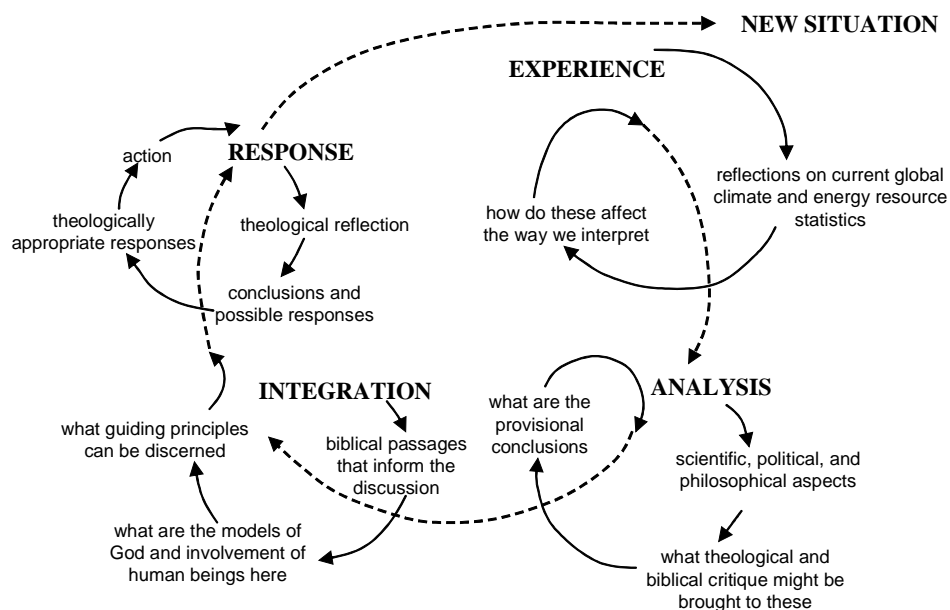
¹⁵ Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Sharing God's Planet* (London, Church House Publishing, 2005) p.3

¹⁶ Sarah Tillett (editor) *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives* (Oxford, Bible Reading Fellowship, 2005) p.14. Much of this book is based on the work of A Rocha, whose five core commitments are: Christian, Conservation, Community, Cross-cultural, and Co-operation. Two of their objectives are: "To encourage the Church to undertake the biblical responsibility to act as good stewards of God's world, and to provide practical advice on how to go about this; to advocate and resource action locally, nationally and internationally, in pursuit of environmental protection and sustainable development." (page 18)

magazines and buses that constantly urge them to “buy *me* if you want to be happy.”¹⁷

The latest opinion poll of 3000 young people (aged 15-17 years), worldwide, conducted by the BBC in October, 2006,¹⁸ bears this out, for while 51% understood climate change, only 17% had done anything to change their lifestyle, and a mere 5% rated it as the most important issue facing the world.

Let me share my version of the pastoral cycle as a framework for aiding the process of understanding:



The Current Situation

The World's population

Delicate checks and balances in the natural world have kept the population of most species at a constant level - the one exception is human beings, where 300,000 years BP there were 1 million; 10,000BP, 5 million; 2000BP (1CE), 250 million; 1800 CE, 1,000 million; 1900 CE, 2,000 million; 1980 CE, 4,000 million, 2000 CE, 6,000 million and projected to grow to 9,000 by 2050 CE. Better nutrition, control of disease through immunisation and improved sanitation have led to lower infant mortality and a resulting rise of population in a geometric progression. In 1980 one fifth of the population were destitute, but Marvin Soroos¹⁹ asks how the environment will survive if we achieve the promise of global prosperity for the four-fifths world. “The bottom

¹⁷ David R Loy, ‘The Religion of the Market’ in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.68

¹⁸ www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/12_december/04/poll.shtml, accessed December 21, 2006

¹⁹ Marvin Soroos, ‘From the End of History to the End of Nature’ in Harto Hakovirta (Editor), *Six Essays on Global Order and Governance* (Finland, Figure/Safir, 2003) p.40

line” says Sean McDonagh²⁰, is that in most Third World countries the populations will be controlled. There is a limit to the carrying capacity of particular bioregions, and famine, starvation and death can take over. The question for the world is whether we will control population in a caring humane way or do nothing and watch the more violent control of population unfold before our eyes.

The Atmosphere and Biosphere

a) **atmosphere:** global warming is natural and is vital for the survival of life on planet Earth. Without an atmosphere the Earth’s surface temperature would be minus 18⁰C, whereas with our atmospheric mantle it is +15⁰C. Instability in the Greenhouse effect is the result of human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels creating build up of CO₂ gas in the atmosphere. CO₂ concentration has risen from 290,000 parts per billion by volume (ppbv) in 1900 to 360,000 ppbv in 1990, with a further 30% increase expected by 2050. Over the same period Methane has risen from 900 to 1700 ppbv, and Nitrous Oxide which causes acid rain and smog has risen from 285 to 310 ppbv. There has been a depletion of the Ozone layer mainly caused by chlorofluoro-carbons (CFCs) used in fridges and air-conditioners, which react with ozone to produce Chlorine Monoxide. In addition, SO₂, produced in large quantities by power stations and other industry in which coal and oil is burnt, combines with water in the atmosphere to become the main source of acid rain. The responsibility for these increases in harmful emissions is largely that of western nations. For example, 83.7% of the increase of atmospheric CO₂ in the period 1800-1988 was the result of industrial and technological activity in USA, Europe, Japan and Australia.²¹

The rising levels of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases since 1800 have led to global warming. Slight increases in global temperatures have led to shrinking glaciers and ice-caps, and sea level rises. Between 1890 and 1990 the earth’s surface temperature has risen by 0.3-0.6⁰C, with the 1990s being the hottest decade since the 14th century, and 2006 the hottest year for over 300 years. “Whatever the causes, the prospect for the twenty-first century is dramatic, as scientists predict an increase in global warming [mean earth surface temperature] of between 1 and 5⁰C, or even higher.”²²

The results are being and will be seen in sea level changes, river flow, and groundwater levels. Melting of the ice sheets will give a sea level rise of 20-50cm by 2050. In low lying countries such a rise would be devastating, for example, over 6 million people in Bangladesh live below the 1m contour. A rise in sea temperature will lead to more frequent and more violent hurricanes and tropical storms, and as rainfall patterns change, desertification is likely in many sub-tropical regions.²³

b) **oceans:** previous generations have depended on the dilution of toxins and human waste pumped into the rivers and oceans. Now these are reaching dangerous

²⁰ Sean McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church* (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1990) p.73

²¹ Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium* (Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1999) p.66

²² Bill McGuire, *Climate Change 2004* (Benfield Hazard Research Centre, 2004) p.1, referenced in *Sharing God’s Planet*, p.7

²³ Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium*, pp.64-65

levels, especially in lakes and partially enclosed seas, for example the Black Sea, where the Danube is dumping 60,000 tons of phosphorus and 340,000 tons of inorganic nitrogen into its waters every year, is now 90% sterile. The pulp mills of Sweden and Finland dump 400,000 tons of chloride compounds into the Baltic Sea every year.²⁴ Destructive pressures on the oceans do not only come in the form of pollution, there are also fishing methods, which are causing dramatic decreases in fish stocks. For example fish catches have increased from 3 million metric tons per year in 1900 to 90 million metric tons in 1989. A United Nations report in 1995 stated that over 70% of the world's marine fish stocks were either "fully-to-heavily exploited, over exploited, depleted, or slowly recovering."²⁵

- c) **land:** we are moving in excess of 42 billion tons of rock and soil per annum, mostly through various forms of mining.²⁶ Draining wetlands and removing trees is leading to changes in water table levels and the stability of mountain sides, as evidenced in the land slide on the island of Leyte, in the Philippines, on 17th February, 2006, when 200cm of rain fell in 10 days.
- d) **rainforests:** as many as 80% of animal and plant species are found in the rainforests. The rainforests also stabilise the world's climate - 60% of the rainfall is held and transpired back to the atmosphere. The forests also lock up billions of tons of carbon.
- e) **ecosystems:** scientists are emphasising the delicate balance of nature. Ecology is not a chain of cause and effect but a web of interconnectedness. "Once we learn that the lives of snails and sparrows are linked to our own in a dozen ways, the meaning of ecology gradually expands to include every other aspect of human life and well-being."²⁷

Energy resources and the nuclear power option

We are using ever increasing amounts of fossil fuels through industrial development, power generation, the ubiquitous motor car, and cheap global air travel. The technological/silicon chip revolution is also greedy for energy.

Under the Kyoto Protocol there are internationally agreed targets for carbon emissions covering the period up to 2012. Any strategy to reduce CO₂ emissions will require large changes in the energy system and society: efficiency; electricity produced without carbon emissions; and the reduction of fossil fuels in powering vehicles. Therefore there is a need for new options in renewable sources of energy and for new technologies.

The United Kingdom might be taken as representative of the use of power in western nations. The report compiled by Sir Nicholas Stern for the UK government, published in November 2006 presented the following key points amongst others:

²⁴ Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium*, pp.85-86

²⁵ Don Hinrichsen, 'The Ocean Planet', *People and the Planet* (1998) pp6-7, quoted in Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium*, pp.89

²⁶ *Sharing God's Planet* p.11

²⁷ Howard Snyder, *Earth Currents: the Struggle for the World's Soul* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1995) p.242

- Carbon emissions have pushed up global temperatures by 0.5⁰ C
- If no action is taken on emissions, there is more than a 75% chance of global temperatures rising between 2-3⁰ C over the next 50 years, and a 50% chance that average global temperatures could rise by 5⁰ C
- Melting glaciers will increase flood risk
- Crop yields will decline, particularly in Africa
- Rising sea levels could leave 200 million people permanently displaced
- Up to 40% of species could face extinction
- Extreme weather and rising temperatures could reduce global output by 10% with the poorest countries losing the most²⁸

In the UK 95% of CO₂ emissions result directly from fuel combustion, and the energy system will be key to any action to reduce such emissions. The main sources of these emissions in UK are; power stations 28%, industry and business 32%, transport 25%, and domestic heating 17%.

It is hoped that renewable electricity from wind, wave, tidal, biomass and solar sources may have a major part in power generation by 2050. Some like hydro have been established for many years. The UK is very well endowed with renewable resources, yet uses less renewable energy than most EU countries. The UK Energy Futures Task Force, *Energy for Tomorrow: Powering the 21st Century* state that “whatever the mix of energy sources it seems certain that more, smaller generation stations will be used in the future. These will be sited either at the point of supply, as for wind, wave and biomass power, or at the point of demand, as for combined heat and power stations and embedded generation.” There is a need to move from a few large plants to many, smaller generators that are geographically dispersed.²⁹

A role for nuclear power in UK cannot yet be defined, since concerns about radioactive waste and low probability but high consequence hazards may limit or preclude its use. Costs of production could fall substantially if new modular designs are effective. However, nuclear power generation is unlikely to compete with fossil fuels on cost alone, but might have significant role as sources of oil and natural gas run low and if low carbon emissions are required.

Currently nuclear power produces 25% of UK electricity, but in coming 20 years all but one of the power stations will have reached their expected life span. Radical new technologies could produce a new generation of smaller, modular and inherently safer reactors which might be significantly more competitive than those available today. But environmental risks remain a concern. The recommendation of the Energy Futures Task Group is:

A full re-examination must be undertaken of the nuclear power issue. If a nuclear power component is required over the long term, then the UK must maintain and develop its expertise, to keep the option of designing, building, running, and eventually decommissioning, new plant. Much of this activity will take place through international co-operation and will focus on cheaper,

²⁸ <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/6096594> accessed 30.10.2006

²⁹ Energy Futures Task Force, *Energy for Tomorrow: Powering the 21st Century* (DTI, 2001) p.6

more efficient and easier to decommission power stations. The issues of waste disposal and public confidence in safety must be addressed with future research.³⁰

However, the *Energy Review* in the autumn of 2006 took a more pragmatic view, seeing nuclear power as a solution to both the reduction of carbon emissions and for securing an energy supply as North Sea natural gas resources diminished.

At this point it is important to point out that renewable sources of energy are not entirely problem free. For example, wind farms are pollution free but are not completely environmentally friendly. The harnessing of wave power requires the development of barrages, which will have a considerable effect on the environment and the habitat of various species, especially shellfish, birds, algae and plankton life. The construction of barrages on coastal margins can lead to the shifting of sand and gravel banks, coastal erosion, and the permanent flooding of tidal flats, with the resulting loss of habitats. However, it could also be argued that some new environments and habitats are created.

The two sources of natural energy that do not result in substantial environmental “pollution” are solar and volcanic, but these are restricted to particular parts of the world. Iceland leads the way in tapping into volcanic heat sources, although there are places even in UK where this is possible. Solar energy is most reliable where weather conditions produce continuous sunshine all year round. However, even in northern European countries there is a growing use of solar power.

Economics

In the Third World we should be aware that there can be a lethal spiral as a result of poverty: population growth → ecological crisis → social conflict. Shortages of water, forests and especially fertile land, coupled with rapidly expanding populations is the cause of great hardship. People pressure on land → destruction of environment → famine and migration → ethnic and religious tension → and as society breaks down population growth takes place - a lethal spiral.

Analysis - Changing Views and Emphases:

In the field of Science

Modern cosmology has discovered a finely tuned universe, in which human beings appear to be woven into the fabric since its beginning. An expanding universe with a beginning and an end, exhibiting design and apparent purpose, is suggestive of God the creator. A universe which includes natural disasters, suffering and man-made pollution, accords with being the creation of a self-limiting God, who gives choice to his creation. Here is our understanding of God who accompanies and suffers with his creation.

A universe which moves from Big Bang to Big Crunch or Heat Death, and in which there is a delicate balance both to produce and destroy life, forces us to consider

³⁰ Energy Futures Task Force, *Energy for Tomorrow: Powering the 21st Century* (DTI, 2001) p.7

carefully both our own future and our care of the planet. Here is our understanding of the place of humanity in creation, as both *imago Dei* and stewards of creation.

Ecology has brought to light the unforeseen effects that human interference with natural processes often has; and this is why we can no longer plead inadvertence as the excuse for technological excess. Ruth Conway notes that “we are part of a world frantically pushing at technological frontiers we are also part of a world whose technologies are threatening the very basis of life.”³¹ She believes that our human-centred culture is in the grip of a technological power that is out of control.³²

Without a moral perspective two attitudes can arise in the scientific arena:

- i) technological pragmatism, seen as an aspect of management. “The ethical questions are not faced explicitly; the solution to a problem consists in finding an appropriate technique to control or eliminate it.”³³ This view is anthropocentric.
- ii) evolutionary humanism, where the theory of evolution is the overriding ontological principle. Humans as the most complex product of the process are able to control and determine the development of the planet.

Jerry Mander states that reverence for the earth is an “idea that is subversive to Western society and the entire technological direction of the past century.”³⁴

Ruth Conway is more critical when she concludes that

it is by listening to those on the underside of technological advance that fundamental perspectives will be shifted and worldviews transformed. It is the experience of those who shoulder the burdens, not those who reap the profits, that provide the crucial criteria for a technology that respects the integrity of creation.³⁵

In Philosophy

We have seen the emergence of ecological mysticism, with an appeal, by some, to eastern religions or to *Gaia* - a personification of nature. There is a desire for a closer, more wholesome, relationship with nature.

Marvin Soroos notes that McKibben in *The End of Nature*, maintains that we can no longer see nature as separate from human society.³⁶ In the 1980s scientists coined the phrase ‘global change’ to demonstrate their conclusion that human impact on the environment is neither temporary nor benign, as we are altering the basic functioning of the earth’s systems. The view that democratic governments will preserve the

³¹ Ruth Conway, *Choices at the Heart of Technology. A Christian Perspective* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Trinity Press, 1999) p.2

³² Ruth Conway, *Choices at the Heart of Technology*, p.4

³³ R P Moss, ‘Environment’ in David Atkinson and David Field (Editors), *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester, IVP, 1995) p.349

³⁴ Jerry Mander, ‘In the Absence of the Sacred’ in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.65

³⁵ Ruth Conway, *Choices at the Heart of Technology*, p.34

³⁶ B McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York, Anchor Books, 1989) quoted in Marvin Soroos, ‘From the End of History to the End of Nature’ in Harto Hakovirta (Editor), *Six Essays on Global Order and Governance*, pp.25-46

environment is misplaced as the ‘environmental footprint’ of the richer nations is greater than the poor in both consumption and pollution.

Robin Attfield recognises that the effects of global warming raise new ethical issues of equity between peoples and generations.³⁷ He identifies the tension between the human needs of present peoples and the land needs of future generations. Neglect of these issues now may lead to dire consequences for future generations. But he then goes on to discuss the equity issues that exist today between countries. He says: “the control of anthropogenic carbon emissions requires an international solution; but the issue of which countries should limit or reduce their emissions is not an easy one.” For example, developing countries need to increase their emissions to develop, and so developed countries are morally obliged to limit their emissions.³⁸

But sadly, as David R Loy notes, we are dominated by the philosophy of the market. He states that “in contrast to the cyclic time of pre-modern societies, with their seasonal rituals of atonement, our economic time is linear and future-directed, since it reaches for an atonement that can no longer be achieved”³⁹ – an ever expanding surplus of economic expansion. He concludes that “the market is not just an economic system but a religion – yet not a very good one, for it can thrive only by promising a secular salvation that it never quite supplies.”⁴⁰

In Politics

The 1989 G7 Economic Summit set up a conference on Environmental Ethics, which advocated the practice of responsible stewardship. A significant watershed was reached with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which was attended by over 25,000 people. 160 countries signed the Framework Convention on climate change.

The first principle of the 27 in the Rio Declaration reads: “Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy productive life in harmony with nature.” However, notes Houghton, “despite such statements of principle from a body such as the United Nations, many of the attitudes which we commonly have to the Earth are neither balanced, harmonious nor sustainable.”⁴¹

The Rio summit has been followed by two further Earth Summits in Kyoto, 1997, and in Johannesburg, 2002. The Kyoto summit produced the Kyoto Protocol, which is an international agreement setting targets for industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. The protocol established in 1997 was based on the principles set out in the framework agreement signed in 1992 at Rio de Janeiro. Targets were set, for example, EU countries are committed to cutting their 1990 levels of emissions by 8% by 2012. Although 55 countries signed up to this agreement, three of the largest polluters, Australia, Russia, and USA, did not, although Russia

³⁷ Robin Attfield, ‘Global Warming, Justice and Future Generations’ in Harto Hakovirta (Editor), *Six Essays on Global Order and Governance*, pp.71-86

³⁸ Attfield in Hakovirta, p.75

³⁹ David R Loy, ‘The Religion of the Market’ in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.69

⁴⁰ David R Loy in Richard Foltz, p.73

⁴¹ John Houghton, *Global Warming* (Oxford, Lion, 1994) p.117

subsequently signed in November 2004. George W Bush said that the Kyoto protocol would gravely damage the US economy. Depressingly, the UN has predicted that emissions will rise by 10% by 2010, and that only four EU countries are on track to meet their targets.⁴²

Robin Attfield notes that the Kyoto agreement agreed quotas based on emissions in 1990, which although favouring the biggest polluters, was the only feasible basis for agreement. This is not ethically defensible but was based on pragmatism in the face of the intransigence of northern countries.⁴³

Equality and redistribution in terms of the use of resources, reduction in pollution, development of technology, and quality of life will be difficult for the developed countries to accept. Any answer will need to include the replacement of carbon-based energy sources by renewable sources of energy.

The third Earth Summit was held in Johannesburg (August 2002), entitled *World Summit on Sustainable Development*. Little of substance was achieved. Issues of energy; along with water and sanitation; global warming; natural resources and biodiversity; trade; and human rights were all addressed, however, the only issue on which some modest progress was made was the commitment to halve the number of people lacking clean drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. Andrew Hewett of Oxfam International, said: "Most of them lacked the guts and will to achieve a brave and far-reaching agreement that might have effectively tackled the problems of poverty and the decaying environment."⁴⁴

A change of heart is needed. The important issue of justice has to be addressed, where we recognise that God's world is created for the benefit of all human beings.

In Theology

Lynn White suggested that Christians thought themselves superior to nature, contemptuous of it, and willing to use it for every whim. The religious answer that White himself recognised is to be seen as redemption and repentance.⁴⁵ However, Sam Berry reminds us that we should also note that stewardship has been a major theme of Christian relationship to nature throughout the church's history, e.g. the Fathers of the Church, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch and Tatian developed a theology of creation. Celtic spirituality was much aware of the presence of the divine in the world of nature. Amongst others we might note St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) and Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1178) who saw in the world the presence of God. Doctrinally, these people considered that God's image was to be seen in the trustworthiness and responsibility of human beings; and emphasised that the Hebrews saw kingship as servanthood.⁴⁶

⁴² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/hi/sci/tech/3927813.stm> accessed 16.02.2005

⁴³ Attfield in Hakovirta, p.76

⁴⁴ Reported by Anthony Browne in *The Times* (London) Newspaper 31 August, 2002. See also Andrew Hewett's Oxfam Press Release, 3 September, 2002.

⁴⁵ R J Berry, 'Rejection of the Creator' in Sarah Tillet, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, p.44

⁴⁶ R J Berry, 'Green Religion and Green Science' in David Atkinson, *Pastoral Ethics*, p.124

The WCC study paper *Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith*⁴⁷ outlined the following points for action by the Church:

- evaluate the scientific evidence
- present a theological and ethical framework based on God's love, sovereignty and justice
- present responses and targets
- to reduce the threat of global warming will require a new vision of what constitutes a 'good life'
- defining the Church's role in global justice and creation spirituality

Looking toward this new millennium Sean McDonagh stated that there is no New Testament support for "an exploitative, throwaway consumer society which in the last four decades has destroyed the natural world in so many parts of the globe and produced mountains of non-biodegradable and toxic waste which will plague the people and creatures of planet earth for centuries."⁴⁸ He rightly maintains that the problem stems from our emphasis on wealth, profit, possessions and power, and that our materialistic approach to defying death through consumerism is in reality destroying life.

Biblical Perspectives:

God's involvement

Moltmann maintains that:

an ecological doctrine of creation implies a new kind of thinking about God. The centre of this thinking is no longer the distinction between God and the world. The centre is the recognition of the presence of God *in* the world and the presence of the world *in* God.⁴⁹

The ruthless conquest and exploitation of nature in the Enlightenment found its theological legitimisation in the distinction between the world and God. The understanding of God's immanence and presence through the Spirit help us to rectify this error. For human beings to "have dominion" over nature is a challenge for us to act with God, imitating his loving kindness and faithfulness with the whole of creation.

We recognise that God's relationship with the natural order is implicit in the very act of creation. God's relationship with creation is faithful and continuous, and God gives value to all life that he has created and cares for. There is no clearer place where God's involvement and God's valuing of creation is seen than in the Incarnation. Through our scientific and technological approaches there is a danger of removing

⁴⁷ WCC Study Paper, *Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith* (Geneva, WCC, 1994) summarised in Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium* (Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1999) p.80-84

⁴⁸ Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium*, p.15

⁴⁹ Jurgen Moltmann, *God in Creation. An Ecological Doctrine of Creation (Gifford Lectures 1984-1985)* (SCM, 1985) p.13

God from creation, except as the ultimate source, and substituting nature and natural laws, discovered by human beings.

James Houston takes Moltmann's Trinitarian view of creation as his basis for understanding the relationship of God with creation. Moltmann explains the character of the triune God in terms of *perichoresis* – “mutually indwelling as a perichoretic community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Likewise, God's relationship with his creation is one of mutual indwelling.”⁵⁰ He notes that Moltmann sees evolution as creative but not as redemptive, and so we should not confuse evolution with redemption nor teleology with eschatology.

Houston argues that if God is love and created all things in love, then it is more helpful to think of creation carried out by the Word of God, who became incarnate in human form (John 1:1-14). He assumes human form in space and time. Our true humanity is to be located in Christ, and when we locate ourselves outside Christ we find ourselves in disharmony with God's purpose for the well-being of creation.⁵¹

The ordering of creation

From the Genesis account of creation we recognise that order is at the heart of God; it is his nature. We see the creator being free to exercise his will in all that he does, but God's acts are not fickle nor arbitrary; his will is constrained by his character. Creation is an expression of God's creative purpose. The scientific enterprise of the Enlightenment depended on this understanding.

Eugene Peterson helpfully suggests that part of God's ordering of creation is the gift of time. He suggests that “under Isaiah's prophetic influence, ‘create’ emerges from the background of Israel's history into an actively gospel word for what God is doing today around the exile people of today.”⁵² The ordering of the six days of creation and the seventh day of finishing, resting and hallowing is a rhythm, which we should not disrupt if we are to live in the created way of our bodies. The seventh day is important as the place where we can enter into creation and participate in God's creative work. Peterson urges us to understand that time is not a commodity. Contemplation of creation is important – the Sabbath rest command is focused and reproduced in our lives through worship. There should be an intimate connection between the world of creation and the world of worship.⁵³ So he believes that we enter the “gift of rhythmic time in the midst of this mess, where the Spirit of God is moving and speaking creation and salvation into existence.”⁵⁴

Chris Wright calls us to recognise that the commercialising of time in our modern debt and interest-based economies is contrasted with the theology of time implicit in the sabbatical cycles of Israel. This includes God's relationship to the land and God's

⁵⁰ James Houston, ‘Creation and Incarnation’ in Sarah Tillet, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, p.90-91

⁵¹ James Houston in Sarah Tillet, pp. 88-89

⁵² Eugene Peterson, ‘Creation and the gift of time’ in Sarah Tillet, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, p.20

⁵³ Peterson in Tillet, p.25

⁵⁴ Peterson in Tillet, p.27

eschatological redemption.⁵⁵ We recognise that the covenant God is the creator God.

God revealed

The Bible presents us with the revelation of God. In the Psalms we read of God's glory and handiwork revealed in the universe (Psalm 19; 104); Jesus affirms that the signs of nature are dependable (Matthew 16:2-3; Luke 12:54-55); and Paul recognises that God's nature is revealed in his creation (Acts 14:17; 17:24-26). Modern science is suggesting a universe exhibiting design, in which human beings have a central place.

We can rightly speak of the sacrament of creation, and of a sacramental universe.⁵⁶ We can agree with the view expressed in *Sharing God's Planet* that "everything is a vehicle of God's self-expression by which God speaks from within" (Psalm 148:5, Hebrews 1:3).⁵⁷ Anne Primavesi encourages all people to see themselves as members of the biological community, together and individually revealing 'Godself'.⁵⁸ We can therefore suggest that any destruction of the environment is the destruction of the beauty and faithfulness of God.

Land

To whom does the earth belong? "The Earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24:1), but also he has given it to us - Psalm 115:16. But it is leasehold - to rule on God's behalf - Genesis 1:26,28. Our unique relation with God leads to our ability to think, choose, create, love, pray, and exercise control. Research, discovery and invention, in biology, chemistry, physics and other spheres, and in all the triumphs of his technology, is part our God-given role. We co-operate with the processes of nature, we do not create them. God has entrusted us - we are caretakers not landowners. The Year of Jubilee teaches us that we do not hold the freehold rights - Leviticus 25:23 (cf. Luke 4:19). Goods are meant for everyone, they are to be shared.

Wright notes that Jubilee was intended to protect the small householder and also "served to establish an economic practice for redeeming the land and the people."⁵⁹ He goes further to suggest that the "Jubilee existed to protect a form of equal land tenure and to prevent inequality of wealth and land ownership in society. It mirrors the creation principle that the earth is given by God to humans, who live as co-stewards of its resources."⁶⁰

Human beings

The Bible describes us as God's image bearers – *imago Dei*. As God's representatives we need to have an intimate understanding of both God and his creation. John Houghton maintains that God-given minds can explore and discover creation. That

⁵⁵ Chris Wright, 'Sabbath for the Land and Jubilee' in Sarah Tillett, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, pp.55-56

⁵⁶ Donald M Ballie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (London, Faber and Faber, 1957) p.42-47

⁵⁷ *Sharing God's Planet* p.20

⁵⁸ Anne Primavesi, *Sacred Gaia: holistic theology and earth system science* (Routledge, 2000) p.12, quoted in *Sharing God's Planet*, p.20

⁵⁹ Chris Wright in Sarah Tillett, p.58

⁶⁰ Chris Wright in Sarah Tillett, pp.59-60

being like God is being creative, and that scientific knowledge is to be applied in technology for the benefit of all creation.⁶¹ It implies being stewards responsible to God. Houghton believes that the degradation of creation is a sign of mismanagement.

Sam Berry refers to 'Adam' as *Homo divinus* – Neolithic farmers, who are *Homo sapiens* in-breathed by God's Spirit. The 'Fall' sees a loss of relationship with God (a spiritual death restored in Christ) and with the environment. Thorns and thistles (weeds) are "merely plants growing in the wrong place. They indicate uncared-for-land."⁶² Creation is restored when human beings discover their true humanity (Romans 8). Berry believes that in our sin we have failed to prevent ecological disaster. Quoting Henri Blocher (*In the Beginning*, IVP, 1984, p.158) he notes that "if a man obeys God, he would be the means of blessing the earth; but in his insatiable greed . . . and in his short-sighted selfishness, he pollutes and destroys it."⁶³

Covenant

The first covenant, of which we read in the Bible, is made by God with Noah (Genesis 6:11-9:17). God commanded Noah to conserve nature (6:19). After the Flood God establishes his covenant with all of creation (9:8-14; see also Hosea 2:18, God's renewed covenant with a disobedient Israel).

The new covenant after the flood reminds us that we are always looking from the side of a broken creation. God's saving of creation is seen in God's heart, as he remembers Noah. The land is still to be fertile. But then we are led into a discussion of what sort of a relationship creatures should have towards one another, and how can the violence and the killing be in accordance with God's absolute sovereignty? The answer is that paradise is lost. The groaning of creation (Romans 8:23) starts here.⁶⁴

Covenant, *berit*, shares a root with the Genesis word to describe divine creativity, *bara*. This root has the sense of 'binding.' "Through God's gracious love, creation is bound by the everlasting covenant to the invisible God, and all creatures are bound to each other in a web of interrelationship."⁶⁵

Creation is in a state of *shalom*, which is peace, harmony and integrity (see Isaiah 11, 24, 32, 55; Psalms 89 and 104). A new and redeemed creation in Christ will exhibit the same characteristics (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:18ff; Colossians 1:15-21; Revelation 21).

The "groaning of creation" (Romans 8:18ff) is not a scientific problem but is based far more profoundly on human beings striving for power and control. The ecological crisis gives theology, science and technology a common task in saving the planet, as we share a common destiny. Moltmann maintains that the living relationship between human societies and the natural environment has been lastingly, if not irreparably, destroyed by human technologies which have exploited nature. He states that:

⁶¹ John Houghton, 'God and the Image Bearers' in Sarah Tillet, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, pp.31-32

⁶² R J Berry, 'Rejection of the Creator' in Sarah Tillet, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, p.43

⁶³ R J Berry in Sarah Tillet, p.44

⁶⁴ Margot Kassmann, *Covenant, Praise and Justice* in David Hallman (Editor), *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North* (Geneva, WCC and Maryknoll, Orbis, 1994) p.29

⁶⁵ *Sharing God's Planet*, p.17

these concerns are governed by the basic values and convictions of human societies. And the values and convictions that prevail in human societies, and regulate public life, themselves derive from fundamental human convictions about the meaning and purpose of life⁶⁶

and:

for the victim nature, scientific and technological civilisation is undoubtedly the most terrible monster ever to appear on earth. The results are so familiar that there is no need to describe them at any length. Everywhere uncontrollable processes of growth have sprung up: growing populations, industrial growth, growing pollution, a growing use of energy, a growing exposure to stimuli, and growing mental and spiritual instability among men and women.⁶⁷

For so-called progress, needs are fulfilled and demands grow, resources are exhausted and pollution increases.

Justice

There are clear questions of justice, when we consider pollution, exhaustion of natural resources and the inequality of the availability of creations gifts. Gustavo Gutierrez distinguishes three meanings of poverty: i) material poverty - the lack of economic goods which are necessary for life; ii) spiritual poverty; and iii) a biblical understanding that recognises that poverty contradicts the meaning of the Mosaic religion and the Christian faith, which is to give people dignity.⁶⁸ There must be the elimination of exploitation and poverty that prevents the poor from being fully human. So Christians should have a solidarity with the poor and should oppose poverty. A key text is the Jubilee manifesto of Luke 4:18-19.

Leonardo Boff believes that the present socio-economic system is oppressive. He says that “experience shows that within the dependent liberal-capitalist system there is no salvation for the poor, no respect for basic rights, and no satisfaction of basic needs.” This is because capitalism works on the logic of the greatest profit in the shortest time.⁶⁹

He maintains that liberal thinking seen in global biotechnology as the providential solution on a world scale is in error. He says that “it is an agenda for guaranteeing survival (by providing food), but not for promoting life (by creating conditions for people to produce their food).”⁷⁰ We might draw a comparison with Satan’s temptation of Jesus to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:2-4). Boff says that human beings are not simply hungry animals in need of food – satisfied through

⁶⁶ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p.23

⁶⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p.28

⁶⁸ Robert McAfee Brown, *Gustavo Gutierrez - An Introduction to Liberation Theology* (New York, Orbis, 1990) pp.56-57

⁶⁹ Leonardo Boff, ‘Science, Technology, Power and Liberation Theology’ in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.500

⁷⁰ Leonardo Boff in Richard Foltz, p.501

“technological messianism” – they must be able to participate through creativity, to feed themselves.

For Boff science, technology and power are part of a programme of redemption, construction, consolidation, and expansion of human life and freedom, which starts with those who have the least life and freedom.⁷¹

Sin and Redemption

We can, fairly, conclude that sin is the main factor in environmental destruction. Sin alienates us from God, our fellow human beings and from the natural world. In Jesus Christ there will be a new creation (Romans 8:18-23). The Spirit gives us the possibility to be what we are to become - the children of God. The whole creation awaits the revelation of this possibility: of caring, self-denying, human beings, who live for others.

John Houghton⁷² believes that the practical problems of stewardship of the earth are beset by problems of human selfishness and greed which lead to overexploitation of the earth's resources, and by human impotence – we know what to do, but lack the will to do it. This is a spiritual problem, and this task is not ours alone – God partners us.

Genesis does not provide a mandate for exploiting and using earth's resources for our own selfish benefit. Houghton warns that:

we can see only too well the results of the use of technology to further uncontrolled and unbalanced exploitation. And all of us know only too well how often our attempts to solve one environmental problem create other problems we had failed to identify.⁷³

A Theology for Earthkeeping:

We need to keep at the forefront of our minds four biblical truths: “In the beginning God...” (Gen.1:1); “The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1); “The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed” (Rom.8:19); and “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Rev.22:12-13).

The value that God places on all life

It is important to avoid compartmentalising ecological reflection, separating human concerns from those of the whole of nature. We do not only understand the loss of rainforests and their unique floras and faunas, we also recognise that tribal cultures

⁷¹ Leonardo Boff in Richard Foltz, p.503

⁷² John Houghton, ‘Christians and the Environment: Our Opportunities and Responsibilities’, *Science & Christian Belief*, Vol 9, No 2, pp. 101-111, 1997

⁷³ Houghton, ‘Christians and the Environment’, p.109

are being destroyed.

It is not only that finite resources are being consumed at an alarming pace, but also that people's lives are being exhausted, their needs and their dreams ignored.

So as Christians we should have a solidarity with the poor and should oppose poverty. We are mindful of Jesus' words: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

It is in Christ that creation is redeemed. The universe is created and then blessed and sanctified, as celebrated in the seventh day, the Sabbath. Houston suggests that the eschatological purpose in creation may be summed up in the theme of "the Sabbath of creation, which distinguishes it from nature." Keeping the Sabbath is the way in which we become true stewards, weekly we declare that God is lord of creation. The technical control of time (departing from the natural God-given rhythms) is human-centred and takes our times away from a relationship with the creator. "The Sabbath reflects on faith in the creator-redeemer, who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. As he consummates his work in creation, so he will complete his purposes in redemption as the incarnate Lord."⁷⁴ Jesus declared the Sabbath principle at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:18-19) and we are called to live as Sabbath-keepers (Romans 8:18-21).

Sharing and giving

We note that the Old Testament concept of *shalom* involves a creative relationship with God, with other human beings and with the whole of creation. There must be a oneness, a sharing and love with all, for us who celebrate the new covenant in bread and wine.

When we discuss the occurrence of natural disasters: flood, cyclone, hurricane, earthquake, volcanic eruption, we must first of all recognise our God-given abilities to predict and counter the effects of these. In global terms there becomes a need to share not only our expertise, but also our technology, resources and living space with the poorer nations.

In the words of the 1974 Lausanne Covenant: we affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge and that we therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of people from every kind of oppression. We recognise that in living under the authority of scripture, we cannot be selective.

Cancelling all debts

Third World debt is result of: high interest rates in First World countries, depressed commodity prices, protectionist policies, and a host of other unfair trading arrangements which make debt repayment impossible. Christians should seek to understand the biblical pattern of Jubilee, and liberate the poorest nations from the burden of the backlog of unpayable debt owed by their governments, to international financial institutions or to commercial banks. We recall Jesus' declaration of Jubilee at the beginning of his ministry, as recorded by Luke (4:18-19).

⁷⁴ James Houston in Sarah Tillett, p.95

McDonagh identified that the debt also resulted in severe environmental damage.⁷⁵ He noted that loans from the World Bank have financed ecologically destructive projects, the Bank ignoring the environmental considerations of dams, hydroelectric and irrigation projects. Debt repayment has increased the destruction of the tropical rainforests in Brazil and SE Asia, where, for example, in the Amazon region the forest has been burnt to provide land for beef production to supply the global fast food market.⁷⁶

Stewardship

Stewardship implies caring management, not selfish exploitation; it involves a concern for the present and the future as well as self, and recognition that the world we manage has an interest in its own survival and well-being independent of its value to us.

One difficult ethical question for the world is whether we should control population in a caring humane way or do nothing and watch the more violent control of population unfold before our eyes.

It may appear less controversial to control the depletion of finite resources - be it fossil fuels or ocean plankton - for here we consume the capital on which our economy is built; and it is irreplaceable. But this raises questions for Christian concern to help developing nations who need to exploit these resources to merely survive. In our modern world where economics rather than ecology, let alone Christian justice, controls our farming there may be good reason to listen to God's call for concern for birds and other animals, (Deut.25:4; 22:6-7) or for fruit trees (Deut.20:19).

The destruction that human beings bring to creation does question whether we are in control or able to be stewards. The ways in which other species become resistant to pesticides and insecticides, and penicillin, questions whether we can be stewards of the natural world. Our control may be only partial and we must see it in the perspective of the many things we do not know and perhaps will never know. This should encourage us to take our responsibilities more seriously.

It has been noted that both Christian and secular agencies have latched onto the concept of stewardship in examining the way in which humans should relate to the rest of the natural world. We are warned that "the use of stewardship can represent an easy retreat to a comfortable concept which avoids coming to terms with deeper philosophical and theological issues inextricably interwoven with the environmental crisis."⁷⁷

We can fall into the danger of God as the absentee landlord, who leaves human beings in charge. A theology that separates God from the natural world is less likely to respect it than one which sees God as indwelling creation.

⁷⁵ Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium* p.39

⁷⁶ Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium* p.40

⁷⁷ Clare Palmer, 'Stewardship: A Case Study in Environmental Ethics' in Ian Ball, Margaret Goodall, Clare Palmer & John Reader (editors) *The Earth Beneath: A Critical Guide to Green Theology* (London, SPCK, 1992) p.68

While these are important warnings for the models that may be implied by our use of stewardship, we should not forget that it is connected with grace - all from God. It is God who calls us to be stewards. There are far-reaching consequences if we forget about stewardship - we run the risk of forgetting grace and gratitude and change our basic outlook from stewardship to ownership.

Stewardship is not only a matter of how wealth is distributed, but also how it is acquired. Wealth is acquired from the finite resources of the planet, so stewardship must be concerned with issues of ecological and political exploitation; respecting the integrity of creation. The biblical word 'dominion' must no longer be misunderstood as domination. "As awareness of the consequences of consuming non-renewable resources or of permanently affecting the ecological balance increases, so does our accountability, both to God and to our neighbour, of this and of future generations."⁷⁸

Too often stewardship takes a utilitarian view, seeing nature and the natural world as our resource. With Anna Peterson, we can conclude that "stewardship ethics seek, in short, to allow for human distinctiveness and special relationship between humans and God while also placing limits on human freedom and dominion over the rest of nature" and that human needs and environmental concerns "place constraints on the ownership and use of property."⁷⁹ We are created as co-creators with a freedom to participate in God's purposes. Peterson believes that our purpose is linked to our capacity for responsibility. Peterson quotes Rosemary Radford Ruether in recognising that power carries responsibility: "The capacity to be agents of destruction of the earth also means that we must learn how to be its co-creators *before* such destruction becomes terminal."⁸⁰

The idea of the natural world as a resource belongs to a man-made financial model - the idea that everything is there for the good of humanity. This leads us to consider justice. There is a danger that as long as we can justify something as benefiting humanity, it will be acceptable under our stewardship ethic. We justify the destruction of woodland, wilderness, wetlands for agriculture to feed humans; the flooding of river valleys for hydro-electric power. Such a view is entirely anthropocentric.

There is a danger of humans treating the environment in an inhuman and godforsaken manner. We should behave as: prophets - helping people to see the world of creation as it is; as priests - "living sacramentally, receiving all creation as a gift, transforming it and returning it to God"⁸¹; and as kings - defending the rights of the poor and disadvantaged - accountable stewards before God.

Justice

⁷⁸ P N Hillyer, 'Stewardship' in David Atkinson & David Field (editors), *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (London, SPCK, 1995) p.814

⁷⁹ Anna Peterson, 'In and of the World? Christian Theological Anthropology and Environmental Ethics' in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.328-329

⁸⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (New York, Harper Collins, 1992) p.86, quoted in Anna Peterson, 'In and of the World? Christian Theological Anthropology and Environmental Ethics' in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.331

⁸¹ *Sharing God's Planet*, p.24

Development which pollutes and undermines life-support systems is a contradiction in terms. It is here that we will want to note the responsibility of richer nations in terms of justice. However, mere economic growth is not an indication of development - injustice prevails where people's basic needs are left unmet. It is not satisfactory to maintain that what fundamentally matters in morality is the integrity and stability of the biosphere, and disregard the wellbeing of every individual. It can become an attempt to disown all the requirements of justice.

Mary Grey notes that Rosemary Ruether has suggested that

Christianity's powerful sacramental tradition and Sabbath traditions of blessing can be re-envisioned to include directly the honouring of creation as it affects the suffering and need for justice of poor people and especially poor women.⁸²

There is the connection between economic exploitation and environmental degradation. The uneven distribution, control and use of natural resources are serious justice issues. e.g., the average USA citizen uses the natural resources used by 200-300 citizens of Asian countries. The rapid depletion of non-renewable natural resources raises the question of our responsibility to future generations. Poverty is a source of ecological destruction, but "unless the poor have alternate sources of food and basic needs like fuel, they too will wantonly destroy whatever natural environment is around them."⁸³

Sin is the main factor in environmental destruction. Sin alienates us from God, our fellow human beings and from the natural world. We can address this through our celebration of the Sabbath. The Sabbath breaks us free from the chains of ownership and consumerism. "The Sabbath is an occasion of thanksgiving, a feast of contentment and enoughness The fallow season constrains human activity and limits human exploitation of both the natural order and of the poor Sabbath requires letting go."⁸⁴

Peter Carruthers suggests that Sabbath and Jubilee give three principles for farming and food production: sharing – with the poor; caring – for the earth; and restraint – of power and wealth. But he warns that there are huge disparities in the world between the overfed and the hungry; there are imbalances in the world food system, there is unfair trading, and a growing industrialisation of agriculture, which is destroying the environment. Instead of keeping the Sabbath we have a "Sabbath-less society."⁸⁵

Relationships

The natural world is not our complete environment; God and his grace also form the human environment. We cannot reduce environment to a biological chain of vital processes.

⁸² Mary Grey, 'Ecofeminism and Christian Theology' in Lukas Vischer (editor), *Listening to Creation Groaning* (Geneva, John Knox, 2004) p.165

⁸³ K C Abraham, in David Hallman, *Ecotheology*, pp.68-69

⁸⁴ *Sharing God's Planet*, p.28

⁸⁵ Peter Carruthers, 'Creation and the Gospels' in Sarah Tillet, *Caring for Creation. Biblical and theological perspectives*, p.74

“An adequate theology of the environment therefore involves God, the human person and nature; thus problems concerning the environment cannot be resolved in purely socio-political terms.”⁸⁶ There is often the danger of the ecology label being used by people to promote their own materialistic ideologies.

It is totally unacceptable to follow the approach of certain ecologists who see the solution of the crisis of human beings and their environment in terms of population control. Such ideological manipulations have at their root an egoistic philosophy which in fact seeks to make life more pleasurable for wealthier countries by disregarding the interests of less well-developed nations.

We need a theology for earthkeeping which is holistic and not dualistic - separating out human beings as above the rest of the world; that views God's immanence as well as his transcendence; and that is relational, recognising the trinitarian God of creation.

Responses:

In environmental terms we recognise that the world has a window of as little as 20 years in which to think and act globally. The world may face a global eco-crisis in the next 50 years. Scientists have become more sure about just what human activities are doing to the climate, but there are many uncertainties in our predictions particularly with regard to the timing, magnitude and regional patterns of climate change, due to our incomplete understanding of, for example, sources and sinks of greenhouse gases, which affect predictions of future concentrations.

There is a need to take action to stabilise the situation. Some actions have already been taken which affect the emissions of greenhouse gases, for example the Kyoto (1997) and Montreal (1987) Protocols regarding emissions of CO₂ and CFCs. Other actions which can be taken are: a reduction of deforestation and an increase in afforestation; reductions in methane emissions; and an aggressive increase in energy saving and conservation measures.

The path to follow is neither too difficult nor too costly, but requires a clear political resolve. Need to provide incentives for energy saving; need to develop renewable energy sources; need to provide developing countries with the necessary technology; investment should take note of long-term environmental requirements.

The demand of consumers can have far-reaching effects. It is a matter of what we want and are prepared to pay in both costs and consequences. The future is therefore, to some extent, in our own hands.

Christian response

Christians have a contribution to make. God created and entrusted the earth, and will redeem the whole of creation (Rom.8:19-22). We learn to think and act ecologically. There is a need to be re-awakened to the Gospel ethic, and recognise that human greed is at the root of the environmental crisis.

⁸⁶ Paul Haffner, 'A Christian Ecology' in Robert Whelan, Joseph Kirwan & Paul Haffner, *The Cross and the Rain Forest: A Critique of Radical Green Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996, p.126

There is a price to pay through fair prices for third world goods and higher taxes to allow the support of development in third world countries.

Christians face the task of articulating the gospel with relevance, to speak prophetically and relevantly to the environmental and social issues of our day. Sadly often the church misses the opportunity and others take on the task - this is particularly the case with the environment. The growth of the Green Movement is the clear example, where there has been little Christian involvement.

Understanding and perceiving the situation and moving to a change of heart or mind is *metanoia* – repentance. There are steps that we should take in sustainable consumption, which involves ethical choices in our purchasing of goods and in our lifestyle. We will need to recognise our ecological footprints on the earth – our impact on our local and global environment. We can take environmental audits of our church and community, and establish eco-congregations.

The Church should be at the forefront in campaigning for sustainable development, addressing social and economic injustice in the world. There needs to be a holistic response that looks to the interests of all who share God's world. An example of church action is demonstrated in a Tearfund advocacy case study – protecting La Moya Ecological Reserve in the Peruvian Andes.⁸⁷

Recognising the developing crisis in the pollution of La Moya, a lake essential to the needs of the community Tearfund and its partner organisation, the *Instituto Biblico de Ayaviri* have sought to analyse and address the problem. Central causes include the dumping of general waste in the lake, a lack of running water leading to the lake being used for washing clothes, sewerage flowing into the lake, and the use of the lake environs for sports and leisure activity. Short term action has involved restricting the dumping of waste, and action to remove rubbish from the lake. Longer term action will involve providing running water to the houses so that people can wash their clothes at home; providing clean drinking water; providing locations for safe disposal of waste; providing alternative areas for sports activities; and finding a way so that polluted water does not flow into the lake. Tearfund has identified the following as key advocacy learning points:

- endeavour to include the community at all stages
- hold existing bodies to account for what they are supposed to be doing
- educate communities on the causes and effects of their problems
- co-operate with the government to bring about change
- build strong and varied coalition
- use the media in appropriate ways

Another example is the work of *A Rocha*, an international Christian organisation dedicated to environmental conservation, which is discussed in the next section.

Sallie McFague asks if there can be an ecological answer to Jesus' question: "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29)⁸⁸ She believes that eschatological Christologies that

⁸⁷ Graham Gordon, *Tearfund advocacy case study. Protecting La Moya Ecological Reserve – Peru*, April 2002, obtainable from graham.gordon@tearfund.org

look to renewal and a resurrected creation address the despair of a deteriorating world, and that Jesus' ministry to the oppressed can be extended to nature, which she sees as the 'new poor.' She maintains that "If the Redeemer is the Creator, then surely God cares also for the other 99 percent of creation, not just the 1 percent (actually, less than 1 percent) that humans constitute."⁸⁹ She says that "our consumer culture defines the 'dominant life' as one in which 'natural resources' are sacrificed for human profit and pleasure and 'human resources' are the employees who will work for the lowest wages."⁹⁰ But God with us suggests the range and promise of divine concern. Sacramental Christology is the embodiment of God in creation, as well as the hope of new creation. Therefore justice, rights, care and concern should be extended to the natural world.

*The Earth Charter*⁹¹

Our response can be summed up under the following principles, presented under the 'Earth Charter' in Richard Foltz's *Global Anthology*:

- respect Earth and life in all its diversity
- care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love
- build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful
- secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations
- protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems – biodiversity and natural processes
- prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection – if in doubt – precaution
- adopt patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being
- advance the study of ecological sustainability
- eradicate poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative
- ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner
- affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development
- uphold the right of *all* to human dignity, health and spiritual well-being
- strengthen democratic institutions – accountable government
- integrate into formal education and lifelong learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life
- treat all living beings with respect and consideration
- promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace

Celebration

As in the Psalms, we celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness; this great big beautiful world, which God has given for our sustenance and enjoyment.

⁸⁸ Sallie McFague, 'An Ecological Christology. Does Christianity have it?' in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.334

⁸⁹ McFague in Foltz, p.337

⁹⁰ McFague in Foltz, p.337

⁹¹ Included as an appendix in Richard Foltz (Editor), *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology*, p.591-596

Sean McDonagh suggests that we explore the Lord's Supper or Eucharist as renewing the covenant.⁹² He focuses on two themes: covenant renewal, and thanksgiving to God for all gifts including the gift of creation. Covenant living includes praise and thanksgiving, care of the poor and of the vulnerable. The new covenant in Christ includes the political freedom and promised land of the old covenant but, in addition, is the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. God's work in creation is in the background of all the covenants, especially the covenant with Noah. Sadly, our misuse, overuse, and abuse is "shredding the integrity of creation."⁹³

To be covenant people we need to learn to understand and work in harmony with creation. This requires humility. McDonagh suggests that on a number of occasions each year our celebration of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist should highlight the renewal of the cosmic covenant where the emphasis would be in promoting work for justice and the integrity of creation among Christians.⁹⁴

Thanksgiving has also been a central focus of the Eucharist, from Passover remembrance to our recalling the love of God in Christ. McDonagh notes that the Jewish *berakah* (prayer of blessing and thanks) from which all Eucharistic prayers are ultimately derived, gave thanks first for God's natural bounty and secondly for the blessings of the covenant.⁹⁵ The dynamic creation of which we are a part should be reflected in our Eucharistic celebration, and could include our appreciation of our own local environment. Such prayers, urges McDonagh, would reconnect a worshipping people with their immediate landscape, and thence their lives with the whole of creation.⁹⁶

He concludes that the gifts of bread and wine symbolise the gifts of creation and the human dimension of care and creativity in fashioning these elements into food and drink. Here is the mutual relationship between human beings and creation, and the social world of dependence on others. We are challenged in an ethical lifestyle and celebrate the Holy Spirit renewing us and the whole of creation.⁹⁷

Conclusion

The land and its resources belong to God and not to human beings. God is revealed as a God of order, power, and faithfulness, and God is involved in his creation. Human beings are invited by the creator to be co-creators, taking part with God in the care and sharing out of the riches of the world. Covenant with its themes of relationship, justice and sin, becomes the key underlying principle for our thinking. God, the creator, draws us into a covenant relationship with himself, which involves us in the responsible and accountable stewardship of creation. Here we recognise the need to address pollution and the related issues of Ozone layer damage and adverse climate change. We are also challenged to be just in our dealings with all other human beings. Understanding God's justice and God's desire and care for every human life leads us

⁹² Sean McDonagh, *Greening the Christian Millennium*, pp.193-213

⁹³ Sean McDonagh, p.197

⁹⁴ Sean McDonagh, p.201

⁹⁵ Sean McDonagh, p.203

⁹⁶ See, for example, my own meditation, printed as the postscript in *Earthshaping Earthkeeping* (SPCK/Lynx, 1999)

⁹⁷ Sean McDonagh, p.213

to ask questions about our use of the earth's resources as well as our pollution of the earth's surface and atmosphere. Recognising human sin becomes a vital element in controlling our use and abuse of energy sources. It is so easy for greed, the desire for power, and selfishness to control the way we behave.

Christians must learn to think and act ecologically; repent of extravagance, pollution and wanton destruction; and recognise that human beings find it easier to subdue the earth than they do to subdue themselves. Christians face the task of articulating the Gospel with relevance; to speak prophetically and relevantly to the environmental and social issues of our day; and rediscover an holistic doctrine of creation. The native American Cree people have a saying:

Only when the last tree has been cut, the last river poisoned, and the last fish caught, only then you will realise that one cannot eat money.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Margot Kassmann, 'Covenant, Praise and Justice in Creation' in David Hallman (Editor), *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North* (Geneva, WCC and Maryknoll, Orbis, 1994) p.49

Examples of Practice

A Rocha⁹⁹

The *A Rocha* Trust was first created as a UK charity to establish a Christian field study centre in Portugal in 1983. Since then *A Rocha* has continued work in the area of practical science-based conservation projects inspired by a biblical understanding of the earth, and of our role as stewards and students of creation.¹⁰⁰ *A Rocha* currently works in 16 countries across five continents, where it is involved at all levels from local to global, both as a uniquely Christian presence in the conservation world, and in resourcing the Christian Church to better care for God's creation.

A Rocha in the Czech Republic

At the conference we heard of the work of *A Rocha* in the Czech Republic from Pavel Svetlik and some of his colleagues. He explained the work that they are doing in ringing and monitoring breeding birds in the Orlické Zahorí Special Protection Area in eastern Bohemia.

This research is being carried out in partnership with the Czech Ornithological Society and already some trends are becoming apparent with a decrease, in 2005, in the number of Corn Crakes. The long-term bird monitoring in the Orlické Zahorí will be more easily supported through the *A Rocha* Czech field study centre near Dobruška in eastern Bohemia. The centre is run by a small resident team, who welcome visiting researchers and volunteers. This centre will also be used by local groups of young people in *A Rocha* wildlife and conservation clubs. *A Rocha* Czech also works to increase awareness of wildlife issues in Czech schools.¹⁰¹

A Rocha in the United Kingdom

From the beginning of *A Rocha*'s work in the UK there has been a strategic vision of influencing the training of Christian ministers, based on four propositions:

1. church leaders have a decisive role in influencing local and national church priorities
2. church leaders usually receive their most influential formation in terms of their priorities during their initial training
3. until recently there has been little engagement with the Christian responsibility towards the non-human creation as part of the training of ministers in the UK
4. ministerial training must engage with environmental issues because of the urgent crisis, the biblical imperative for creation care, and because of the missiological opportunities that arise

⁹⁹ See website: www.arocha.org

¹⁰⁰ Dave Bookless, 'Theological Education and Environmental awareness. The Experience of *A Rocha* in the UK' (unpublished paper, *A Rocha* UK, 2006)

¹⁰¹ Taken from the *A Rocha* International Review 2005, published by *A Rocha* International Office, 3 Hooper Street, Cambridge, CB1 2NZ, UK

A Rocha since 2001 has provided support in terms of lectures and visits to projects for some 14 ministerial training institutions in the UK. This has involved a number of different approaches:

- One-off lectures fitted into modules on Missiology, Ethics, Contemporary Issues, and Spirituality.
- Lectures combined with visits to *A Rocha*'s project in West London, which has allowed for engagement with a real context.
- 'Considering Creation' - two 5 day courses in Snowdonia combining pre-reading, retreat, pilgrimage and guided reflection.
- Placements/group work, which have been enormously valuable and career changing for a small number of people who have been able to take part.
- Ministers using sabbatical study leave to spend time with *A Rocha* UK and in visiting projects outside the UK.

A Rocha UK's National Director, the Revd Dave Bookless, maintains that it is critical that environmental theology and missiology are 'mainstreamed' into the lifeblood of all training institutions and courses. He suggests that some of the main difficulties in achieving this in the UK are:

- The lack of any common agreed syllabus across British colleges
- The pressures on colleges from competing priorities (often finance-led)
- The dependence on key individual staff members in order to have environmental input (demonstrated when that staff member leaves)
- The concentration on 'internal' church issues at many colleges
- The fact that the environment does not fit into one area of study within most college syllabi.

The lack of environmental engagement for would-be clergy is deplored by Bookless, who observes that colleges see this as a peripheral issue. He believes that there is a need for a co-ordinated approach, which engages with the structures and design of courses. He suggests the following strategies for *A Rocha* and others:

1. As a primary strategy, encourage the main-streaming of environmental concerns so that they become a natural part of every area of training for ministry. To achieve this:
 - arrange meetings with key denominational leaders and college principals to persuade them of the need to include this area
 - arrange a large-scale conference on Theological Education and the Environment for theological colleges
 - encourage all theological colleges to offer a core module which blends theological reflection on current environmental issues with hands-on practical experience
 - offer a range of 'off-the-shelf' resources to colleges that could be inserted into existing courses and modules
2. Offer courses/placement opportunities for those who wish to engage more deeply than the primary strategy allows. This would include many of the other

current course/opportunities on offer, such as those through CRES, *A Rocha* placements, and the Open Theological College.

Orthodox Academy, Vilémov, Czech Republic

The academy was established as a citizen's organisation in 1995 with Roman Juriga as Director. The membership includes the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in Czech lands. In 1998 The European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN, see below) held its inaugural meeting at Vilémov.

Theology and spirituality

From the beginning, the academy encouraged reflection on environmental theology within Orthodoxy and also explored the nature of environmental problems in the world today. During 1996-1997 a series of seminars were presented dealing with Ecology and Spirituality, but the end result was the feeling that 'we can't do anything'. These seminars expressed concerns, but considered that politicians and larger companies would have to undertake the action identified.

When such action was not forthcoming they decided that the academy should do something. A colleague of Roman Juriga did an internship with the Lutheran Church in Germany and returned with a variety of ideas for action. The academy began by examining their own buildings. They worked at the insulation of the buildings and explored the use of solar energy. An elderly woman in the church gave them some money and with that they built a solar thermal system, which was installed in a single day.

The academy continued with small scale operations such as using bicycles for transport, and the insulation of buildings. Then they came up with the idea of developing a water supply/water cleansing system for the villages of the surrounding region. This proved to be expensive, and led them to think about creating a centre for renewable energy.

Against an attitude of "it doesn't work," they spent two years making applications to the local authorities and eventually got support for a programme of implementation. They finally established a centre for the application of renewable energy, which offered education, consultancy, and practical application.

The sustainable energy programme continued with a photo-voltaic system, solar water heating, wind turbine, and biomass. Roman Juriga commented that it is not so much an issue of financial returns, but whether or not we really want to do it. The spiritual motivation is important.

Metamorphosis – Transfiguration

What is most important, he said, is the application of this key doctrine. When the availability of energy resources is becoming more limited, and the burning of fossil fuels has impact on the global eco-system, we recognise that renewable resources have no waste. We should be looking for renewable resources that can be used in

decentralised / small units and cannot be monopolised, but give the possibility of hope for future generations.

Absolutely key to this process is the linking of theory and practice. Education is combined with practical application. At Vilémov they move beyond doing the research, and demonstrate that these technologies do work. Vilémov often finds itself offering consultancy to local municipalities. Such consultancy is based on real experience, with all the data provided. They offer one day introduction courses for school children, which often end up with the children asking about spiritual issues related to the environment. Three week courses on the theology and practice of sustainable energy are offered to groups from central and Eastern Europe.

They are demonstrating the operation of a wide range of technologies through the St Elias Wind power station, the Holy Apostles Water Power Station and the reconstruction of an old windmill. They believe that it is important to do this in a church environment, as they are not merely speaking about money, but about other concerns such as the doctrine of creation, and the church's solidarity with all people in the community.

ECEN¹⁰²

The European Christian Environmental Network was founded in response to a resolution of the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in 1997 calling for "a network of persons with environmental responsibilities in the churches." Several exploratory meetings were held in the months following the Assembly. As a result, at the invitation of the Conference of European Churches, 60 delegates from 24 countries met at the Orthodox Academy of Vilémov in 1998 and decided to set up ECEN.

The founding gathering declared that in recent years it has become increasingly clear that the European churches need to collaborate closely on environmental issues. Ecological threats transcend national boundaries and are often best addressed by joint efforts, in addition to the ongoing work on local issues.

The aims of ECEN are to work towards the development of sustainability at all levels, community, regional, national and European. This embraces not only the ecological, but also the social, spiritual, political and economic dimensions of life. It seeks to do this by:

- promoting environmental responsibility based on Christian convictions
- pooling information and expertise
- encouraging and supporting members in developing practical action to fulfil the churches' ecological responsibilities
- raising ecological awareness and commitment of the European churches
- analysing social and political implications of environmental issues and promoting joint activities to address them

¹⁰² The material included here is based on the ECEN publication, *European Christian Environmental Network. The First Five Years (1998-2003). A Documentation*

- identifying environmental issues arising at the European level and suggesting to the churches ways of dealing with them
- encouraging the dialogue on environmental issues among the different regions of Europe (for example East-West and North-South)
- stimulating appropriate collaboration with NGO's and with the activities of European organisations and institutions.¹⁰³

In introducing the work of ECEN, the Revd Dr Peter Pavlovic, Study Secretary of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches and secretary of ECEN, noted that the two main tasks were:

1. to establish contacts between people from different churches and people from different countries involved in the Care for Creation. ECEN is a network which offers a platform of exchange for those who are delegated by their respective churches to do the work in protection of environment as well as for those who, on the basis of their Christian faith, are called to be active in this area, both volunteers and experts. ECEN is closely linked with the Conference of European Churches.¹⁰⁴
2. to work in specific fields such as climate change, water, eco-management, environmental education, and sustainable development, providing a theological context in all fields.

ECEN calls its members and friends usually every second year to an Assembly. The last ECEN Assembly took place under the title 'Living in a New Energy Era' in September 2006 in Sweden.

One of the main ECEN activities is promotion of 'The Day of Creation' as a part of the Liturgical life and Liturgical calendar of the churches in Europe. An annual publication of liturgical material with a focus on care for creation is available from the website www.ecen.org.

ECEN is contributing to the preparation of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly to be held in the Romanian town Sibiu, in September 2007. In particular, it is responsible for the Creation Forum which will focus on 'responsible and sustainable lifestyles'.

Eco-congregation

Eco-congregation is a programme offered in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, designed to enthuse and equip churches to weave environmental issues into their life and mission. The full programme offers:

- *resources* – modules for every area of church life
- *support* – website, newsletters, links to other organisations
- *an award* – to affirm and witness to the church's work

¹⁰³ *ibid.* p.3

¹⁰⁴ Conference of European Churches is pan-European organisation of churches which gathers 125 Member Churches of Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant traditions from all over Europe.

The modules cover, amongst other topics, worship, teaching, youth work, looking after church buildings, looking after land, and community involvement.

Churches are encouraged to carry out an environmental check-up and work out what should be their priorities for action.

The check-up includes:

- *worship*. How often are environmental concerns included in worship including prayers and hymns or songs?
- *theology*. Does the church tackle creation/environmental issues in its teaching and preaching?
- *children's work*. Does the work with younger children recognise the potential for including environmental concerns?
- *youth work*. Are young people challenged about their personal responsibility in the care of the environment, and are the young people encouraged to undertake an environmental project?
- *church property*. A challenge to consider energy and maintenance issues, such as: energy consumption, use of 'green' electricity (electricity from renewable sources), thermostatic and time control of heating, appropriate levels of insulation, and low-energy light bulbs etc.
- *church land*. Where appropriate seek to make grounds wild-life friendly.
- *personal lifestyle*. Promote awareness of steps that can be taken in the home, for example energy efficiency and re-cycling of waste products
- *community involvement*. Involvement in local environmental groups and projects, and also being pro-active in addressing local environmental issues

John Biggs outlined the ways in which a number of local churches were addressing environmental issues. The following are some examples of what different Eco-congregations have done:

- Waste ground adjacent to a church was transformed into a community garden providing a space for children to play safely and for adults to come to sit and relax.
- A local canal was cleared of all the rubbish that had been tipped into it over years of misuse, and the local church invited others from the community to join them. This led to many contacts of the sort that the church would never have made in its normal forms of outreach, and some of the men who gave willing help entered its congregation.
- A church had a paved area immediately in front of its building that was behind railings, in front of which was a bus stop. This had an untidy appearance. It was cleared; old rubber tyres were painted and filled with soil, planted out with flowering shrubs that attracted butterflies. Trellises were erected for climbing shrubs and together a green space was created, which was attractive for all those standing at the bus stop.
- A monthly programme of items that could be recycled was developed, which concentrated on one type of material at a time. There were collections of such materials as plastics, mobile phones, ink cartridges, and drink cans.
- A parish church's graveyard had been neglected and become overgrown, now only used at night by those addicted to illegal drugs, who left hypodermic

needles behind, with the result that other people were frightened to enter. This was cleared, the overgrowth cut back, and the graveyard changed so that it became a place for relaxation, at the same time removing it as one of the crime-spots in the district.

The John Ray Initiative (JRI)

The John Ray Initiative (JRI)¹⁰⁵ is an educational charity, based in the UK, with a vision to bring together scientific and Christian understandings of the environment in a way that can be widely communicated and lead to effective action. It was formed in 1997 in recognition of the urgent need to respond to the global environmental crisis and the challenges of sustainable development and environmental stewardship. Among its founders were climate scientist Sir John Houghton, geneticist Prof. R.J. (Sam) Berry, and biodiversity expert Dr. John Sale.

JRI has worked in three main areas: education; research; and advocacy. From its inception it has specialised in putting on conferences in a variety of venues in the UK. These have mostly been directed at Christian audiences, with some aimed more widely. The most significant of these was Climate Forum 2002¹⁰⁶, which was jointly sponsored with the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies (U.S.)¹⁰⁷. The aim of the conference was “to enable top policymakers and religious leaders to hear directly from scientists about climate change, and to provide a forum for discussion of how churches, individuals, and institutions in the wider society should respond.” A number of Christian leaders from the United States attended the meeting. Climate Forum 2002 has been recognised as a key moment, and led to the Evangelical Climate Initiative statement in 2006.¹⁰⁸ Much of JRI’s efforts have been directed towards raising concerns over climate change, but in recent years topics for discussion have broadened out to include human population, biodiversity, and the proposed Severn barrage (across the Bristol Channel between South Wales and Southwest England). Three “Coffee House Days” with a variety of speakers and topics have also been run in Oxford and Leeds.

Throughout the first 10 years of JRI a consistent stream of publications has appeared either directly under the JRI banner (e.g. JRI Briefings¹⁰⁹) or by authors associated with JRI (e.g. Berry, Houghton, and others¹¹⁰). Another key means of communication has been the JRI web site¹¹¹, which has details of upcoming events an Information Gateway, and an interactive forum. JRI members have also been involved in media

¹⁰⁵ See www.jri.org.uk

¹⁰⁶ See www.climateforum2002.org

¹⁰⁷ See www.ausable.org/au.main.cfm

¹⁰⁸ See www.christiansandclimate.org/history

¹⁰⁹ See www.jri.org.uk/brief/index.htm

¹¹⁰ e.g. R.J. Berry, (editor), *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action* (IVP 2000); R.J. Berry, *God's Book of Works: The Nature and Theology of Nature* (T & T Clark International 2003); R.J. Berry, (editor) *When enough is enough, A Christian framework for environmental sustainability*, (Nottingham, Apollos 2007); and J Houghton, *Global Warming, The Complete Briefing, Third Edition*, (Cambridge: CUP 2004). Finally several new books on Christianity and the Environment will be published in 2007/8 by JRI directors including ones by Prof Bob White FRS, Prof Colin Russell and Dr Martin & the Revd Margot Hodson.

¹¹¹ See www.jri.org.uk

presentations such as the BBC Radio 4 Sunday Morning Worship on Climate Change in February 2007.¹¹²

JRI is involved in a number of educational initiatives at tertiary level. The Certificate in Christian Rural and Environmental Studies (CRES) is a distance-learning course run jointly with another charity, Christian Rural Concern, and is based at Ripon College, Cuddesdon (nr. Oxford, UK). The Open Theological College module "Christian Faith and the Environment" is designed to take 120 hours to study by distance-learning.¹¹³

JRI's membership is mainly made up of Directors and Associates. Both are expected to have a significant level of competence in science or theology with a good lay understanding of other disciplines. In practice the majority are professional scientists, engineers or theologians and many work in environmental fields. Most have had a concern for issues of faith and environment for many years and have been developing Christian responses to environmental challenges. This level of experience among the JRI membership provides a skilled network of Christians who are frequently called upon to speak at conferences, and provide specialist input for theological institutions. The contribution that Christians can make in providing ethical approaches to environmental concerns is also increasingly being noted by secular institutions. For example when the University of Oxford awarded Sir John Houghton an honorary DSc in June 2006, his role in founding JRI and his Christian concern for the moral dimension of Climate Change was emphasised.¹¹⁴

JRI is therefore strategically placed to provide Christians and theological institutions with reliable resources and specialist teaching in environmental concerns and theological responses.

Christian Aid

Paula Clifford is a theologian who is seeking to develop a theology to underpin the work of Christian Aid. She introduced Christian Aid's response to climate change, which is outlined in their report, *The Climate of Poverty: facts, fears and hope* (A Christian Aid Report, May 2006, PO Box 100, London, SE1 7RT, UK).

Christian Aid's partner organisations working in some of the world's poorest communities have already been grappling with the effects of climate change for some years. The increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes and floods in vulnerable areas such as Central America and the Caribbean have been reflected in their work on helping communities prepare for disasters and to cope with their effects.

However, as an organisation whose primary goal is to alleviate poverty and fight injustice, they have recognised that climate change must now become a top priority for their organisation. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events directly attributable to the changing climate have a devastating effect on the poorest people,

¹¹² See: www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/chapel/sundayworship.php

¹¹³ More details of both these initiatives are available in the section on Courses later in this volume.

¹¹⁴ Sir John Houghton was Chairman of JRI until December 2006 when he stood down to become its first President.

who lack the resources and education to adapt. In sub-Saharan Africa higher temperatures have led to prolonged drought, and in some areas such as northern Kenya this has been exacerbated by melting glaciers that have not reformed, leading to water shortages and, in some places, conflict. In Bangladesh, as is well known, global warming has resulted in rises in sea levels, driving people from their homes and forcing them to live in makeshift conditions or to become environmental refugees.

All this represents new challenges for development. It is clear that measures to combat climate change must be such as to allow poor countries to continue to grow. But their development must be enabled to happen in ways that do not have an adverse impact on the environment. So, for example, in Malawi this means installing solar panels as a means of generating electricity and training people in how to maintain them. As a result, many villages are already benefiting from power for the first time. In Senegal, one of their partners is training people to construct energy efficient cooking stoves. These are very simple in design, yet consume far less fuel than conventional methods, so people spend less time looking for firewood and deforestation is reduced.

However, climate change is also a justice issue. Poor people suffering most from the effects of excessive carbon dioxide emissions are those who have done the least to cause them. The figures speak for themselves: the atmosphere is capable of absorbing 12 billion tonnes of CO₂ and this works out at 2 tonnes per person per year worldwide. Yet the emissions of the average North American is 24 tonnes per year and those of the average European 12 tonnes per year, while in sub-Saharan Africa it is less than 1 tonne, often as low as 0.1 tonnes. Even China, with its fast-growing economy, accounts for little more than 2 tonnes per person per year. In other words, to combat climate change effectively we have to recognise that those of us who live in western nations, are damaging the people we most want to help and that change has to begin with us: ourselves, our families and community, our churches, our countries. Purely as a matter of justice, the present situation cannot be allowed to continue.

As a Christian organisation it is a priority for Christian Aid to set out the theological basis for their work, making clear to their supporters and sponsoring churches their vision of the interconnectedness between God, God's people and the created world. *Time to Change the Climate* is a pack specifically designed for churches and includes suggestions for reflection and worship. This is periodically updated via their website with material that includes a full act of worship. They expect to produce a fully worked paper on theology and climate change in the near future.

Although many of their partner organisations overseas are already working on climate change-related matters, they are building up this work and recruiting new partners who are able to provide poor communities with green technology.

In the UK Christian Aid launched a major climate change campaign in February 2007, designed to persuade individuals, communities, businesses and government to reduce their carbon emissions. They know that it is incumbent on them as an organisation to do this themselves before making this request of others, and their efforts to 'green' Christian Aid, both at their London headquarters and at their offices elsewhere in the UK and Ireland and overseas, are well underway.

They are also working alongside other organisations and coalitions, both in the UK and Europe (and in the future in the United States) on issues such as international advocacy, and in developing compensation schemes to benefit poor countries. In the UK Christian Aid is a member of *Stop Climate Chaos* and in Europe they have joined the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) and are part of its working group on climate change. Three Christian Aid staff members were present at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change conference in Nairobi in November 2006 (one as part of the WCC ecumenical delegation) and they also had a significant presence at the World Social Forum in January 2007, again addressing issues of climate change.¹¹⁵

Tearfund

Rachel Roach (Tearfund's policy officer on climate change) notes that the world is now locked on course to become ever warmer. Climate change exposes the most vulnerable, affecting all aspects of development. For the world's poorest people, the future in this warming world is bleak.

Tearfund believes that in order to fulfil its mission statement in a way that is consistent with biblical teaching, it needs to build care for the environment into all areas of its work and life. Partners, staff and supporters are encouraged to live with care for God's earth as an essential concern. The poor rely on environmental resources for their livelihoods and security, and these are increasingly jeopardized. Conserving and enhancing environmental resources are vital for getting people out of poverty.

Climate change is a specific growing environmental threat, and it is the poorest people who are hardest hit. Tearfund is therefore committed to addressing both the cause of climate change (by encouraging individuals, churches, businesses and governments to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions), and the effects (by working through their partner organisations in developing countries to equip poor communities to cope with the consequences of climate change).

Tearfund particularly believes that it is important for the organisation and its supporters to participate in serious engagement with environmental issues as part of their God-given responsibility for Creation and is essential practically for lifting people out of poverty.

As Tearfund highlighted in 2006¹¹⁶, one of the most devastating impacts of climate change is on the world's water supply. A warmer world is also a wetter world due to an increase in evaporation. But although this results in more rainfall overall, rainfall increasingly comes in more intense, less frequent bursts, disrupting seasonal patterns

¹¹⁵ *Time to change the climate* is available free in hard copy from Christian Aid: telephone 08700 787 788, and is downloadable from: www.surefish.co.uk/climatechange/order.htm

For more details of Christian Aid's campaign and other work on climate change go to www.christianaid.org.uk/climatechange/index.htm or www.surefish.co.uk/campaigns/climate/index.htm

¹¹⁶ Tearfund, 2006. Feeling the heat.

www.tearfund.org/webdocs/Website/News/Feeling%20the%20Heat%20Tearfund%20report.pdf

and increasing both floods and droughts. For example the UK Met Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research says that extreme drought, which currently affects about 2% of the planet, will affect over 10% within 50 years.

A member of staff from a Tearfund partner organisation in Mali recently reported: *'The climate has changed and the rainy season has become unpredictable. The water levels fall year by year and some kinds of animals and vegetation have disappeared. The future is bleak for farmers and cattle-breeders alike.'*

This kind of experience is mirrored by communities around the world in which Tearfund and their partners work, and increasingly matches the scientific predictions¹¹⁷. Not only do changing rainfall patterns lead to food insecurity (particularly in regions highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture), but also to health problems, migration and potentially conflict.

It is vital that the impacts of climate change are considered within any development initiative, and that is why Tearfund are keen to promote practices that help people cope with the challenges presented by climate change. For example by promoting agricultural practices that help communities deal with changing rainfall patterns. The following are examples from two regions increasingly affected by drought:

- In the Monze East area of Zambia, Tearfund partner the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia is implementing what is known as 'conservation farming'. It is a minimum tillage method of farming, which traps moisture, improves the quality of the soil, minimises soil erosion and enables a high degree of drought tolerance. There is typically a tenfold yield increase associated with it.
- In Rajasthan state in India, Tearfund partner the Discipleship Centre is seeking to restore traditional practises that have been abandoned or forgotten. One of these is to conserve water by making 'bunds' – earth walls (1-2 metres high) built around a field with ditches in front. The bunds help to prevent soil erosion from wind and rain and will hold rainwater in the soil, therefore improving yields.

In addition to supporting these practical measures themselves, they are encouraging governments to invest more money in helping developing countries adapt to climate change through existing development programmes.

There is no doubt that climate change will have a greater impact on poor people in the future. The UK Hadley Centre predicts 30 million more people may be hungry because of climate change by 2050. Some degree of climate change can't be stopped now, it's too late. But if we really want to avoid climate change increasing poverty further in the future then fundamentally we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is why Tearfund is engaging with policy processes at national and international levels. Agreeing a more robust international framework to tackle global greenhouse

¹¹⁷ See Tearfund, 2005. Dried up, drowned out: voices from the developing world on a changing climate.

www.tearfund.org/webdocs/Website/Campaigning/Policy%20and%20research/Driedupdrownedout.pdf

gas emissions, to build on the Kyoto Protocol, is vital. Nationally, rich country governments must meet and go well beyond their existing targets.

In addition to these things, individuals have a role. This is why Tearfund are encouraging individuals and churches to get involved. Practically we can all assess our own lifestyles and reduce energy consumption, cutting personal greenhouse gas emissions. This is often easier than we think and there are resources to help¹¹⁸. And in addition, we all can play our part in campaigning at the national and international level, raising our voice on behalf of the poorest people. Climate change is a global problem and it requires a global solution.

Like Christian Aid, Tearfund work alongside other organisations and coalitions, both in the UK and Europe on issues such as international advocacy, and in developing compensation schemes to benefit poor countries. In the UK Tearfund is a member of *Stop Climate Chaos* and in Europe are informally part of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) being part of its working group on climate change. Tearfund staff members were also present at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change conference in Nairobi in November 2006.

Some Reflections on the Environmental Education at the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS)

Lina Andronovienė and Petra Veselá explain that the way IBTS engages in the issues of creation care reflects the general approach IBTS takes towards theology.

Theological inquiry at IBTS often begins with welcoming the ‘mess’ of life and taking a careful look at a situation of a concrete community of faith with an effort to describe that particular situation and discern the theological convictions which have brought it about and are reflected in it.¹¹⁹ Once that is done, some analysis can be applied in an effort to understand the reasons for the formation of these convictions and the factors that have fostered and nurtured their inter-dynamics. Once the primary theology or theology of life,¹²⁰ embodied in the community’s living, has been looked

¹¹⁸ E.g. Tearfund has produced a guide called *For Tomorrow Too*. See our website: www.tearfund.org/Campaigning/Climate+change+and+disasters/What+can+I+do+about+climate+change.htm

¹¹⁹ ‘Theological convictions’ here do not refer only to those bits of our deep-rooted beliefs which are explicitly ‘religious’. Rather, this grounding force for human motivations, here termed *convictions*, is seen as related to various aspects of life in its wholeness. Here and further, the approach to theology as the discovery, interpretation, and transformation of convictions comes from the landmark work carried out by James Wm McClendon, Jr. For a discourse on convictions, see his work with James M Smith, *Convictions: Defusing Religious Relativism*, revised and enlarged edition (Valley Forge, PN: Trinity Press International, 1994); originally published as *Understanding Religious Convictions* in 1975 by University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame); also McClendon, *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today’s Theology* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990; originally published 1974), 1-23; and *Ethics: Systematic Theology*, Volume I, Second Edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), ch. 1; originally published in 1986. On the differences between the Eastern and Western ways of conveying convictions, see Parush R. Parushev, “East-West: A Theological Conversation,” *Common Ground E-Journal: Perspectives on the Church in the 21st Century*, 1:2 (April 2004), pp. 11-21 (republished from *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, 1:1 (September 2000), pp. 31-44).

¹²⁰ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 142-71; Idem, *Doctrine: Systematic Theology*, Volume II (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 23-46; Parush R Parushev, “Theology for the Church: A Convictional Perspective on Community’s Theological Discourse,” plenary paper at IBTS Directors’

at carefully and the reasons for its shape and content discerned and interpreted, then it becomes possible, even if modestly, to explore the ways and the means of (creative) transformation where it is found deficient.

When it comes to the environmental issues and the communities that the students of IBTS come from, deficiency is noticeable. Many of them come from Eastern Europe which, during the Communist times, had enjoyed some practices – enforced economically and ideologically – that were much more environmentally friendly compared to today's realities.¹²¹ Paradoxically, such practices existed alongside ecological disasters people were not allowed to speak about, diseases resulting from working in a highly contaminated environment, and a lax approach towards natural resources such as water or gas. The Eastern European communist lifestyle was interrupted with the collapse of the Soviet system and the galloping entry of wild capitalism with its companion, consumerism. Even now that a whole group of Eastern European countries have entered the EU, and the resources for various ecological projects become not only much more available but also at times required to be used, the realities on the ground are often deplorable. EU money can sustain a happy host of bureaucrats who produce impressive reports without much regard for the implementation of policies and practices. Ironically, this is somewhat reminiscent of the communist era, when propaganda and reality had little in common. Such a climate certainly does not help build environmental enthusiasm, especially when, as noted in one of the lectures during the Conference, many of the churches are struggling with issues of poverty and injustice making direct environmental concern a very remote issue, if not an insult.

The primary work of IBTS is carried out on the level of graduate studies. Our typical student is a current or future teacher of the local seminary who alongside will serve as a minister in their local church. In most cases, exposure to the theology of creation during their undergraduate education has relied on material that either completely ignored the so-called doctrine of creation or treated it briefly and in isolation from any other aspect of faith so that at best it reinforced a romantic appreciation of nature within a platonic framework.¹²²

Alongside our graduate students, we also have the Certificate in Applied Theology programme which brings together young Christians from various European countries for nine months of living and learning together. Again, most of them currently come from Eastern Europe and bring similar baggage to the graduate students in terms of environmental attitudes, only perhaps with less sophisticated theological justifications.

How can we help students to grasp the mandate of creation care?

The Church and Environment module, offered through the MTh in Applied Theology and Magister programme, is not the most popular choice of students applying for the programme. However, when the students arrive at IBTS, they cannot avoid becoming

Conference *The Dynamics of Primary and Secondary Theologies on Baptist Communities*, August 24-28 2004, forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference.

¹²¹ Recycling would be one obvious example.

¹²² One of the most fascinating projects of theological research is for the students to begin exploring the reasons for and the development of such an attitude in their home contexts.

involved in the life of the community, which is marked by certain practices that explicitly and, even more importantly, implicitly convey concern for creation. Following the original vision for the IBTS community of a mission reconciling and redeeming the “mess” of life,¹²³ the holistic embodiment of creation care is the principal vehicle of environmental education.

One way is through the experience of daily community worship - the Scriptures, prayers and the songs used on a daily basis, as well as special events of the Christian liturgical year related to creation. Another is the implementation of an Environmental Policy overseen by an Environmental Management and Protection Group (EMPTy) drawn from the academic and administrative staff and students. EMPTy promotes, amongst other things, the “greening” of the campus, a comprehensive recycling programme, advocacy of environmentally friendly decisions regarding our buildings, purchase of supplies, and in the development of sustainability. It involves the whole community in various activities, such as tree planting or campus and nature picture contests, games, competitions and reflection or action points each Wednesday at our community refreshment. Each November IBTS arranges events for an Environment Month on campus with each week devoted to a different theme, such as, trees, water, waste, renewable energy, global challenges. In that period we engage in various activities to advance a concern for, and joy of, our environment. Each spring there is a whole-campus environmental audit conducted by our Research Professor in Environmental Education. IBTS is in an ecumenical partnership with a team from the Orthodox Academy at Vilémov that also teaches a course on a theology of creation care and acts as a consultant in the use renewable forms of energy.

All of these activities are challenges for the students, especially when clashing with their previous lifestyle, confronting them and forcing them to consider afresh their own convictions in relation to creation. This is supported by special lectures as well as courses such as the Church and Social Ethics. This is a very popular module, which has environmental ethics as one of its key sections. As with social ethical issues in general, learning from each other in an ecumenical spirit of active care for creation has proven to be an effective way of wrestling with the indifference of communities of faith, and provides a stimulus for thoughtful engagement with the challenges of environmental neglect. Ecumenical partnership is particularly needed in the Eastern European context.¹²⁴

123 See Parush R Parushev, “Witness, Worship and Presence: On the Integrity of Mission in Contemporary Europe, Plenary paper for the IAMS (International Association for Mission Studies) XIth Quadrennial International Conference on “Integrity of Mission in the Light of the Gospel: Bearing the Witness of the Spirit” in Port Dickson, Malaysia 2004 (31 July - 7 August 2004), available on www.missionstudies.org/conference/plenary_papers.htm; Edited and expanded version is forthcoming as an article in a special edition of the International Journal on Mission Studies, 2006. On the story of IBTS and its engagement with the redemption of distorted life, such as the sharing of life and space by the students from countries which had just been at war with each other after the seminary opened in 1949 in Rüschtikon, Switzerland, or, after the seminary’s relocation to Prague, Czech Republic, giving new purpose to rooms which had been used by the Nazis and the Communist State Police, see Petra Veselá, *Fit for a King: Tracing the History of the Czech Republic, Jenerálka and IBTS* (Prague: IBTS, 2004).

¹²⁴ See Lina Andronovienė and Parush R Parushev; Church, State, and Culture: On the Complexities of Post-soviet Evangelical Social Involvement (with Lina Andronovienė), *Theological Reflections*, EAAA Journal of Theology, # 3 (2004), 194-212.

Building on these approaches to environmental issues more directed and focused study can take place. It takes the form of specialist weeks of lectures in the theology of creation care for the CAT course. This includes practical activities on sustainability and environmental protection, often accompanied by a field trip, such as to the Orthodox Academy at Vilémov. However, the most concentrated study is carried out by those who take the aforementioned module in Church and Environment.¹²⁵

At the point of convergence of practice and theological education certain questions can be asked in a more meaningful way.

- What are the reasons why the Church has pushed creation to the periphery of its concerns, even though the people of God's story in the Bible both starts and finishes with images of creation, new and renewed?
- What has happened to the Church's practice of reading the Bible, and what can be learnt from those believing communities, such as the one led by Hans Hut and others of the radical reformation, who took 'the gospel of all creatures' very seriously?
- What does it mean to affirm the goodness of creation and its role in glorifying God and enhancing God's rule?
- How, for human beings, is being a part of creation understood, and how is creation related to creativity?
- How do we correlate creation with suffering,¹²⁶ which seems to be creation's constant companion?
- Given that for Christians the key in understanding suffering is provided in the life and death of Jesus Christ: what can be said about the newness of life brought by His resurrection, which is indicative of the way in which the early chapters of Genesis converge into the vision of the Lamb of the Revelation?¹²⁷
- How can these insights be embodied in the communities of faith from which our students come?

Our aim is that connections with other areas of theological exploration as well as the practices of the church and of an educational institution will become more evident as the students progress through their studies. As they explore what the church must teach in order to be the church it claims to be,¹²⁸ our hope is that they will be able to successfully relate creation care to their church's task of being a witness to Christ in the contemporary context.

IBTS Environmental Policy, adopted November 2002

¹²⁵ It is offered as a 10 or 20 ECTS credits module. Further information can be obtained on the IBTS website, www.ibts.cz/academics

¹²⁶ For a thoughtful engagement with biblical narrative of creation as gift, blessing, and promise, and the theme of suffering, see James W McClendon, *Doctrine*, 146-89.

¹²⁷ John Howard Yoder provides an excellent map for the biblical grounds for engaging the realities of life from the perspective of renewed sociality brought by the Christ event. *The Politics of Jesus: Behold the Man! Our Victorious Lamb*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994; originally published in 1972).

¹²⁸ Here we follow the understanding of doctrinal theology as a second-order discourse, which rightfully is the focus of theological institutions such as IBTS. See McClendon, *Doctrine*, 21 ff.

*Preamble*¹²⁹

Flowing from our Mission Statement, IBTS in our witnessing to life in the Šárka Valley recognises our responsibility to educate, enable, encourage and set an example to our staff, students, visitors and neighbours in the stewardship of God's world as an essential element in Christian discipleship and kingdom ministry. The Board of Trustees, Rector and Directorate respects this responsibility and we are committed to the following Environmental Policy as a governing factor in our management systems.

Our Environmental Policy embraces the notion of Sustainable Development, which is different from sustainability and more accurately reflects our understanding of being made in the image of God and invited by God to be partners with God in both the maintenance and development of God's creation. God means us and allows us to take what God gives us and responsibly to develop it in such a way that it is enriching for us without damaging or impoverishing the whole creation now or in the future. Nor must the exercise of this God given liberty and role diminish the variety and quality of God's creation (which has so delighted and nurtured us) for future generations. Development that is not sustainable has been popularly described as "cheating on our children" or "treating the planet as though we do not intend to stay."

1. Overall Framework

The Environmental Policy of IBTS consists of three elements that will be absorbed into the Seminary's culture:

- i) our Curriculum and Education Programme
- ii) the management of the institution, our estate and buildings
- iii) our involvement with and encouragement of good environmental practice in the Prague region and the local community.

2. Specific Activities

To deliver each of the foregoing elements of the Policy, IBTS will address a number of issues and devise a range of specific activities.

2.1. Curriculum Development and Education Programmes

IBTS will:

- i) include within our worship, prayers, songs and theological programmes an understanding that caring for and partnering God in the wonder of creation is an essential part of Christian discipleship and ministry.
- ii) ensure that the notion of stewardship is inherent in all our teaching and training programmes, not just in some with an ecological tag.
- iii) recognise that in both the Old and the New Testament studies God has an abiding interest in the *world* God created and for which God's Son died.

¹²⁹ Note: The Preamble does not form part of the policy

- iv) will encourage all who come within its community, as lecturers, students, visitors or workers to carry out a personal environmental check up and discharge their duties in such a way as to contribute to the life of the Seminary as an environmentally sensitive contributor.
- v) have a constant programme of training and alerting our staff, students and visitors in such matters as good waste management, energy conservation, pollution reduction and environmental enhancement.

2.2. Management of the Institution, its Buildings and Campus

IBTS will:

- i) develop and operate this environmental policy which embraces the notion of Sustainable Development, removing bad practices and will seek to ensure that IBTS functions safely, reliably and provides a healthy environment for all within our own micro environment.
- ii) in seeking to preserve and enhance the environment, use the best available, economically feasible and environmentally sensitive technology.
- iii) seek to reduce our use of water and minimise the adverse environmental effects of such water as goes to waste.
- iv) seek to reuse and recycle materials and so reduce the waste it produces.
- v) develop strategies and management practices that reduce the use of energy from fossil fuels and explore alternative energy sources, and seek to use them whenever possible.
- vi) reduce our impact on the environment by using environmentally friendly raw materials and supplies and by controlling emissions from our heating and ventilation systems.
- vii) select wherever possible contractors and suppliers who take a concern for the environment into their production, purchasing and sales methods.
- viii) seek to ensure that healthy food when available and possible will be served to those living or visiting the campus.

2.3. The Seminary's Involvement with and encouragement of good Environmental Practice in the Prague Region and the Local Community

IBTS will:

- i) keep the environmental laws of the Czech Republic.
- ii) use the experience and knowledge gained by our own practices to offer advice to the wider Christian community, regional bodies and municipalities and the general public.
- iii) cooperate with other Christian groups and people of goodwill to promote concern for the environment.

3. Methodology

IBTS will:

- i) conduct a baseline survey in all three activity areas to establish current practices including costs.
- ii) set targets and deadlines for achieving change and improvement in all the activity areas

- iii) annually review the effectiveness and performance within each activity area
- iv) seek external validation of our performance and be ready to respond to constructive criticism from interested parties
- v) within the annual budget attempt to provide the necessary resources for realising the aims of this Environmental Policy and the goals, targets and programmes within it.

5. Conclusion

In adopting this Environmental Policy the Board of Trustees asks the Rector and the Directorate to provide an annual report on this policy, its implementation and the extent to which goals and targets are being met and programmes being conducted.

Integrating environmental perspectives into the theological curriculum

*The Revd Margot R Hodson*¹³⁰

Workshops introduction

Ministerial education is coming under pressure from many quarters to include new strands of education to better resource contemporary church ministers. Issues as diverse as postmodernism, management training and counselling have relevance to pastors and many colleges struggle to fit these contemporary issues into the curriculum without losing sight of a solid core of subjects that have traditionally undergirded ministerial training. A concern for the environment can be seen as yet another clamouring voice and for some, one that can be resisted amid more pressing human concerns. Within universities, theology has diversified and again, environmental theology competes for attention amid other contemporary approaches. The research for the section on courses identified several different approaches. If the environment is specifically included, it is frequently an optional module. Though this is much better than nothing at all, there is a key disadvantage. It implies that the environment is a supplementary rather than a core concern. This leads to the perception that the main curriculum does not need to respond to the challenge of seriously addressing our approach to the natural and material world. Secondly, where there are tutors with a commitment to environmental concerns, they are likely to emphasise the significance of the environment in their own lectures and their approach to community life. Quite frequently this means that it is included ad hoc according to the interests of these tutors, but without the development of an overall strategy of understanding from the college.

The conference in Prague was convened because there was a realisation of the need to develop a holistic environmental strategy for environmental theological education. The idea of the workshop sessions was to explore the issues of integrating environmental concerns throughout the curriculum of a theological college. This calls for a fundamental shift in perception to acknowledge the importance of the natural and material world in the whole of our theological understanding and life as a worshipping community. Positively, this enables the development of a strategy that would integrate environmental perspectives naturally into ministerial preparation, rather than eroding time from areas of important human concern. This approach will enable trainee ministers to form a holistic approach to ministry and communities. It will provide resources to help them to integrate human, spiritual and environmental concerns, and give them the flexible skills that they will need to tackle the many complex challenges of the twenty first century. In the following sections of this chapter, I will set out four broad areas where environmental integration can be facilitated: doctrine and biblical studies, ethics, mission and worship. These will be based on the collective understanding of those attending the conference and build on the insights gained there, providing some practical guidelines for curriculum integration.

¹³⁰ The Revd Margot R Hodson is Chaplain of Jesus College, Oxford, and a director of the John Ray Initiative. She teaches Environmental Ethics at Oxford Brookes University and is an active member of 'Sage', Oxford's Christian environmental group.

Doctrine and Biblical studies

Workshop facilitator: John Weaver

The Doctrine subgroup considered many of the major themes of biblical studies and Christian doctrine and found a significant environmental component to explore. The core concerns were: the relationships between God, humans and the rest of the cosmos; the connection between the doctrines of creation, salvation and redemption; a full understanding of the doctrine of God, a doctrine of humanity, and an understanding of the future of the earth in eschatology.

A Doctrine of Relationships

The three-way relationship between God, humans and the rest of the cosmos is central to an environmental understanding of Christian doctrine. Traditionally Christian theology has concentrated on two sets of relationships: the relationship between God and humanity, and human to human interactions. The re-establishment of the three-way relational model has long been used in developing a doctrine of society, but the earth is frequently placed in an economic and supporting role.¹³¹ The full inclusion of the cosmos within this relational understanding of the Christian faith enables a proper approach to faith, communities and the earth.

Creation, Salvation and Redemption

There are a number of places in Old and New Testaments where these doctrines are placed together. Examples are Second Isaiah, Psalms and John 1. God is first emphasised as the creator of the universe, and this is then followed by a message of salvation. Scholars have come to different conclusions concerning the relationship between the doctrines of creation and salvation in these passages. Von Rad takes a minimalist view of the importance of creation, seeing it as “*but a magnificent foil for the message of salvation.*”¹³² Others are more positive, but there is a tendency to see the doctrine of creation to be concerned with ‘nature,’ whereas salvation and redemption to be the concern of humanity alone. Where this is implicit in the teaching of doctrine and biblical studies there will be a major gap in understanding the environmental implications of the doctrines of salvation and redemption. The inevitable result is that ministerial students and others can focus their attentions on human concerns relegating environmental ones to the periphery. If salvation and ultimate redemption is God’s intention for the whole of his creation then there is an imperative to take seriously the call to care for creation as part of God’s redemptive plan.¹³³ As we look to the New Heaven and New Earth we can begin to understand them as Heaven and Earth fully redeemed, just as we are made new in Christ.

Environment and the Doctrine of God

¹³¹ See for example: C.J.H. Wright, (1983) *Living as the people of God*, Leicester: IVP.

¹³² G. von Rad, (1984), ‘The theological problem of the Old Testament doctrine of creation,’ in B.W. Anderson, *Creation in the Old Testament*, London: SPCK, p.53-64

¹³³ For a fuller account see: M.R. Hodson, (2006) *Creation in Exile? Environmental perception in the Book of Isaiah*, unpublished thesis.

The Apostle's Creed begins with, "I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth." From their experience of the covenant God the Israelites recognised the creator God, and God's role as creator was frequently used as an argument for monotheism. From their experience of the crucified and risen Christ the early Church recognised the cosmic Christ (John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3). In these passages, Jesus' role in creation was clarified to reveal his divinity. His ongoing role in sustaining creation was also developed and this resonates with ecology and environmental studies that point to interconnectedness and continuous creation. An environmental understanding of the Cosmic Christ is therefore suggestive of God's immanence as well as God's transcendence and leads to a Trinitarian understanding of the role of Father, Son and Spirit in creation and redemption. In the Eastern Orthodox view of the Trinity, the concept that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father is used to explain an eternal creativity of God. The universe and our earth is a natural expression of God's personality and is being continuously created and sustained by God. Furthermore, a robust approach to the doctrines of incarnation and bodily resurrection will lead to an appreciation of our material world and mitigate against body/soul and material/spiritual dualisms, both of which can lead to a negative understanding of God's creation.

Environment and a Doctrine of Humanity

Humans are part of God's creation and fellow creatures with the rest of God's creation. We are made from the dust of the earth and will return to dust. Humans are also made in God's image and as his image bearers have a specific role in relation to the rest of creation. When we consider our role in creation, the descriptive words, stewardship, co-creative, and co-redemptive, must be put alongside the words sin and justice. God has made a covenant with his whole creation and we are called to take our part in that. We are called to act justly, humbly aware of our shortcomings and our human tendency not to act responsibly towards the earth placed in our care.

Doctrine course work

The outline above could be used either to integrate an environmental approach throughout a course on Christian doctrine, or it could be used as a basis for a stand alone lecture that could be given toward the end of a lecture series to help students make the connection between conventional Christian doctrines and a legitimate environmental interpretation of them. Whichever approach was followed, students could then be given the choice to develop the environmental dimensions of not more than two related Christian doctrines. This could be presented as an essay or could form a complimentary seminar series that might run alongside the lecture series.

Ethics

Workshop facilitator, Chris Walton

Environmental ethics has become a major discipline, yet within the curriculum of a mainstream theology course, environmental approaches may be entirely absent. In Christian colleges, approaches to ethics vary from theoretical, philosophical approaches, to a more practical focus applying philosophical approaches, such as community virtues ethics, to more situational, problem-solving approaches. In some colleges it will be an extension of biblical studies. There are also a few colleges that do not have any courses named “ethics” and perceive it as an application of Christian doctrine.

Most vocational colleges will naturally be seeking to equip students to be competent and sensitive in handling the ethical dimensions of pastoral situations. Environmental ethics may not seem to have obvious relevance. As environmental problems become more apparent during the twenty-first century, ministers will need to be equipped to approach these from an ethical perspective and balance human and environmental concerns. Such an approach will take account of the value of nature, our relationship to it and the balance of our responsibilities toward people and planet.

The Value of Nature and ideas of ultimate value

Ethical decisions concerning nature need to be based on a proper understanding of its value. Christians understand God’s creation to be made for God’s glory and therefore to have value in its own right and not purely for its usefulness to humans. Sadly some Christians have failed to appreciate the intrinsic value of nature and these have taken ethical decisions based on giving value to humans but not to the rest of creation. This anthropocentric approach distorts Christian ethics and gives false moral validation to actions that have caused harm to creation. Secular environmental ethics frequently take a biocentric or ecocentric approach to absolute value. Biocentric approaches place ultimate and equal value on each individual organism. Ecocentric ethics places ultimate value on the integrity of the ecosystem. The challenge of Christian environmental ethics is to balance the intrinsic value of nature with the understanding of humans as made in the image of God. This theocentric or Christocentric approach places ultimate value on God and seeks to balance the intrinsic value of nature with issues of human need. This does not lead to a straightforward set of guidelines but rather to a commitment to care for people and planet as an intrinsic and priceless whole.

Interconnectedness

This concept of intrinsic value and Christocentric ethics implies the interconnectedness of the whole earth community. Humans are intimately related to the rest of creation and are dependent on the natural world. As we accept that the whole of creation is reconciled in Christ and held together in him (Colossians 1:17-20) so we can accept our place within creation as Christ’s body.

The Stewardship ethic

Though stewardship is not the only biblical ethic for approaching environmental concerns, its value is recognised as playing a significant role in helping us to act more justly towards the earth.¹³⁴ Genesis 2:15 provides the basis of the stewardship approach. We work and keep the land by serving its needs and protectively sustaining its fruitfulness. Thus good stewardship teaches sustainable approaches that will lead to a flourishing of the whole earth community.

Community and lifestyle

Humanity will need to accept a different approach to individual and community lifestyles and move away from our current aspirations, based on the myth of limitless economic growth. Instead, we need to look to simpler and more spiritually rich lifestyles that will bring “life for all instead of money for a few.”¹³⁵ Healthy relationships based on mutual respect will be at the heart of this. The concept of relationships will extend to the global human community making us sensitive to the disparities experienced in the human population. Community will also respond to the concept of the whole earth community held together in Christ and this deepening of relationship with the rest of creation will lead to a greater understanding of being the body of Christ through our lives. Daily living will become an embodiment of our worship and our commitment to Christ.

Given these commitments any initiative to integrate environmental concerns into the ethics strand of a theological institution would only be possible if the whole institution was also willing to work out those ethics in the daily life of their community.

Ethics course work

Environmental ethics should be conducted within a group, institution or seminary where healthy relations between people and planet are not simply talked about but are embodied. Students, as part of the course, should monitor the quality of justice within their own group and their immediate environment (human and non-human). The students should themselves, together with their tutor, be held responsible for the ethical quality of their own group dynamics, and their individual and group impact on the earth.

Suggestion for a piece of course work for ethics on the subject of Water

The ethics group was drawn to the work of Roman Juriga in the supply of clean water to the villages around Vilémov. The requirement of the subject for the case study is that it should be the investigation of a local issue or problem, which could therefore present the connections between the personal, the local and the global issues. Students would first research their case study and then present their findings as a seminar.

¹³⁴ For a detailed analysis of the stewardship ethic see: R.J. Berry, (2006) *Environmental Stewardship, Critical Perspectives – Past and Present*, London: T&T Clark.

¹³⁵ European Kairos Document, “Setting out for a socially just, life-giving and democratic Europe” first drafted in November 1997. See www.c3.hu/~bocs/kairos-a.htm, accessed 21.12.06

1. Introductory lectures

A lecture and workshop would be used to outline the particular case under investigation. They would give an overview of the current water crisis through presenting the personal issues, local issues and global issues. The first lecture would use this specific case to teach some of the ethical concepts outlined above. The workshop session would discuss the ways and means of carrying out the study, giving helpful aids and tools for the work.

2. The case study should then be researched and presented by the students in small groups

a. The case study will include:

- investigation and research, personally, locally, globally unearthing the issues and questions arising out of the specific study
- indication of decisions made and action proposed
- description of the problems and dilemmas encountered

b. The presentation will:

- include a variety of ways of presentation, such as seminar, power point, drama, visits
- describe the process and criteria by which resolutions, decisions are to be made
- describe the theological and ethical framework which guided the process and the criteria
- describe the actions and lifestyle changes taken: personally; within the group; and within the institution/college

In this way awareness is created by the study

3. Concluding seminar/Lecture

This will include:

- all the groups together teasing out the conceptual, theological and ethical issues required to understand the dilemmas and to make the difficult decisions resulting from the case study.
- a time of reflection investigating how the case study has changed both individual and collective attitudes and lifestyle.
- in conclusion the tutor could helpfully expand awareness of areas of ethical enquiry as yet unknown to the group for future decision making

Mission

Workshop facilitator, Martin Conway

Introduction

If we are able to integrate environmental concerns into a theological curriculum, we should expect a response in Christian action towards environmental care. Within the curriculum, environment therefore needs to be integrated into a holistic understanding of Christian mission. When it comes to practical mission, many Christians see environmental care as subordinate to human issues. If the command from God to care for creation is taken seriously, it should rather be seen as fundamental to our faith and inextricably linked to issues of human care and justice. The theory of environmental missiology has already been thought through by many Christian denominations and some make this explicit in their mission statements. For example, the Worldwide Anglican communion has a fifth strand of mission that encourages Christians: *to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*¹³⁶ The Methodist Church of Ireland has as one of its four core features: *wholeness – God’s creative purpose and active compassion inspire concern for the whole of human life and the environment.*¹³⁷ Others are less explicit but have mission statements that could include an environmental understanding, for example the Baptist Union of Great Britain, whose Five Core Values could be interpreted to include the whole earth community.¹³⁸

An authentic mission concern

When considering the environment in the context of Christian mission, it is essential to develop an approach that sees caring for the environment as mission in its own right. At the start of human history, God gave humans a command to take responsibility for the earth – to care for it, protect it and enable its fruitfulness (Genesis 1-2). Christ in redeeming the world made it possible for creation to ultimately be freed from its bondage to decay and obtain freedom (Romans 8:21). Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross therefore had Cosmic as well as human implications and we should consider the whole of our world as something Christ died for. As we look to the future we know that this freedom will be expressed in a renewing of our heaven and earth (expressed in the use of the Greek word ‘*kainos*’ meaning ‘renewing’ rather than ‘new’). This restoration of heaven and earth, however radically brought about, also points to the value of God’s creation now.

The practical impacts of an environmental approach to mission

If we take this approach, we can begin to see many of the lifestyle changes that we are asked to make not only to be an ethical response to the environment but also to be part of our Christian mission. These lifestyles are best worked out in a community context and can be lived out alongside lifestyle changes that reflect a concern for justice for all people on earth. When we truly begin to take these issues seriously they will take us into the heart of our communities through very practical involvement with issues of waste, energy, transport and ecological management. As all these concerns become

¹³⁶ www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/fivemarks.cfm

¹³⁷ www.irishmethodist.org/who/missionstatement.htm

¹³⁸ www.baptist.org.uk/Baptists/five.htm

more imperative to communities at local and national level, so the church has an opportunity to provide a lead and bring hope to many who will have begun to despair. The holistic outworking of this will be that in approaching the environment as a mission concern in its own right, we will inevitably find that there will be those around us who will be personally drawn to the Good News of Jesus, our loving redeemer of the world.

Mission course work

It is fundamental to the understanding of the entire mission entrusted to Christ's Church that humanity is living in a universe created by God in love and for love. Humanity, as witnessed by the story of Adam and Eve, was created with the role of stewards of creation on God's behalf. It is thus central to the nature and task of humanity that we are to care for, not to damage, God's creation. Moreover our health as human beings depends intrinsically on a healthy environment, just as we are now learning painfully how crucial the behaviour of humanity is for the long-term health of the natural creation.

So it becomes essential that human beings, individually and collectively, learn not to take from nature more than we absolutely *need*, rather than what we may persuade ourselves that we *want*. Already it becomes clear that human flourishing is more truly sought in the *simplicity of life* rather than in an ever more greedy consumerism, which deprives the poor of things they need. The fact that all nature's systems are closed, in the sense that nothing is ever wasted, points to the value of humans taking maximum care to waste as little as possible, for example through legislation such as that in Germany by which only things that are recyclable may be sold.

One excellent way to persuade those little inclined to take the priority of environmental concern seriously is to look with them into their spending and/or their eating and drinking, to discover, for example, how much of it is driven by their need(s) and how much by their want(s)? Some questions that will aid the discussion include:

- how much of our consumption involves local production/distribution, and how much comes from other parts of the globe?
- through our consumption how much energy is used up, or how much are we helping to save?
- how many toxic substances are in any way involved in the process?
- how many of the machines involved are repairable, and how many have to be discarded once broken?

An excellent entry point for discussion into the basic outlook for mission is through a graph that indicates the relation in different nations between human happiness and average incomes, and a parallel one indicating the relation between the degree of human stress and the speed of change. Simplicity rather than the accumulation of possessions is seen to be essential to human flourishing.

As Christians consider the nature of the missionary task in today's world, with its various contexts and communities, in which we serve, individually and corporately as

churches, there is a need to think carefully about at least two major questions:

1. How to encourage friends and neighbours to see the world as God's rather than as an entirely human possession?
2. How to present an example of appropriate behaviour and use of our time that those around us can positively recognise the value of living simply, for the sake of love and friendship, rather than being dominated by concerns about money and possessions?

An Environmental Project within a course on Christian Mission

1. Starting from a practical experience - two possibilities are offered:

a) Take the group to a place they are most unlikely ever to have visited before, a highly unpleasant heap of rubbish piled up in some hidden corner of your town or countryside. Then begin to explore of what sort of materials it is composed. Amongst the questions that may be asked are:

- why has it been deposited there, and by whom?
- what impact is it having, on the immediate area and/or the water systems underneath?
- what may the consequences be on human health and/or on the local environment?
- what immediate actions might be undertaken to clear up this situation and prevent anything like it occurring in future?

b) Take the group to a local supermarket and examine the shelves of fruit, vegetables and meat. Amongst the questions that may be asked are:

- what are the countries of origin of the goods on display?
- how many products originate within the local region?
- how many of them currently are in season?
- how many of them are organic?
- is it possible to provide a full meal from those that are local, in season and organic?

2. A piece of individual coursework to calculate the participant's own personal environmental footprint.

Each member of the group is invited to research, with, for example, the use of relevant websites, their use of the earth's resources and contribution to environmental pollution. This is to be set out through a simple visible presentation.

3. A task for a workshop

Together the group reviews the personal environmental footprint schedules they have produced in order to:

- a) discuss which aspects of their lives relate to their individual *need*, and which to their *wants*. How are these distinguished from each other?
- b) develop a manageable outline for examining individual environmental footprints that could be used within a local church. Accompany this with a number of specific pieces of advice on how one's personal footprint might be

reduced.

4. A lecture arising from these explorations

The tutor sets out his considered response to these exercises in relation to the questions:

- a) What have we learned together about behaving responsibly in relation to our natural environment(s)?
- b) How best can each local church, and the Church Universal, help its members to learn to behave more responsibly in relation to the natural environment(s)?

Worship

Workshop facilitator, Lina Andronovienė

The content of Christian worship varies greatly between denominations and different traditions, thus any approach to incorporating environmental concerns into the worship strand of a theology curriculum needs to consider these very different approaches. Christians absorb much of their theological convictions from resources used in worship, and so it is an important area to consider when seeking to redress the balance of the role of creation care in our thinking.

Our songs, hymns and liturgies vary greatly in their appreciation of the earth. Some provide very positive attitudes to nature, while others are more negative in their approach, seeing the aim of Christianity to spiritually transcend our present world. The workshop group was asked to devise a set of guidelines that would help those teaching and leading worship to discern what would be beneficial in helping Christians to cherish God's creation and understand their relationship to it. They also prepared the worship for the closing session of the conference.

Guidelines for including an environmental understanding in a worship course in a Christian College, Seminary or Faculty of Theology.

Introduction

The way forward for integrating the theology of creation care rests in the life of an intentional community that is gathering for worshipping and growing together. Thus worship reflects the convictions by which a community lives and at the same time is formative for the beliefs of the community.

We recognise and affirm the range of worship-styles and theological background. This means that material produced for use in worship must be capable of adaptation and cultural identification within a variety of backgrounds. At the same time, the environment, as an issue, can often be a topic to bring churches together. The possibility should not be lost for creating occasions when different churches or institutions from various Christian communions can gather together for ecumenical worship with an environmental theme.¹³⁹

The intention of these guidelines is to offer a framework of integration together with information about resources available for building a theology of creation care into the general theological and worship curriculum.

¹³⁹ The closing worship of the conference, for example, involved songs and litanies from various church traditions and parts of the world. The worship followed the Eastern Orthodox tradition of celebration of Presanctified Gifts, using unconsecrated bread and wine. The fresh locally baked bread was dribbled with virgin olive oil from southern Europe as a sign of the healing gifts of Christ and with wine from Mikulov where the vines were restored by the Anabaptists as a sign of celebration of life. The list of material helpful for highlighting the createdness of human beings and the call to stewardship, including the songs used during the closing worship of the conference, is provided at the end of this chapter. For the Litany of Thanksgiving to God for Gifts of Life see, for example, "The Liturgy of the Presanctified," www.byzantines.net/liturgy/presanctified.htm, or "The Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts," www.antiochian.org/1172879442.

Sources for the theme of creation in worship

It was recognized that much of modern Western worship resources – especially songs – tends to be anthropocentric and platonic in construct. It was further noted that quite often musical resources with a theme connected with the environment and ecology tend to be didactic or sentimental.

Below are some suggestions for sources from Christian tradition which invite into the holistic celebration of and care for creation:

- The Celtic tradition and insights represented by such intentional communities as Iona and Northumbria draw on the missionary background of the ancient Celtic church, its holistic view of life and a deep awareness of the created order.¹⁴⁰
- The Orthodox Church has an ingrained appreciation within its life and worship of the importance of God's creation.¹⁴¹
- The Franciscan tradition is another resource for reflecting on creation in worship.¹⁴²
- Another example would be some communities in the tradition of the radical reformation, whose sense of being part of created order was expressed in their music tradition and prayers.¹⁴³

The group affirmed the importance of these past insights, which can be used today, but also wanted to encourage each new generation to create and develop contemporary and contextual worship resources, which are holistic and affirm the covenantal relationship between the Triune God, humankind, and the rest of creation.

Possibilities for including environmental understanding in a worship course in a Christian College, Seminary or institution.

It is important to affirm the theology of creation care as a regular feature of the community worship. Within a course of Christian worship every section should draw attention to the importance of liturgical resources seeking to celebrate God's creation.¹⁴⁴

1. The importance of certain festivals is recognised as moments where a theology of creation care can be especially emphasised.

¹⁴⁰ See- R. Simpson, (1995) *Exploring Celtic Spirituality. Historic Roots for our Future*. London: Hodder & Stoughton

¹⁴¹ See for example- A.G. Keselopoulos, (2001) *Man and the Environment. A study of St Symeon the New Theologian*. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

¹⁴² For the background to this topic see also www.ofm-jpic.org/ecology/reorders/franciscan.html For more on this, including an order for an open-air animal service, see: The Staffordshire Seven *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. London: SPCK (2003). pp. 140-150.

¹⁴³ See, for example, Meego Rimmel's essay "The *Ausbund* as a Source and Expression of Anabaptist Primary Theology and the Moral Sense of Virtue" especially Section 3.7, "Sense of virtue in relation to the Anabaptist practice of worship of the living God everywhere on earth and in heaven," in *Currents in Baptist Theology of Worship* (Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), forthcoming.

¹⁴⁴ Two recent liturgical resources, which contain substantial amounts of relevant material are: The Staffordshire Seven *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. London: SPCK (2003); and Common Worship: *Times and Seasons*. London: Church House Publishing (2006).

- Many of the biblical (Jewish) festivals such as Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles have Creation themes that can be incorporated into worship services.¹⁴⁵
- The autumn harvest and thanksgiving festival is a key moment.¹⁴⁶
- Easter, with reference to the signs of new life (and the link with the Jewish Festival of Passover¹⁴⁷) provides an opportunity for affirming the creative and re-creative aspects of worship of the Triune God.¹⁴⁸
- The seasons of Advent¹⁴⁹ and the Incarnation and the events around the Christmas¹⁵⁰ and Epiphany¹⁵¹ seasons also present opportunities for celebrating the created world.
- There are other festivals in certain traditions that can affirm creation such as Rogation Sunday, when traditionally Christians prayed that God would bless their crops.¹⁵²
- Environment Sunday¹⁵³ (the Sunday closest to World Environment Week) and Creation Time¹⁵⁴ (September 1st to the second Sunday in October) are both specially focused to celebrate the creation. There are many liturgies available in connection with these two events.

2. The Ordo:

- If the circumstances of the venue permit it, affirming the celebration of God's creation could be done out of doors in a natural surrounding of parkland, a church yard, an area of open space.
- A service of worship has, as the Orthodox tradition affirms, the possibility of a "liturgy after the liturgy." In the celebration of the creative order, following an act of worship, an outing, walk, picnic or informal time in the open air might be enjoyed together by an ecclesial or academic community.¹⁵⁵
- Liturgical space should also be considered. The shape of the meeting place for worship, the design, lighting, colour and seating arrangements should be reflected upon in what they convey about our understanding of environment.
- Children need to be encouraged to recognize and share in the celebration of creation. The use of art, drama and music are good opportunities for the involvement of children. Children can also draw pictures, both positive and negative, of the world, animals and so on to illustrate the theme of a particular prayer or concern.

¹⁴⁵ M.R. Hodson, (2000) *A Feast of Seasons*. London: Monarch Books. See also: www.hodsons.org/Afeastofseasons/

¹⁴⁶ The Staffordshire Seven. *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. pp. 122-139; Common Worship: *Times and Seasons*. pp. 623-633.

¹⁴⁷ Hodson, *A Feast of Seasons*. pp. 31-66

¹⁴⁸ The Staffordshire Seven. *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. pp. 48-68; Common Worship: *Times and Seasons*. pp. 257-468.

¹⁴⁹ The Staffordshire Seven. *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. pp. 2-6.

¹⁵⁰ The Staffordshire Seven. *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. pp. 7-18.

¹⁵¹ Common Worship: *Times and Seasons*. pp. 118-207.

¹⁵² The Staffordshire Seven. *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. pp. 69-94; Common Worship: *Times and Seasons*. pp. 609-618.

¹⁵³ See <http://en.arochoa.org/ukconsunday/index2.html>

¹⁵⁴ See www.ecen.org/cms/uploads/creationtime06.pdf

¹⁵⁵ For some examples of this type of activity on Environment Sunday see: www.sageoxford.org.uk/envsun.htm

- Drama, prayers of praise, confession or intercession, music, and the proclamation of the Word can all be opportunities for working with the theology of the created order in daily and weekly liturgy.¹⁵⁶
- Testimony from members of the congregation can also be good opportunities for people to affirm some positive aspect of environmental concern.

Daily worship in a theological community

Whilst some traditions have an ingrained emphasis on the theology of creation in their forms of the office, for some other traditions it is not so clear and they need to find ways to intentionally weave the theme of creation into their worship. Using a cycle of the psalms, for example, would inevitably provide some level of engagement with a celebration of creation. For some other colleges/communities there may need to be a specific form of intentionality to focus the community on prayer for the created order. For instance, in the cycle of intercessions in daily community prayer perhaps one day per week can have a focus on concerns for the environment. In the use of hymnody, it might be appropriate to see that in the cycle of worship there are occasions when hymns and songs affirming and celebrating God's creation are used.

Course contents

In teaching liturgical and worship studies within colleges and seminaries, it will be natural to affirm those aspects of the shape of the liturgy that offer opportunity to affirm the work of God in creation and the responsibility of the community to serve their role as stewards of the world that the Triune God has created.

- Adoration and Praise: In the heart of the study of worship the adoration and praise of the Triune God provides a proper place for reflection on how our prayer celebrates the creation as that of God's purpose. This can be an excellent point to explore how all the senses can be affirmed and utilized in worship.
- Confession: When we consider the destruction, exhaustion and pollution of the created order and as we recall that "God so loved the world", inevitably a regular element of our confession will include prayer for the despoiling of our environment.
- Proclamation: Patterns of proclamation vary across the Christian traditions, but in those traditions that use lectionaries, there are natural moments for preaching to include insights into a theology of creation care.¹⁵⁷ In those traditions that do not use lectionaries, there can be an appropriate reflection on the rhythm of the seasons.
- Intercession: Most denominational worship liturgies begin with intercession for creation, but in helping ordinands and others to develop adequate patterns of intercession for use within ecclesial communities, this is often bypassed. Students should be encouraged to see the importance of such intercession.
- Eucharist, Communion, Lord's Supper: When the early Church celebrated the Eucharist it affirmed the importance of the created order through that

¹⁵⁶ Many examples of suitable songs, hymns, prayers, sermons etc. can be found in the Environment Sunday packs that have been produced by A Rocha: <http://en.arocho.org/ukconsunday/index2.html>

¹⁵⁷ Christian Ecology Link have produced some ecological notes on the Common Worship Lectionary: www.christian-ecology.org.uk/econotes-index.htm

celebration The very use of language and historic prayers about the gathering of the grain for the making of the bread and the activity of viniculture and the image of the vine in John's gospel all make this emphasis. Certain early texts, such as the liturgy of St Basil, give a strong and positive affirmation of creation.

Suggested Resources for Liturgical Material

Websites:

ECEN resources pages. European Christian Environmental Network:

<http://www.ecen.org/oldsite/resource.shtml>

A Rocha Environment Sunday resources:

<http://en.arocha.org/ukconsunday/index2.html>

Christian Ecology Link: <http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/resources.htm>

"Song Bibliography" of Earth Ministry:

http://www.earthministry.org/Congregations/song_bibliography.htm

The John Ray Initiative: resources for worship and sermons.

<http://jri.org.uk/resource/index.htm>

For a recording and full text of a service on the theme of Climate Change see:

<http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/chapel/sundayworship.php>

Printed material:

Common Worship: *Times and Seasons*. London: Church House Publishing (2006).

The Staffordshire Seven *Seasonal Worship from the Countryside*. London: SPCK (2003)

"We met you." Words and music by The Iona Community. John L. Bell and Graham Maule, eds., *Heaven Shall Not Wait. Volume 1 of Wild Goose Songs*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1989, 14-15.

"The goodness of God." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 16-17.

"Dance and sing." Words by The Iona Community. Ibid., 20-21.

"The song." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 22-24.

"World without end." Words by The Iona Community. Ibid., 24-25.

"Praise with joy." Words by The Iona Community. Ibid., 30-31.

"The secret." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 34-36.

"God's table." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 92-94.

"Blessing and honour." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 112-114.

"Jesus is Lord." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 120-121.

"Darkness is gone." Words and music by The Iona Community. John L. Bell and Graham Maule, eds., *Enemy of Apathy. Volume 2 of Wild Goose Songs*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1989, 70-71.

"Enemy of apathy." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 114-115.

"Today I awake." Words and music by The Iona Community. John L. Bell and Graham Maule, eds., *Love From Below. Volume 3 of Wild Goose Songs*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1989, 12-13.

"Thirsting for God." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 30-31.

"Nears the ending of the day." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 38-40.

"I am the Vine." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 52-54.

"The greatness of the small." Words and music by The Iona Community. Ibid., 62-63.

"Sing Praise to God." Words and arrangement by The Iona Community. Ibid., 70-71.

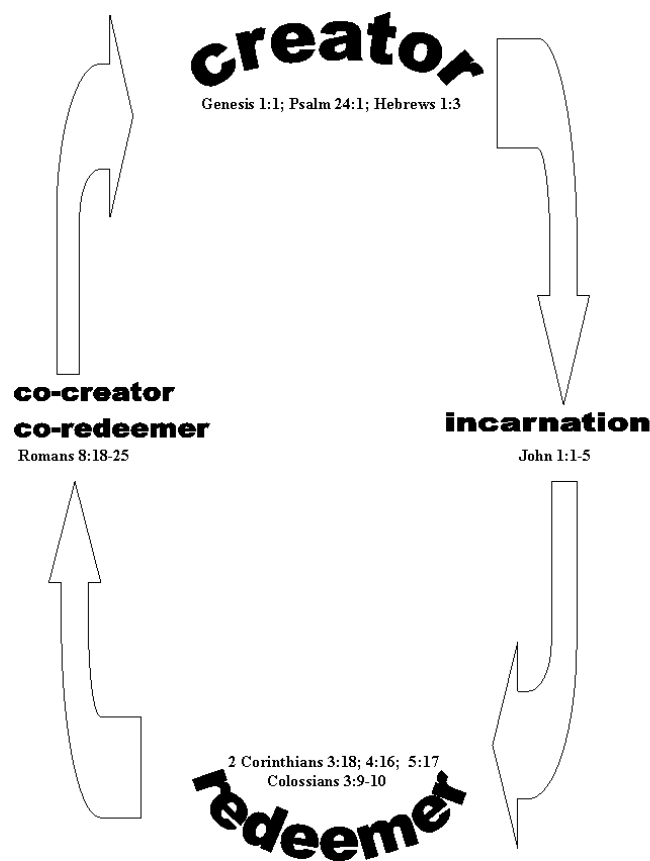
- “As if you were not there.” Words and music by The Iona Community. *Ibid.*, 72-73.
- “We will not take what is not ours.” Words and music by The Iona Community. *Ibid.*, 74-75.
- “God the Creator.” Words and arrangement by The Iona Community. *Ibid.*, 84-85.
- “Christ as a light.” Music by John Michael Talbot. *Celtic Daily Prayer. Music Edition*. Hetton Hall: Northumbria Community, 1999, 5-7.
- “May the road rise to meet you.” Music setting by Jill Sutheran. *May the Peace of the Lord Christ Go With You: Four Songs of Blessing. Music Edition*. Hetton Hall: Northumbria Community, 2001, 2.
- “May the peace of the Lord Christ.” P. Sutcliffe. *Ibid.*, 4.
- “May the saints and Saviour.” Words and music by Sammy Horner. *Ibid.*, 6-7.
- “Psalm 84.” Music: traditional, arr. Jill Sutheran. *Waymarks: Songs for the Journey. Music Edition*. Hetton Hall: Northumbria Community, 2001, 2.
- “Du är helig/You are holy.” Words and music by Per Harling, arr. David Peacock. Peacock, David and Geoff Weaver, eds. *World Praise*. (London: HarperCollins/Marshall Pickering, 1993), No. 29, in Swedish and English.
- “Jesus Christ, our living Lord.” Words after E. Turmezei, trans. E. Abraham and John L. Bell, music by Szokolay Sandro, arr. Geoff Weaver. *Ibid.*, No. 75, in Hungarian and English.
- “Look and learn.” Words by John Bell, music by Nah Young-Soo, arr. Geoff Weaver. *Ibid.*, No. 95
- “For the beauty of the earth.” Words by F. Sandford Pierpoint, traditional Chinese folk song, adpt. I-to-Loh. *Ibid.*, No. 36.
- “Carpenter, carpenter.” Words and music by Marion Payton. *Baptist Praise and Worship. Music Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, No. 118.
- “Come, let us praise the Lord.” Words by Timothy Dudley-Smith, Chilean folk melody adpt. and arr. Michael Paget. *Ibid.*, No. 119.
- “Come, you thankful people, come.” Words by Henry Alford, altd., music by G. J. Elvey. *Ibid.*, No. 120.
- “For the beauty of the earth.” Words by F. S. Pierpoint, altd., music by David Evans. *Ibid.*, No. 121.
- “For the fruits of his creation.” Words by F. Pratt Green, music by Francis Jackson. *Ibid.*, No. 123.
- “God, whose farm is all creation.” Words by John Arlott, English traditional melody arr. R. Vaughan Williams. *Ibid.*, No. 124.
- “He gave me eyes.” Words and music by Alan Pinnock. *Ibid.*, No. 125.
- “I’ll praise my maker while I’ve breath.” Words by Isaac Watts, music by G. Davis. *Ibid.*, No. 127.
- “Now thank we all our God.” Words by Martin Rinkart, tr. Catherine Winkworth, altd., music adpt. from a melody by J. Crüger., or another version by Geoffrey Beaumont. *Ibid.*, No. 128.
- “O Lord of every shining constellation.” Words by Albert F. Bayly, music by R.R. Terry, or another version by J. B. Dykes. *Ibid.*, No. 130.
- “Morning has broken.” Words by Eleanor Farjeon, Gaelic melody. *Ibid.*, No. 132.
- “Think of a world without any flowers.” Words by Bunty Newport, music by Graham Westcott. *Ibid.*, No. 134.
- “We plough the fields and scatter.” Words by Matthias Claudius, trans. Jane Montgomery Campbell, music by J. A. P. Schulz. *Ibid.*, 135.

- “All people that on earth do dwell.” Words by William Kethe, music from the *Genevan Psalter. The Source: The Definitive Worship Collection Compiled by Graham Kendrick. Full Music Edition*. Buxhall: Kevin Mayhew Ltd., 1998, No. 13.
- “All things bright and beautiful.” Words by Cecil Frances Alexander, music: traditional English. *Ibid.*, No. 14.
- “God is great.” Words and music by Graham Kendrick and Steven Thompson. *Ibid.*, No. 126.
- “Here is love.” Words by William Rees, music by Robert Lowry. *Ibid.*, No. 164.
- “I, the Lord of sea and sky.” Words and music by Daniel L. Schutte. *Ibid.*, No. 246.
- “Jesus is Lord!” Words and music by David Mansell. *Ibid.*, No. 284.
- “No scenes of stately majesty.” Words and music by Graham Kendrick. *Ibid.*, No. 375.
- “O give thanks.” Words and music by Graham Kendrick. *Ibid.*, No. 384.
- “O Lord, my God.” Words by Stuart K. Hine, Swedish folk melody, arr. Stuart K. Hine. *Ibid.*, No. 396.
- “Our God is so great.” *Ibid.*, No. 420.
- “O worship the King.” Words by Robert Grant, melody and bass by William Croft. *Ibid.*, No. 425.
- “The heavens shall declare.” Words and music by Geoff Bullock. *Ibid.*, No. 480.
- “The Lord is a mighty King.” Words and music by Graham Kendrick. *Ibid.*, No. 481.
- “Who then is this.” Words and music by Matt Spencer. *Source 2. Full Music Edition*. Buxhall: Kevin Mayhew Ltd., 2001, No. 1069.
- “Yes, God is good.” Words by John Hampden Gurney, music: *Templi Carmina*. *Ibid.*, No. 1075.
- “Den blomstertid nu kommer/The lovely spring is coming.” Words by Israel Kolmodin, Johan Olof Wallin, Britt G. Hallqvist, trans. Maria Lohuus (German), Margaret Fuhlbohm (English), Swedish folktune. *Colours of Grace: Gesangbuch der Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa (GEKE)*, in German, English, and French (München: Strube Verlag, 2006), No. 22, in Swedish, German, and English.
- “Zolang er mensen zijn op aarde/While still the world is full of people.” Words by Huub Oosterhuis, trans. Dieter Trautwein (German), Fred Kaan (English), Sœur Marie-Claire Sachot (French), music by Woltera Gerharda de Marez Oyens-Wansink. *Ibid.*, No. 32, in Dutch, German, English, and French.
- “Vom Aufgang der Sonne/From first light of sunrise.” Music by Paul Ernst Ruppel. *Ibid.*, No. 40, in German, English, French, Czech, and Polish.
- “Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr/All glory, be to God on high.” Words by Nikolaus Decius et al, trans. S.Slamnig (Croatian), Arve Brunvoll (Norwegian), Dirk Christiaan Meyer Jr. and Jan Wit (Dutch), Fritz Fliedner (Spanish), music by Nikolaus Decius. *Ibid.*, No. 45 (In German, English, Czech, Finnish, Croatian, Norwegian, Dutch, and Spanish).
- “Now the Green Blade Rises.” Words by John Macleod Crum, trans. Friedrich Hofmann (German), Anders Frostenson (Swedish), French 15th cent. carol. *Ibid.*, No. 113 (In English, German, and Swedish).
- “En Medio de la Vida/You are the God within Life.” Words by Mortimer Arias, trans. George Lockwood, music by Antonio Auza, arr. Homero Perera. *Celebremos: Segunda Parte*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1983, No. 27.
- “¿Para Qué Vivir?/Why Life?” Taller de Jóvenes, arr. Javier Arjona. © Cancionero Abierto. *Ibid.*, No.36.

Concluding the workshops and presenting a future vision

The closing session of the conference set out to consider where our understanding and explorations fit together. We recognised that we are involved in the *mission Dei* – God’s mission in the world. God the creator, who is love, creates a world with freedom, lives with the pain of human rebellion, the ‘Fall’, and seeks to redeem a broken world.

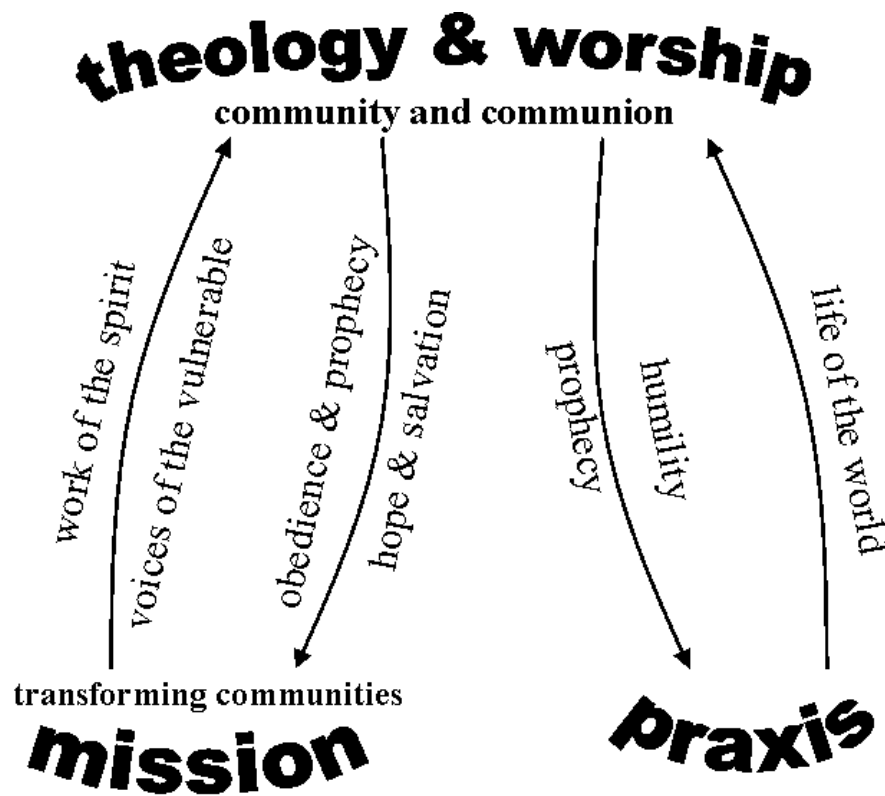
In the Bible we recognise that the Creator is the Covenant God and Redeemer God, who became incarnate in Jesus Christ. In union with Christ, Christians are invited into fellowship, partnership, in God’s mission in and for the world. It is in this role that Christians may become co-creators and co-redeemers with God. It is not that human beings are able to create or to redeem, but in co-operation with God, the Holy Spirit works through human beings.



It may be helpful to consider Gordon Kaufman’s re-phrasing of the opening verses of John 1: “In the beginning was creativity, and the creativity was with God, and the creativity was God.” He thinks of God as ‘creativity itself,’ manifest throughout the cosmos, where life emerges through the creativity of the evolutionary process.¹⁵⁸ Kaufman is anxious to bring God and nature together, where ‘God,’ ‘world’ and

¹⁵⁸ Gordon D Kaufman, *In the beginning Creativity* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2004) p. ix-x

'humanity' and their relationships to each other can highlight our "ecological embeddedness" in the natural world order.¹⁵⁹



Mission is the key to our understanding as it informs our theology and gives substance to our worship. Involvement in God's mission in the world hears the voices of the poor and the vulnerable and witnesses the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet theology and worship inform and give content to our understanding of mission. Mission is seen as our obedience to the prophetic call of God, and from our worship we are enthused with the message of hope and salvation. In this way the community of faith is involved in the transforming of communities as the work of God's Spirit.

Mission is recognised as the praxis of faith, the activity and theological reflection upon that activity as characteristic of Christ-like discipleship. Our theology and worship give us the prophetic words to proclaim and a recognition that obedience to God can be summed up in the words of the prophet Micah, who says in answer to the question, "With what shall I come before the Lord?" "He has shown all you people what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:6-8)

From this praxis we bring the life of the world into our worship. The celebration of the Lord's Supper brings our Sunday and Monday worlds together. It is thanksgiving to God for everything that God has accomplished in creation,

¹⁵⁹ Gordon D Kaufman, *In the beginning Creativity* p.41

redemption and sanctification, and for God's work of bringing the Kingdom to fulfilment in spite of human sin. As William Lazareth states:

The very celebration of the Eucharist is an instance of the Church's participation in *God's mission* to the world. This participation takes everyday form in the proclamation of the Gospel, service of neighbour and faithful presence in the world.¹⁶⁰

The Incarnation in history demonstrates God's clear identification with the created world of space and time. The celebration of the Lord's Supper with its backward look to the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and its forward look to the hope of the consummation of the world in God's eternal kingdom, celebrated in the physical elements of bread and wine, embrace the whole of life and human existence. Lazareth rightly concludes that

Solidarity in the Eucharistic communion of the body of Christ and *responsible care* of Christians for one another and the world find specific expression in the liturgies: in mutual forgiveness of sins; the sign of peace; intercession for all; the eating and drinking together; the taking of the elements to the sick and those in prison or the celebration of the Eucharist with them.¹⁶¹

This is the love and ministry of the servant Christ in which we share and in whose mission we participate.

We recognise that the Lord's Supper extends beyond the church congregation to the whole world. We understand God to be present in all human life, and beyond this to his work in sustaining the whole environment. We understand that God is immanent in the whole of creation, and that in the incarnation declares his solidarity with the whole of the created order. We recognise that redemption and restoration of the poor, weak and vulnerable includes the atmosphere, biosphere and ecosystems of the world we inhabit.

Sallie McFague, in her essay *An Ecological Christology*¹⁶², urges the Church to answer the question 'How have you been committed to the reign of God?' She believes that the natural world might be envisaged as 'the new poor,' believing that justice, rights, care and concern should be extended to the whole of creation. She challenges us to recognise that Jesus' ministry to God's oppressed creatures must include our deteriorating planet. For McFague, sacramental Christology is the embodiment of God in creation, as well as the hope of new creation.

Christians have a contribution to make. God created and entrusted the earth, and will redeem the whole of creation (Rom.8:19-22). We learn to think and act ecologically. There is a need to be re-awakened to the Gospel ethic, and recognise that human greed is at the root of the environmental crisis. Understanding and perceiving the

¹⁶⁰ William H Lazareth, *Growing Together in Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. A Study Guide* (Geneva, WCC, 1983) p.51

¹⁶¹ William Lazareth, *Growing Together in Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p.73

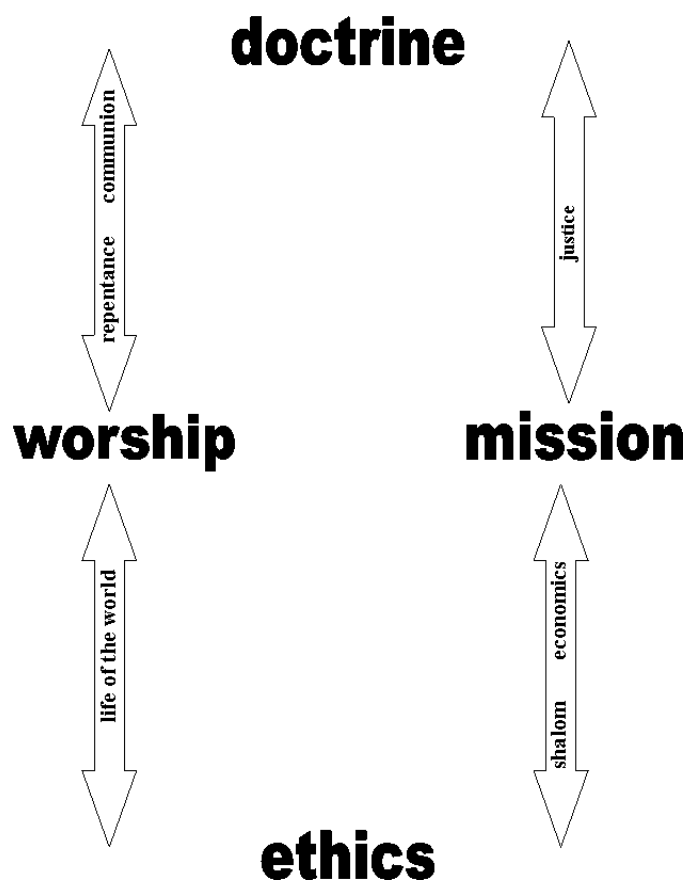
¹⁶² Sallie McFague, 'An Ecological Christology. Does Christianity have it?' in Richard C Foltz (editor) *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment. A Global Anthology* (Belmont, California, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003) pp.336-338

situation and moving to a change of heart or mind is *metanoia* – repentance. There are steps that we should take in sustainable consumption, which involves ethical choices in our buying and lifestyle. We will need to recognise our ecological footprints on the earth – our impact on our local and global environment. We can take environmental audits of our church and community, and establish eco-congregations.

For western Christians there is a need to develop a global perspective that recognises the impact of their lifestyle choices, and their economic, trade and industrial decisions on the rest of humanity. In accepting their relationship with the developing world, western Christians must actively seek to address the issues of justice and poverty, which are an integral part of global environmental concerns. We identified throughout the conference the links of the increased consumption of fossil fuels, global warming, climate change, with starvation and water shortages in the developing world. We also recognised that the unfair distribution of resources, and restrictive practices in international trade were a factor in increasing environmental destruction in parts of the developing world.

Christians must learn to think and act ecologically; repent of extravagance, pollution and wanton destruction; and recognise that human beings find it easier to subdue the earth than they do to subdue themselves. Christians face the task of articulating the Gospel with relevance; to speak prophetically and relevantly to the environmental and social issues of our day; and rediscover a holistic doctrine of creation.

So here we put all our thinking together into one last diagram.



Consideration of the environment and our response to the current environmental crisis brings together the whole of our theology and our discipleship. We see the ways in which the various aspects of theology are related to one another:

- doctrine and mission are joined through God's concern for justice within the whole of creation
- mission and ethics are joined through God's purposes in shalom, which also involves global economic welfare
- ethics and worship come together in the celebration of our life in the world and the life of the world itself
- worship and doctrine come together through the celebration of the Lord's Supper and our repentance for neglecting our commission to care for creation

We therefore conclude that aspects of environmental theology and our care for creation should be a part of teaching in ethics, missiology, Christian doctrine, practical theology and liturgy, and that we should express these concerns through our worship life in colleges and churches.

Environmental Theology Courses in Europe- Where are we now?

*Dr. Martin J. Hodson*¹⁶³

When the dust has settled from our time in Prague, what conclusions can we make about the present state of adult Christian environmental education in Europe? The aims of the present paper will be to conduct a preliminary survey of what is available, and to provide some leads for those who might wish to develop courses in this topic area in the future. As far as I am aware there has been no previous attempt to conduct a survey of this type. What follows is obviously going to be a personal view, and will undoubtedly have some bias towards the situation in the UK in 2007. I was fortunate to attend both the Prague meeting and a meeting organised by Dave Bookless of *A Rocha* on a similar theme in October 2005.¹⁶⁴ Building on these meetings, I have conducted extensive web searches¹⁶⁵, consulted with attendees at the London and Prague conferences, and contacted several Christian environmental organisations. However, this will not be an exhaustive survey, but rather a sampling exercise, and I am fully aware that I simply do not know what is happening everywhere!¹⁶⁶ Quite evidently, we need to consider a whole range of types of institutions and contexts. So I will split these up into three major categories: teaching at secular institutions; teaching at Christian theological colleges; and distance learning courses.

Secular Institutions

In some respects the teaching of environmental theology at secular institutions could be seen as tangential to the main theme of the Prague conference. However, it should be remembered that large numbers of Christians do take courses at secular institutions.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, as Canon Tony Dickinson¹⁶⁸ states, "In many European countries, particularly in the Reformed/Lutheran north, theological colleges as understood in the UK do not really exist. Ordained ministers in, say, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) or the Church of Sweden do most of their theological training in the theology departments of universities (which may or may not be "secular" and which will, like those in British universities, include students who are not going on to ordination). The institutions which bear the closest correspondence to UK-style theological colleges are probably the "Predigerseminäre" of the EKD or the Pastoral Institutes of the Nordic Churches, but these are concerned primarily with ministerial formation, with the basic theological tools provided in the course of a university career." So in some denominations, and in some parts of Europe, Christian ministers will receive most of their training in secular institutions. In many of these institutions the theology and religious studies courses include substantial amounts of material on subjects such as environmental ethics. The motivation for including courses in this topic area at secular institutions often seems to be that they wish their students to reflect theologically and ethically on the subject matter. Other topics that

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¹⁶⁴ Environment & Theology Consultation- 12th Oct. 2005 at Church House, Westminster, London, UK

¹⁶⁵ All web sites cited in this article were accessed between 15th January 2007 and 19th March 2007.

¹⁶⁶ I am grateful to Ruth Conway who pointed out some courses that I was not familiar with.

¹⁶⁷ It is not always entirely clear what constitutes a "secular institution" as it is now very common for theological colleges (e.g. in the UK) to be attached in some way to Universities or other higher education establishments.

¹⁶⁸ Tony Dickinson is Ecumenical and European Officer for the Diocese of Oxford, UK

they include for similar reasons are just war, media, sexuality, feminism and literature. In some cases institutions do not run whole modules on environmental theology, but the subject is included within other modules. For example, Eryl Davies, Head of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at *University of Wales, Bangor*¹⁶⁹, writes, “We do not have a module specifically on environmental issues though we do have a few lectures on environmental ethics in the module that I teach on the Ethics of the Hebrew Bible. It’s one of the issues that the Old Testament seems to say much more about than the New Testament. I usually give 3 or 4 lectures on notions such as stewardship of God’s creation and the relation of humans to nature as reflected in the Old Testament generally.” Speaking from the perspective of a secular institution he goes on to say, “interest in the subject is increasing gradually (no doubt in part owing to current concerns about global warming etc.).”

Looking at environmental ethics modules it is quite evident that they vary considerably in their content. Environmental ethics is not a specifically “Christian” subject, but it would be an unusual course (particularly in a European context) that did not at least include some consideration of Christian thinking on the environment. Here are a few examples of modules taught at secular institutions:

- The Department of Philosophy at the *University of Wales, Lampeter*, UK, runs a module in Environmental Philosophy for their undergraduate Philosophy students.¹⁷⁰
- *Oxford Brookes University*, UK runs a single honours level module in Environmental Ethics¹⁷¹, which is available to its undergraduate Theology and Religious Studies students.
- The *Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Brescia*, Italy has a module in Environmental Ethics available to its undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science.¹⁷²
- The *University of Pisa*, Pisa, Italy has an Environmental Ethics programme in its Bachelor’s programme in its Economics Faculty.¹⁷³
- The *University of Chester*, UK has an optional module in Green Theology and Environmental Ethics as part of its MTh programmes in Science and Religion and in Applied Theology.¹⁷⁴
- The School of Divinity at the *University of Edinburgh*, UK, runs a module in Ecology, Ethics and Spirit as part of its MTh or Diploma in Theological Ethics: Ecology.¹⁷⁵
- The *University of Oslo*, Norway, has module in Environmental Philosophy and Ethics that is part of its Masters in Culture, Environment and Sustainability.¹⁷⁶
- The *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*, Leuven, Belgium, has a module in Environmental Ethics in its Master of Applied Ethics programme.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ See www.bangor.ac.uk/trs/

¹⁷⁰ See www.lamp.ac.uk/philosophy/Part%20Two%20Courses/modules/envphil.html

¹⁷¹ This is currently taught by Martin and Margot Hodson. See www.brookes.ac.uk

¹⁷² See <http://facolta.dmf.unicatt.it/programmi2006/prtri037.html>

¹⁷³ See www-dse.ec.unipi.it/cleta/html/gallenietamb.html

¹⁷⁴ See www.chester.ac.uk/postgraduate/applied_theology.html

¹⁷⁵ See www.div.ed.ac.uk/ecologicalet.html

¹⁷⁶ See www.uio.no/studier/emner/annet/sum/SUM4014/

¹⁷⁷ See www.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/aanbod/syllabi/A00C4AE.htm

- The *University of Zürich*, Switzerland, includes a module in Environmental Ethics in its Master of Advanced Studies in Applied Ethics course.¹⁷⁸
- A number of Swedish Universities and colleges¹⁷⁹ run courses in Environmental Ethics and related subjects. The Centre for Research Ethics at *Uppsala University* runs an advanced course in Environmental Ethics.¹⁸⁰
- The Philosophy Department at *Högskolan Dalarna at Falun* run an undergraduate course in Environmental Ethics.¹⁸¹
- The Department of Geography at *Stockholm University* has a basic module in Environmental Ethics.¹⁸²
- *Lund University* are also planning a course in animal and environmental ethics at their Centre for Theology and Religious Studies.
- The *University of Augsburg* in Germany is unusual in offering a whole Postgraduate Diploma course in Environmental Ethics¹⁸³, including a considerable amount of theology.

What is clear from my survey is that many of the courses available at secular institutions are at postgraduate level, rather than undergraduate. In many cases, at secular institutions environmental topics are taught from a multi-faith or secular perspective, and so the individual Christian taking such a course may have to do some work to integrate what they have learnt from their studies with their Christian faith. However, some of the above modules are taught by Christians or come from a Christian perspective. So many Christians are gaining insights into Creation care and environmental issues by attending courses at secular institutions, and the amount going on here should not be underestimated.

Christian Theological Colleges

Christian theological colleges are themselves a very diverse group of institutions, and it is not surprising that the way they approach environmental issues varies considerably. In contrast to the secular institutions, Christian theological colleges (and the distance learning courses coming from a Christian perspective) include environmental issues in their curricula because they see it as important or potentially important for the future ministry of their students. There is little doubt that the environment will be one of the major issues of this century, and these institutions want to prepare their students to meet this challenge. There are four potential approaches:

Approach 1) Ignore the environment altogether.

Fortunately, this option no longer seems to be as common as it was in the past. However, there are still some institutions, and some parts of Europe where this remains the case. For instance Daniel Lešinský, of the Catholic Ecology Forum,

¹⁷⁸ See www.ethik.uzh.ch/asae/allgemeines/allgemeines.html

¹⁷⁹ I am grateful to Anders Melin, Assistant Professor in Ethics at Lund University, for help in locating Swedish courses.

¹⁸⁰ See www.fef.uu.se/default.asp?s=13

¹⁸¹ See www.du.se/templates/EducationPage.aspx?id=3900&kod=FI1017&language=

¹⁸² See www.utbildning.su.se/katalog/Kurser/1753.asp

¹⁸³ See www.kthf.uni-augsburg.de/studium/studieninformationen/umweltethik

Europe,¹⁸⁴ writes, “In Slovakia we have just started to talk about these topics at a theological level, and we are trying to convince church leaders of the importance of topics like environmental protection and its relationship to spiritual development, but it is hard work. So unfortunately, we are still quite far away from developing courses. There are a number of university courses on different aspects of environmental protection such as waste and water management, but this is something different.” Similarly, Will Simonson of *A Rocha* Portugal,¹⁸⁵ says, “I am not aware of anything in Portugal that is relevant, and would be surprised if there is.” In some parts of Europe public and church interest in environmental issues has been lower because other topics have tended to dominate. This is then reflected in the theological colleges. For example, Richard Clutterbuck, Principal of *Edgehill College*,¹⁸⁶ a Methodist college in Belfast, Northern Ireland, states, “Our courses are currently tied into the Presbyterian College and Queen’s University. We don’t have anything specific on environmental issues at the moment. I suspect that’s partly because the great ethical issue in Northern Ireland has been peace and reconciliation, partly because the theological atmosphere is pretty conservative. On the other hand, it’s an issue growing in importance with (for example) the “bungalowsation” of the Irish countryside and the increasing problem of waste illegally smuggled over the border and dumped.”

Approach 2) Have a few lectures on environmental theology within a whole course.

In the UK, visiting speakers from organisations such as *A Rocha* and the John Ray Initiative often provide at least some of these lectures. When *A Rocha* UK is involved, the lectures can be supplemented by a field trip to Southall in West London.¹⁸⁷ In addition, Peter Hawkins of *A Rocha* UK runs a course called Considering Creation¹⁸⁸ each summer in Snowdonia. He writes, “With a reflective, discursive style rather than didactic teaching, this is very much targeted at theological college students and is distinctive in being based in the outdoors.” At present this course is quite small, but *A Rocha* UK hope to expand it in the near future, and it does offer an additional resource beyond the traditional courses.

Many UK institutions are presently adopting Approach 2. For instance, John Weaver, Principal of *South Wales Baptist College*,¹⁸⁹ Cardiff, UK, writes, “In Cardiff there is a popular but optional module of Christianity and Science, within which I give a number of lectures on environmental issues. I also deal with concern for the environment within our college Pastoral Studies course (compulsory). The environment is not deliberately integrated within other modules, although it is a ‘hot topic’ for mission and ethics tutors. I also include it within my Practical Theology courses. Currently we have a small but growing number of students choosing to complete postgraduate studies in environmental theology.” Similarly, John Bimson of *Trinity College, Bristol*,¹⁹⁰ UK says, “At Trinity College we currently introduce environmental theology in:

¹⁸⁴ See www.cefe.ch

¹⁸⁵ See <http://en.arochoa.org/portugal/>

¹⁸⁶ See www.edgehillcollege.org

¹⁸⁷ See the section by Dave Bookless and Pavel Svetlik in this volume.

¹⁸⁸ Contact peter.hawkins@arochoa.org

¹⁸⁹ See www.swbc.org.uk/

¹⁹⁰ See www.trinity-bris.ac.uk/

a) A second-year biblical hermeneutics module, which includes 5 lectures and a seminar on the theme of 'Creation and Salvation'. Two of the lectures deal explicitly with environmental theology and it is implicit in the others.

b) A third-year module (which can also be taken at MA level) on Christianity and Global Issues.

c) I also introduce it in more minor ways wherever I can, e.g. in my module on the book of Job, I include an 'environmental reading' of the divine speeches.

All of these are optional modules. It also comes into some Mission modules, one of which includes an annual visit to Southall and the *A Rocha* UK Minet site. We are acutely aware that environmental issues are under-represented in our courses and are looking at ways of addressing this, either by introducing a dedicated module or by linking the subject with topics already taught, especially in compulsory modules." Finally, David Heywood of *Ripon College Cuddesdon*,¹⁹¹ near Oxford, UK reports that the college does not "have any dedicated course which features environmental issues." However, Dave Bookless of *A Rocha* UK has been a visiting lecturer for a number of years, and the College have placement students working at the new *A Rocha* project with Simon Brignall in Lewknor.¹⁹² In addition, environmental issues feature as part of the optional rural ministry week, and in 2007 one Masters student was working on environmental theology for her dissertation.

The situation in theological colleges in France seems mostly to fit into approach 2. Frédéric Baudin of "Culture Environnement Médias" (CEM)¹⁹³ in France sent the following report: "Actually, I think that there are no environmental theology courses in any seminary in France. I regularly lecture about *Bible and Ecology* in churches and last summer (2006), I taught about *Faith and Ecology* in a "summer university" (6 hours!) at the "Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique", in Vaux-sur-Seine, near Paris¹⁹⁴, but it was not a "regular" course, and I think it was the first time in France. Of course, Henri Blocher, one of the most famous French scholars¹⁹⁵, and other professors who teach in this seminary, also speak about environmental theology in their courses. Moreover, Pierre Berthoud does at the "Faculté Libre de Théologie Réformée", in Aix -en-Provence¹⁹⁶, where he deals with some aspects in his courses in Old Testament (The Theology of Creation and the Cultural Mandate in Genesis; Biblical Anthropology) as well as in Apologetics."

In the Netherlands, Petra Messelink, the coordinator of *A Rocha* Netherlands¹⁹⁷, teaches a module in environmental communication for third year students in communication at a Christian college, *Christelijke Hogeschool Ede*¹⁹⁸. In this course there is one session on philosophy and Christian views towards nature, including material on the Greek vision, the Jewish vision and the biblical vision of nature.

¹⁹¹ See www.rcc.ac.uk

¹⁹² For details of this project see the article by Simon Brignall in *Sage Words* (Jan. 2007) at www.sageoxford.org.uk/swords2007a.htm

¹⁹³ See www.cemfrance.org Frédéric Baudin published *D'un jardin à l'Autre*, Aix-en-Provence, CEM, 2006.

¹⁹⁴ See www.flte.free.fr

¹⁹⁵ Henri Blocher is well known as author of *Révélation des Origines*, PBU, Lausanne, 1988

¹⁹⁶ See www.fltr.net

¹⁹⁷ See <http://en.arochoa.org/netherlands>

¹⁹⁸ See www.che.nl

Approach 3) Have one or more whole modules included in a course.

Usually these are optional modules, and a small sample are listed below:

- At the ***International Baptist Theological College*** (IBTS), Prague, Czech Republic, the MTh in Applied theology (validated by the University of Wales) includes an optional module in Church and Environment.¹⁹⁹ IBTS not only runs this optional module, but it also has a very comprehensive environmental policy for all of its operations, and attempts to integrate environmental concern in many aspects of its life and worship.²⁰⁰
- The ***Irish Mission Union Institute***, Navan, Co. Meath, Ireland, have a Diploma or MA in Ecology and Religion in association with the University of Lampeter.²⁰¹
- ***Redcliffe College***, Gloucester, UK, have a Postgraduate MA in Global Issues in Contemporary Mission, which includes an optional module on The Greening of Mission.²⁰²
- The Oxford Summer Programme based at ***Wycliffe Hall***, Oxford, UK, are running a topical seminar (3 weeks duration) on the Bible and the Environment.²⁰³ Unusually, this is aimed at American and Canadian Christian college students who come to the UK for a short period of study in the summer and take back credits to their own institutions.
- ***Benediktbeuren***, a Catholic institution in Bavaria, Germany runs a number of courses in Environmental Ethics and related subjects at the Zentrum für Umwelt und Kultur (ZUK), a centre for environment and culture.²⁰⁴

Approach 4) Integrate environmental theology across the whole syllabus.

We investigated this idea in the workshops at Prague, and the conclusions are included in the present volume. The key factor that has come over many times in discussion with theological educators is that the syllabus for theological colleges is already very packed. So the idea of adding in yet more material, this time on environmental theology, is not very attractive. Although it is better than nothing, the problem with the optional module is that it can be opted out of. It is only when environment becomes integrated across the whole syllabus, and into college life, that Christians will come out of the colleges with a full appreciation of the issues involved. IBTS in Prague are to be congratulated, as they certainly seem to offer the most integrated approach yet available in Europe. It is to be hoped that many theological colleges will be looking to move from approach 2 at least to approach 3 in the near future, but finding suitably trained staff may not be that easy, at least in the next few years.

Distance Learning Courses

¹⁹⁹ See www.ibts.cz/academics/

²⁰⁰ See the section on IBTS by Lina Andronovienė and Petra Veselá in this volume.

²⁰¹ See www.imudalغانpark.com/ecology_religion_dip_ma.htm

²⁰² See www.redcliffe.org/standard.asp?id=2063&cachefixer=cf11114481802006

²⁰³ See <http://osp.bestsemester.com/contentID.1/academic.asp>

²⁰⁴ See www.zuk-bb.de/konzept/index_e.html

Again one might argue that distance learning courses are not that relevant to the overall theme of the Prague conference, or to this book. However, I would argue that they are relevant for the following reasons:

- 1) They are potentially the most widely available courses in Europe, and are not dependent on the student living near a university or theological college that happens to run a suitable course.
- 2) They have considerable potential in continuing ministerial education after church ministers have left their colleges.
- 3) Several are based in theological colleges, and have many possibilities for interactions with those institutions.

Examples

As examples, I will give brief details of four modules/courses that are based in the UK and then concentrate in more detail on two others.

- **Imperial College**, London, UK includes an optional module in Environmental Ethics²⁰⁵ in its postgraduate courses in Environmental Management.²⁰⁶
- The **Open University**, UK has a postgraduate level module in Environmental Ethics that is taught by distance learning.²⁰⁷
- **Exeter University**, Exeter, UK has a Level 3 module in Environmentalism - Ethics and Theology in the Green Movement as part of its Environmental Studies undergraduate programme.²⁰⁸
- **St John's College, Extension Studies**, Nottingham, UK offers a single module in Sustaining the Earth as part of their Faith for Life programme.²⁰⁹

Case study 1: OTC

The **Open Theological College (OTC)** based at the University of Gloucestershire in Cheltenham, UK²¹⁰ includes an optional basic (Undergraduate Level 1) module on Christian Faith and the Environment²¹¹ in its certificate/diploma/BA course. The module is designed to take 120 hours of study. Written for the OTC by the John Ray Initiative, this module counts for 12 CATS points. Students receive telephone and email support by a specialist tutor, a printed study guide, online resources, and may also opt to participate in a two week online seminar. The module starts in September every year, and runs through to the end of January. Students can register: as part of an undergraduate Higher Education Certificate, which can later be extended to a Diploma or Honours Degree; or as a stand-alone module. The following is a brief summary of this module:

Unit 1. Introduction. A guide to the textbooks and the OTC systems.

Unit 2. Global environment. Relates local environmental awareness to global issues, and describes major physical and biological systems affected by human activity.

²⁰⁵ See www.imperial.ac.uk/distancelearning/course/outlines/c63.pdf

²⁰⁶ See www.imperial.ac.uk/distancelearning/course/eb/em.htm

²⁰⁷ See www3.open.ac.uk/courses/bin/p12.dll?C01T861

²⁰⁸ See www.education.ex.ac.uk/dll/details.php?code=LLN3042D

²⁰⁹ See www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/html/distance_learning/course_details/faith_for_life/f41-ste.shtml

²¹⁰ See www.glos.ac.uk/faculties/ehs/humanities/otc/courses.cfm Thanks to module leader, John McKeown, for providing the material on the OTC module in this section.

²¹¹ See www.glos.ac.uk/subjectsandcourses/undergraduatefields/otc/descriptors/otc115.cfm

Unit 3. Limits to growth. Looks at energy, resources and waste, and the impacts of population and consumption. Compares voluntary responses and legislative controls as solutions.

Unit 4. Sustainability and values. Explores the roles of 1) science and technology, 2) management and political systems, and 3) law and rights. Considers the concepts of utilitarian and intrinsic value. Evaluates the viability of ‘sustainability’ as an environmental ethic.

Unit 5. Anthropocentrism. Historical roots of environmental problems. Looks at different varieties of anthropocentrism in ancient, medieval, renaissance and modern secular and Christian thought.

Unit 6. Creator and Creation. History of earth-affirming and earth-negating views of the world. Dualisms of matter/spirit and body/soul. Deism and pantheism are contrasted with doctrine of creation.

Unit 7. Eden and the Promised Land. Background information about life in biblical times. Theme of land explored through Eden, the Promised Land, and the whole earth. Raises issues of land ownership and use.

Unit 8. Fellow Creatures. Scientific and biblical insights into what humans have in common with other creatures. Also considers the theology of humans being uniquely created “in the image of God”.

Unit 9. Dominion and Stewardship. Examines different interpretations of biblical texts, especially Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Unit 10. Sin, Curse and Fall. Explores differing views of the impact of sin on the earth including (i) a fallen world, (ii) a cursed earth, (iii) direct effect of environmental abuses - and their implications for the selection of appropriate responses to environmental problems.

Unit 11. Covenant. Considers the promises of blessing in Genesis 1, and their renewal in the rainbow covenant. Theology is applied to the issues of biodiversity conservation and extinction.

Unit 12. Law and Ethics. Explores different methods of deriving ethics from biblical laws, including the Sabbath and Jubilee, and their environmental dimensions.

Unit 13. New Testament. Investigates why there seems to be less about the environment in the New Testament than the rest of the Bible. Explores themes including the incarnation, the Kingdom of God, Jesus’ ethical teaching, Jesus as Lord and healer of creation.

Unit 14. Earthing future hopes. Secular and religious forms of apocalyptic nihilism are contrasted with doctrines of bodily resurrection and the life of the age to come. Explores ways of thinking about eschatology that offer affinity and commitment to the earth.

Unit 15. Church and Worship. Compares recent environmental declarations by international church bodies. Looks at issues raised for church worship and liturgy, especially concerning earth-inclusive language.

Unit 16. Lifestyle and Politics. Considers the relative contributions of individual awareness and responses and public policy. Also looks at vocations to professional work in environmental science or conservation.

Unit 17. Christian Mission. Explores holistic mission, contextual evangelism, issues in co-operation with non-Christian environmental groups. Examples are given of UK and international Christian ventures.

The first registration for the OTC module was in September 2005. By December 2006 a total of 13 students had registered for the module. Of these five students have completed, and one withdrew.

Case study 2: CRES

Ripon College Cuddesdon²¹² (RCC), nr. Oxford, UK validates a Certificate and Diploma in Christian Rural and Environmental Studies (CRES)²¹³. I am involved in the running of CRES and, as a result, can give some more detailed insights here. The CRES course is unusual, in that it is a complete course, as opposed to an individual module, covering environmental theology (admittedly it does also contain modules in rural studies). CRES is a part-time distance-learning course jointly run by two charities, the John Ray Initiative (JRI) and Christian Rural Concern (CRuC), and is ecumenical, with staff and students from many denominations and diverse churchmanships. The course usually starts in September/October. From September 2005, RCC has provided quality control for the course, and facilities for many of the associated CRES meetings. The course had been run in its original format by CRuC since the 1980's, and was formerly validated by Keele University. Many students interested in rural ministry have taken the course, and benefited from it. For example, clergy with experience of urban ministry took it as a conversion course when moving to the countryside. In 2002, CRuC and JRI formed a partnership to revamp the course, and introduced modules in environmental studies. The writing team included Prof. Sam Berry and Sir John Houghton, and the course now has options that allow for specialisation in either rural or environmental studies, with a central theological strand. The CRES certificate course is intended to be of interest to all with a personal or professional concern for the environment and countryside, rural communities and churches. CRES has great flexibility, enabling students to tailor coursework topics to their own particular concerns. Students work through six out of eight module booklets, and are examined on study papers and a work diary, one per module. The presently available modules are: The Living World; Farming and Food; Christians as Salt and Light; Economics; The Physical Environment; The Biological Environment; Rural Communities; and The Church in the Countryside. In the final year of the course, students work on a written project, the topic being chosen in consultation with the tutors. This is presented at the annual residential consultation, a suitable climax to the course, after which the student graduates. Although CRES is a distance-learning course, students are found a local personal tutor from the JRI and CRuC networks to guide them through. There are also regular course meetings (mainly at RCC), which are opportunities to meet with other participants. In recent years a CRES Diploma course has been developed that allows students to get to grips with one major topic in depth.

In its first two years (to 2006), eight CRES students have graduated (seven on the Certificate and one Diploma student). Three of these have been church pastors. Two of the Certificate students did such excellent work that they were granted distinctions. Currently (March 2007) there are nine continuing students on CRES.

²¹² See www.rcc.ac.uk

²¹³ See www.cres.org.uk

CRES is now actively looking at expanding the range of modules offered, and at internationalising the curriculum to make it easier for non-UK students to take the course. The CRES staff team have also been involved in a number of initiatives beyond the running of the course itself. Using The Living World module as the basis, CRES provided a study leave for a Church Mission Society (CMS) Mission Partner from Bangladesh. Several CRES tutors collaborate with Canon Glyn Evans, the Rural Officer for Oxford Diocese, to provide a whole week on Rural Ministry as an option on Pastoral Studies for ordinands at RCC. One of the CRES staff gave a lecture on Christian Eco-spirituality to the part-time ordination students from the Oxford Ministry Course that is based at RCC. Two CRES tutors fronted a day conference for rural ministers at Sarum College, Salisbury, UK.²¹⁴ Many of these activities have arisen because of the desire of both RCC and CRES to form a strong partnership, helping each other.

Distance learning courses are making a small, but strong, contribution to adult Christian environmental teaching. Total numbers on these courses are still quite small, but the students tend to be highly committed, and the courses have a great potential for the future. A feature of the three modules/courses based in theological colleges is that they are aimed at Certificate level (first year university in the UK), and/or have fairly open admissions policies. Unlike many of the modules mentioned above, most of the distance learning modules/courses are free standing. In other words, students do not have to take whole theology courses just to take the one course available in environmental ethics. The difficulty at the moment is that such courses appear to be strongly UK based and UK focussed, and this needs to change.

Conclusion

The above sample of courses suggests that adult teaching on Creation Care, Environmental Theology and Ethics is increasingly available. However, there is little doubt that there is still considerable room for enhancement. In particular, the present uneven provision in theological colleges needs to be improved. It is, perhaps, understandable that environmental theology is often taught in postgraduate courses, as the subject involves integrating vastly different disciplines. However, most people never do postgraduate courses! So there is a real need for increased provision at the undergraduate level.

In almost all cases environmental theology is still not really integrated into the curriculum of theological colleges. Such integration will, however, take time. Changes in the curriculum do not happen overnight, and the teachers need teaching before much can happen. How have such changes in the curriculum happened before? A similar process came about with the “New Perspective” teaching on the Jewish roots of Christianity. In the 1960’s this was the preserve of just a few theologians, but has now become far more widely accepted and integrated into the curriculum, and most pastors in training will now be exposed to these ideas. Similarly, issues concerning developing countries are now routinely included in the programmes of theological colleges, and this is a relatively new idea. For the present I think we will probably have to be satisfied with making any inroads into theological colleges, however small. But as this century wears on, and the scale of the environmental crisis

²¹⁴ See www.sarum.ac.uk

becomes clearer and clearer, then I predict that environmental theology will increasingly be seen as a core part of the curriculum, and the integration we all seek will happen. At least I hope so.

Concluding Remarks: The Environment in Theological Education

The participants of the conference returned to their home countries conscious that we had made just the first step in addressing the central theme of the conference. We are all aware that the environment will continue to be a pressing political and growing social issue in the twenty-first century. Moving forward from the conference the next stage needs to be addressed within seminaries, theological faculties and Christian training colleges. These institutions have a tremendous opportunity to 'grasp the moment' and develop an integrated environmental approach to both their studies and their lives. This will provide their graduates with the contextual tools that are needed to meet the challenges that were identified during the conference.

We trust that this volume will provide resources that will enable a start on that journey. There is an urgent need for a better understanding of God's concern for his creation and our mission call to be responsible for our attitude toward this world. For those training Christians for ministry, we believe that integrating an environmental approach will enable them to lead their communities toward an active engagement in the whole of God's world. Many of the environmental problems we face can best be tackled at community level and need leaders who are equipped to inspire and enable a response. In terms of practical responses, IBTS provides an example of what is possible within a particular institution. We trust that other colleges will be inspired to develop similar approaches, suited to their own local situations. It is in such a lived out faith that the reality of Christian belief becomes evident to those around us. Traditionally, theological seminaries seek to develop regular patterns of prayer in the lives of their students, knowing that these spiritual disciplines will continue when they move on into ministry. Similarly, these colleges could be developing regular patterns for environmental care and of sustainable living that will also continue as part of their graduates' commitment to gospel living.

We are excited by the potential for the fully holistic approach to mission that drawing on environmental perspectives could bring. We therefore commend the task of integrating environmental theology to these institutions and look forward to seeing creative responses. We anticipate that these will in turn challenge and develop our own understanding. We hope above all that a theological concern for the environment will inspire students in their thinking, lifestyles and future vocations.

We need to address these concerns, not only in Europe, but also as a global community. Because of its worldwide nature, we recognise that the Church can play a significant role in this task. Therefore we hope to hear about conferences on these questions in other parts of the world, not least where people are increasingly experiencing the effects of climate change in addition to many other environmental difficulties.

The issues that have been identified in this conference will need to find their place in the courses of seminaries and theological colleges throughout the world as together we seek to prepare ministers for their involvement in the contextual mission of God. We look forward to active responses to this book and hope that it will provide resources for the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania, in 2007.

John Weaver and Margot R Hodson, March 2007

Web Resources

www.ecen.org The European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) web site has links to many Christian environmental groups and resources across Europe. ECEN is the chief instrument of the Conference of European Churches to address our relationship to nature and the environment from the perspective of Christian theology and Christian way of life.

www.arocha.org *A Rocha*, Christians in Conservation. (International)

www.earthcharter.org The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society for the 21st century. (International)

www.tearfund.org Christian action with the World's poor. (International)

www.unep.org The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the voice for the environment in the United Nations system. It is an advocate, educator, catalyst and facilitator, promoting the wise use of the planet's natural assets for sustainable development. (International)

www.cefe.ch The Catholic Ecology Forum for information about the environmental activities of the Catholic Church in Europe. (Europe)

www.cirkev.cz The Catholic Church in the Czech Republic. (Czech Republic)

www.ibts.eu The International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Prague. (Czech Republic)

www.orthodoxa.cz The Orthodox Academy at Vilémov. (Czech Republic)

www.christianaid.org.uk Christian Aid is an agency of the churches in the UK and Ireland that strives for a new world transformed by an end to poverty. (UK)

www.christian-ecology.org.uk Christian Ecology Link is a multi-denominational UK Christian organisation for people concerned about the Environment. (UK)

www.ecocongregation.org.uk Ecocongregation aims to encourage churches to consider environmental issues within a Christian context and enable local churches to make positive contributions in their life and mission. (UK)

www.est.org.uk The Energy Saving Trust works to achieve sustainable use of energy. (UK)

www.jri.org.uk The John Ray Initiative aims to bring together Christian and scientific understanding of the environment (UK)

www.operationnoah.org Operation Noah is the UK churches' climate change campaign. (UK)

www.ringsfield-hall.co.uk The Ringsfield Hall Trust is an eco-study centre with over 30 years experience of offering residential facilities to schools, young people and church groups. (UK)

www.sageoxford.org.uk Sage- Oxford's Christian Environmental Group has news and resources on Christianity and the environment. (UK)

For a broadcast of a service (from Jesus College, Oxford, UK on 11th Feb. 2007) focused on the issue of climate change see:

www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/chapel/sundayworship.php for the broadcast and
www.bbc.co.uk/religion/programmes/sunday_worship/documents/20070211.shtml
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