

Christian Faith and the Environment: Responding to an Urgent Challenge



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Environmental challenges are NOW!



“Right now we are living in the beginning of a climate and ecological breakdown, and we cannot look away from this crisis anymore.”

Greta Thunberg, 1st Nov 2019





Oceans suffocating as huge dead zones quadruple since 1950, scientists warn

Areas starved of oxygen in open ocean and by coasts have soared in recent decades, risking dire consequences for marine life and humanity



i A fisherman on a beach in Temuco, Chile that is blanketed with dead sardines, a result of algal blooms that suck oxygen out of the water. Photograph: Felix Marquez/AP

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Environmental Issues

global warming
overpopulation
toxic
carbon dioxide
degradation
ozone
invasive
deforestation
animals
energy
waste
nuclear
CO2
extinction
greenhouse
environment
climate change
irrigation
fossil fuels
plants
over farming
waste
endangered
degradation
CO2
fallout

over farming
habitat
overgrazing
energy
pesticide
conservation
pollution
sea level
wildlife
endangered
plants
oceans
species
oceans
overgrazing
species

deforestation
climate change
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pesticide
animals
waste
fallout
wildlife
species
greenhouse
overpopulation
acidic
fossil fuels
nuclear
pollution
habitat
endangered
wildlife
sea level
irrigation
global warming
carbon dioxide
overpopulation
carbon dioxide
wildlife

Challenges from scientists

**YOUR
ENVIRONMENT
EXTRA**

ISSUE 17 NOVEMBER 2007 – JANUARY 2008



things that will save
THE PLANET

Results from a poll of 25 experts



‘It’s time the world’s faith groups reminded us we have a duty to restore and maintain the ecological balance of the planet...

...Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others already believe that it is morally wrong to damage the environment. The problem is that many people simply choose to ignore this’

(Environment Agency, *Your Environment Extra*, Issue 17, Nov 2007)

A moral and spiritual issue



“I used to think that the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems, but I was wrong. **The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation.** And we scientists don’t know how to do that.”

(Gus Speth, 2006, meeting of NAE and Harvard scientists)

Biblical and Theological Perspectives



Creation

Christ

Completion





God creates:

- Everything in heaven and earth (Isa 45:18)
- In wisdom (Ps 104:24)
- Fit for purpose (Gen 1:31)



Creation's purpose:

- Reflecting God's glory (Ps 19:1-3)
- Praising God (Ps 148)
- Lamenting human sinfulness (Hos 4:1-3)
- Crying out against injustice (Amos 8:4-8)



Human beings:

- Part of creation (Ps 104:10-23)
- Shared creatureliness (Gen 2:7, 15-19)
- Unique responsibilities (Gen 1:26-28)



Creator and sustainer of all that exists (Col 1:15- 17)

Becomes part of his creation (John 1:14)

Saviour of the whole world (John 3:16-17)

Reconciles all creation to God (Col 1:19-20)

Completion

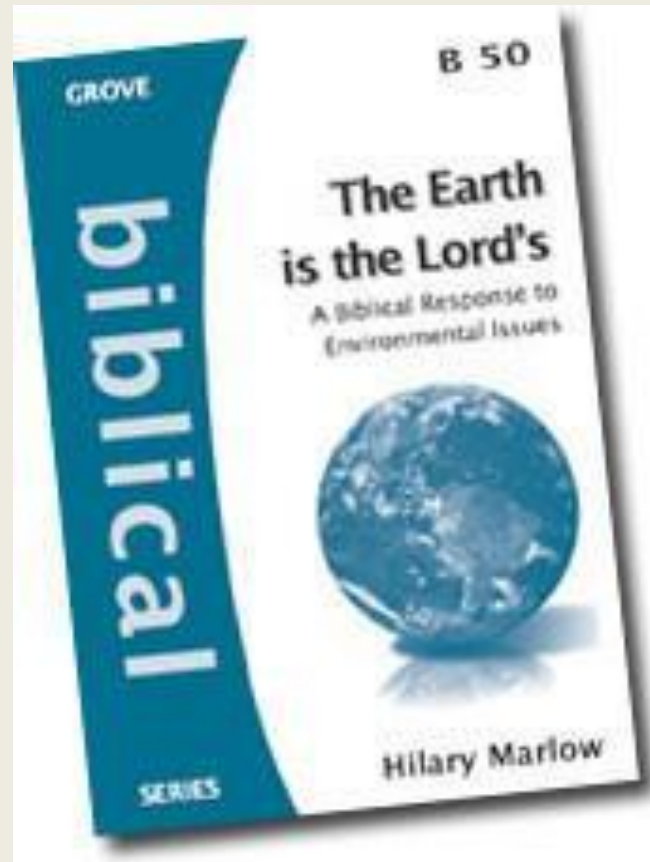


Ultimate hope of “all things new” (Rev 21:5)

The present challenge (Rom 8:19-22)

The kingdom of God on earth (Matt 6:10)

Hearing “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”
(Pope Francis, *Laudato Sí*)



Responding to an urgent challenge



Actions not just words

The multiplier effect

Leading by example

Engaging with the complexities

Spheres of influence



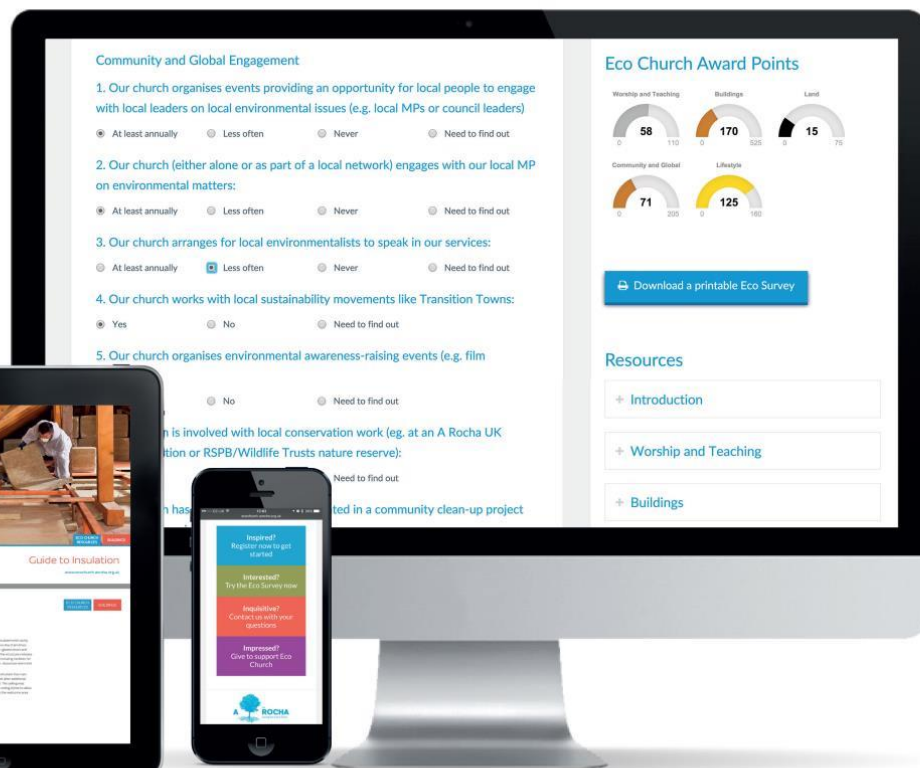
Personal lifestyle choices (*'L' is for Lifestyle*)

Local and community engagement

National and international action

ECO CHURCH

AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

tearfund

christian
aid

The Methodist Church 

Resources



A Rocha – Christians in Conservation
(www.arocha.org)

Ecochurch (www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)

Green Christian (www.greenchristian.org.uk)

John Ray Initiative (www.jri.org.uk)



Francis Schaeffer:

“We should be looking now, on the basis of the work of Christ, for substantial healing in every place affected by the Fall.”

Pollution and the Death of Man
(1970)

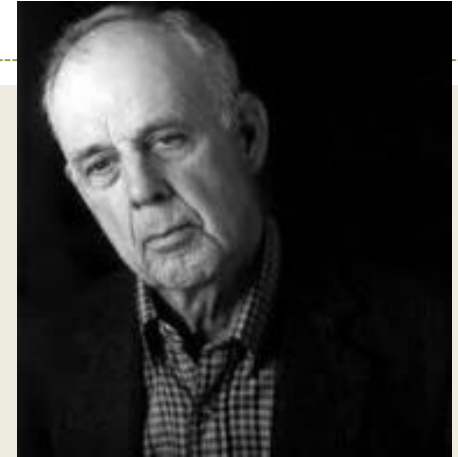




Wendell Berry:

“To live we must daily break the body and shed the blood of creation. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skilfully and reverently it is a sacrament. When we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily and destructively it is a desecration. In such desecration we condemn ourselves to spiritual moral loneliness and others to want.

The Gift of Good Land (1981)





The prophet Micah:

**He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic
6:8)**