



# The Environment

# Christian reactions to caring for the Environment

## Insidious

- all this stuff about the environmental and ecology is a bit dodgy
- something that only 'New-agers' and 'Greens' get involved with
- All about tree hugging and worshipping nature

# Christian reactions to caring for the environment

## Irrelevant

Caring for the earth is not that important for Christians

- Isn't the Gospel about the spiritual, not the material?
- God's prime concern is for our souls, not bodies
- Shouldn't we focus on evangelism rather than worrying about the planet
- Our focus should be on heaven and not earth
- Isn't the planet going to be destroyed anyway when Christ returns?

# Christian reactions to caring for the environment

## Incidental

- I'm glad someone else is caring for the planet – it doesn't have to be me
- Its just for enthusiasts
- It's a peripheral issue not like prayer or worship

## Psalm 65v 8-9

- *8 The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;  
where morning dawns, where evening fades,  
you call forth songs of joy.*
- *9 You care for the land and water it;  
you enrich it abundantly.  
The streams of God are filled with water  
to provide the people with corn,  
for so you have ordained it.*

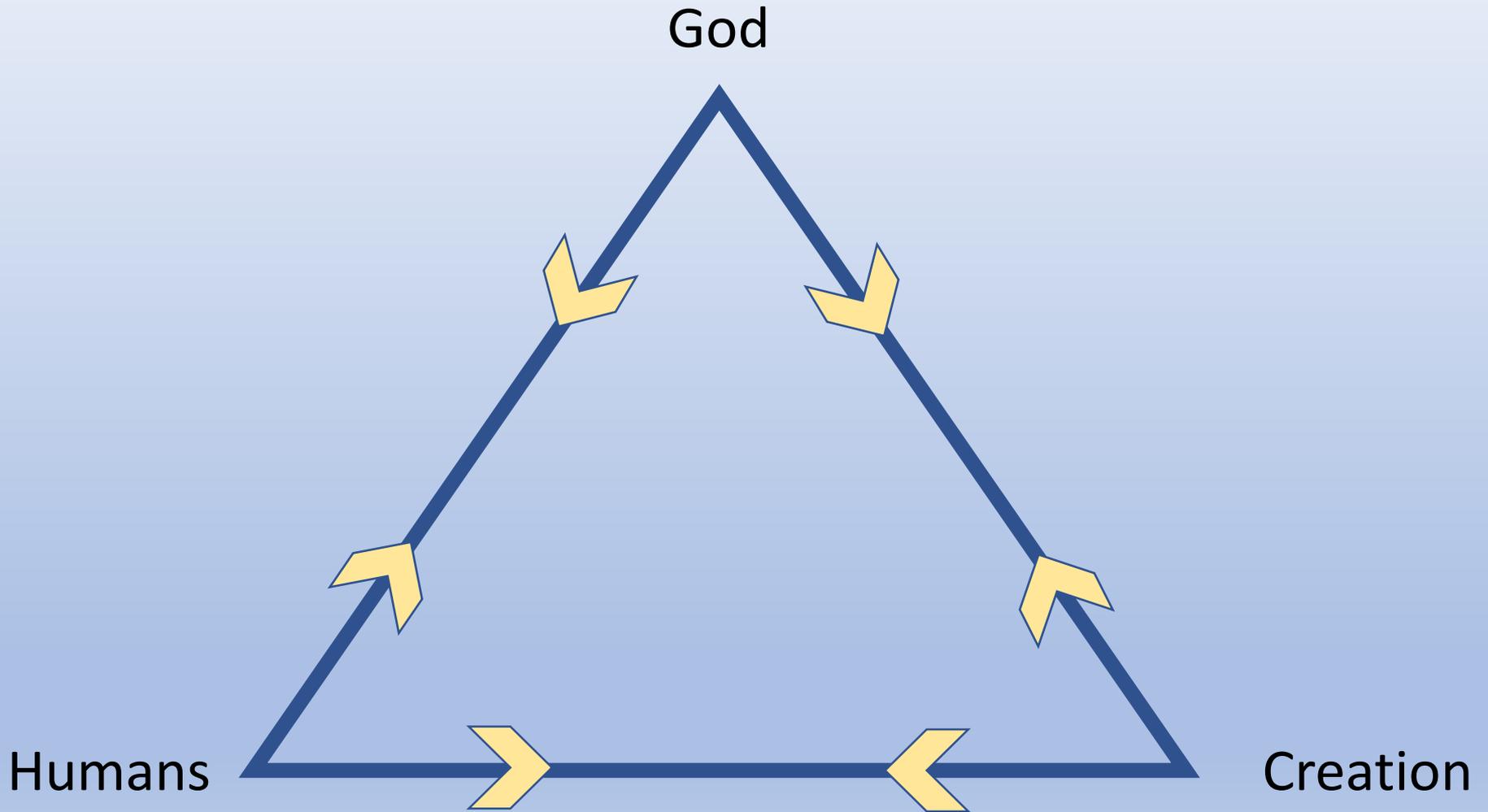
## Romans 8v19-21

*For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.*

*<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it,*

*in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

# God, humans and creation



## Colossians 1v15-20

*For in [Christ] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

# The five marks of mission

- To proclaim the Good News of the kingdom;
- To teach and baptise and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation;
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

# Key messages

- Caring for God's creation is not some insidious new age liberal idea - it is fundamental to our identity as being in the image and likeness of God and as Christians, being in Christ, the creator, sustainer and redeemer;
- Caring for God's creation is not incidental to our task, we must care for all creation just as Jesus does;
- Caring for God's creation is not irrelevant and subservient to preaching the Gospel - it is part of our whole ministry as we build for the Kingdom of God as Christ's workers.



Western Sahara

Mauritania

Mali

Senegal

The Gambia

Guinea-Bissau

Burkina Faso

Guinea

Benin

Sierra Leone

Togo

Côte d'Ivoire

Ghana

Liberia

Nigeria

# What can we do?

- Reduce our consumption of things that are adversely affecting the environment and creating pollution
- Re-use what we can
- Recycle things we no longer need
- Reject ways of doing or buying things that are the most damaging/polluting/wasteful

# Summary

- Remember we are created in the image and likeness of God and are therefore responsible for how we treat creation
- Care of creation is not an optional extra; it is part of God's mission
- Individual small steps together make a real difference
- Pray and start by making one change to your lifestyle

# Confession

We confess our sin, and the sins of our society,  
in the misuse of God's creation.

God our Father, we are sorry  
for the times when we have used your gifts  
carelessly,  
and acted ungratefully.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy:

*All* **forgive us and help us.**

We enjoy the fruits of the harvest,  
but sometimes forget that you have given them to  
us.

Father, in your mercy:

*All* **forgive us and help us.**

We belong to a people who are full and satisfied,  
but ignore the cry of the hungry.

Father, in your mercy:

*All* **forgive us and help us.**

We are thoughtless,  
and do not care enough for the world you have  
made.

Father, in your mercy:

*All* **forgive us and help us.**

We store up goods for ourselves alone,  
as if there were no God and no heaven.

Father, in your mercy:

*All* **forgive us and help us.**

# Resources

## Books:

Planetwise – Dave Bookless – IVP

L is for Lifestyle – Ruth Valerio - IVP

Websites- search on site for “environment”:

Christian Aid - <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>

Tearfund - <http://tearfund.org>

Arocha - <http://www.arocha.org/en/>

Freecycle - <https://www.freecycle.org>