



God has revealed his love and his purpose for us by sharing our humanity in Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection God has reconciled all people to himself, and the redemptive work of Christ on the cross extends beyond humanity to the whole created order. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit he continues to guide, inspire and transform us¹.

This is the Good News: that God redeems humanity through his unbounded love, and that through his Spirit we can share in the work of redemption, transforming both the natural world and human society and making them what he would have them be.

Christians, together with all other people of goodwill, must call humanity back to its chief end: to work with God to make his Earth a place of beauty, wonder, worship, love, justice, fellowship and hope.

We must end the present selfish struggle for natural resources, building instead a new and enduring harmony between people and the sustaining Earth.

It is our task to hand on to future generations a world where they may live in peace, surrounded by its rich and diverse beauty, caring for it as God's children should.

¹This paragraph reflects, in particular, statements in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 v.19, Ephesians chapter 1 v.10, Colossians chapter 1 v.20 and Romans chapter 8 v.21.

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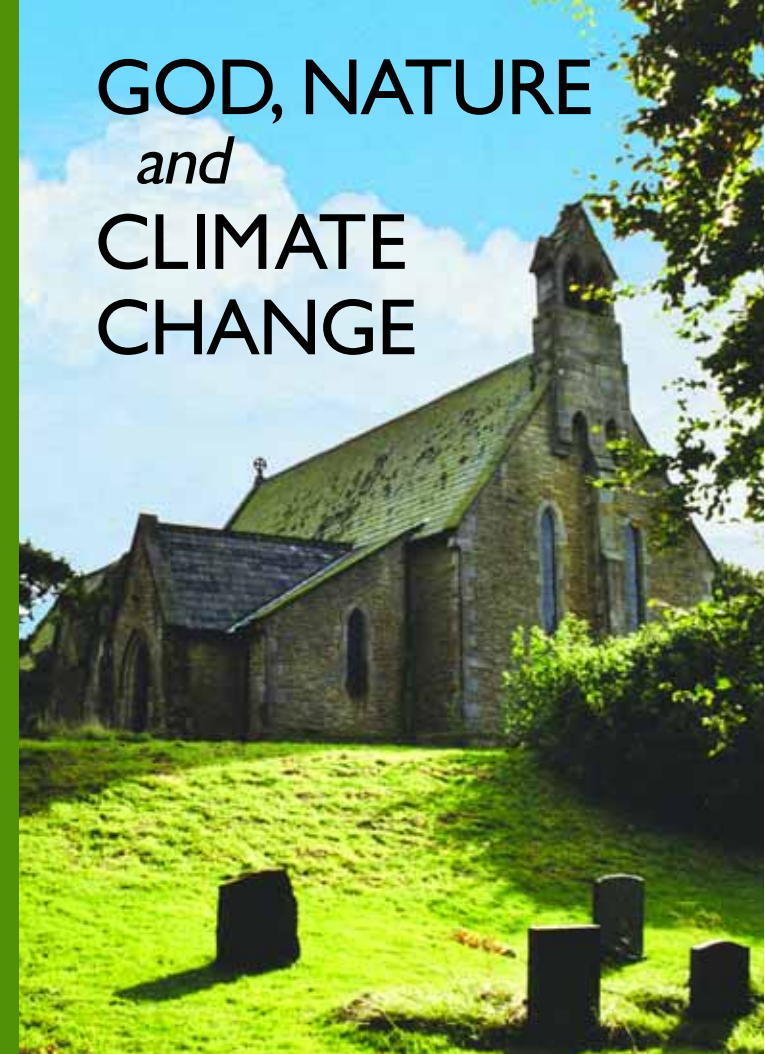
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GOD, NATURE *and* CLIMATE CHANGE



FROM THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF CUMBRIA





The universe has been brought into being through God's creative spirit.

All things are sustained by God, who delights in all that he has made.

We humans are a part of God's creation on Earth, sharing a common origin with all other species and linked to them and to the planet itself in an intricate web of life.

Our life on Earth depends on the cycles of the natural world, and on the life forms that keep the air breathable, the water pure and the soil fertile.

Our life in its fullness depends utterly on God's enduring love, and on our communion with him.

As God's children, made in his image, we participate in his being and can find the Kingdom of Heaven both within us and around us.



God has made us, with him, responsible for shaping the future of the creation on Earth.

Human beings have been given insight and skill to transform the processes of the planet, and science continues to enhance our wonder, understanding and power. Many good things have been done, and more people now live in health and security than ever before.

But human power and skill have also been used selfishly, leaving millions in poverty while the rich become wealthier. The unceasing demand for resources has distorted the balances of the natural world in ways that now threaten the survival of many forms of life and risk increasing the misery of the human poor. Climate change, largely resulting from pollution of the global atmosphere, is the latest and gravest consequence.

Through human ignorance, arrogance and selfishness our relationships with God, with one another, with our inner selves and with our fellow creatures are deeply flawed. Scripture has even been used by some Christians to justify our destructive exploitation of the Earth.



Action

As God's stewards on Earth we are called to action.

Action has three components: prayer, advocacy and example.



Prayer

Prayer and worship are fundamental, for they affirm God's sovereignty, open us to him, curb our arrogance, and help protect us from doing wrong. We indeed must watch and pray, so that we discern and follow the light which God gives us.

Advocacy: the Call for a Harmonious Earth

God calls us to:

- advocate a universal ethic based on respect and care for each other and for the Earth;
- proclaim that the human economy lies within and depends upon the ecology of God's creation;
- accept that the material resources of the Earth are finite and that as humanity claims a larger share of those resources there is less room for other forms of life;
- work for a world in which nobody acts in ways that disadvantage other communities or threatens the web of life;
- accept that poverty and hopelessness destroy both people and their environment and that eliminating poverty is an essential step towards a sustainable Earth;
- meet the needs of the present without imperilling the welfare of future generations, accepting that this will constrain our consumption of Earth's resources and make the avoidance of wastefulness imperative.

The mark of the Kingdom of God is justice and peace so we must work for an end to war and violence and to the exploitation of the poor. Peace will only come when there is justice and harmony between human communities and harmony with the sustaining Earth.

We will encourage all Christians to follow these principles in their daily lives.

Advocacy: Action to limit Climate Change

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Current rapid climate change, due overwhelmingly to human action, threatens to affect the life of every nation, shifting the patterns of the natural world, altering the productivity of agriculture, raising the level of the sea and making some places uninhabitable by people.

This disruption of the global climate is the latest example of humanity's failure as steward of God's creation on Earth and it is driven by our competitive and wasteful exploitation of planetary resources.

We should re-direct our skill and knowledge towards responsible stewardship.

Climate change is an evil inflicted by people on people, and especially by the rich on the poor.

We have a special responsibility to urge action that protects the poorest and most vulnerable.

Climate change threatens the life of all nations, but takes no account of national frontiers.

World-wide policies are required to address this world-wide problem and Christians must support urgent action, through the United Nations and by individual Governments, so that widespread disaster and suffering are averted.

Fundamental changes in trade, investment and aid are needed.

In every nation, starting with our own, we need to adopt policies that build harmony between our communities and the environment that sustains us, and these demand fundamental changes in how we live.

The unceasing pursuit of material goods, even among people who already live in comfort, is a major cause of the stress on planetary systems.

As Christians we recognise the Sabbath principle of 'enoughness' and we must advocate it as a foundation for sustainability.

National and international policies must be guided by science and be adapted as knowledge grows, human needs change and unexpected events occur.

Human societies and ecological systems will need to be resilient in the face of change.

We call on Christians everywhere to pursue these policies, in partnership with other people of faith and goodwill. Much is required from those to whom much is given².

² St. Luke 12. verse 48.

Example

We accept that alone we can do little – but everyone can do something. Individually and collectively Christians need to combine advocacy with witness.

As church communities we must develop and promote a code of conduct for personal sustainable living, recognising that this will mean sacrifices on our part.

We must, in particular:

- adjust our life styles so as to tread as lightly as possible on the Earth;
- practise responsible parenthood;
- be as sparing as we can in our use of energy and materials;
- live modestly;

- care for the vulnerable and for those in need;
- encourage as much beauty and living diversity around us as we can.

Collectively, we must make sure that our churches, other buildings and land are places of witness, inspiring all who visit them with a sense of peace and of God's presence.

To that end we must:

- develop and adopt a code of good practice for the management of church land and buildings;
- demonstrate there that beauty and tranquillity can blend with economy in the use of energy and resources.

We accept the need to let others know what we are doing, to be open to their criticism and to move forward with them, rejoicing in our opportunities for change.

