

CONCLUSION

The New Testament concludes with the vision where heaven and earth are made one:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now and there was no longer any sea.....Then I heard a voice call from the throne, 'Look here God lives among human beings, he will make his home among them; they will be his people and he will be their god, God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness or pain. The world of the past has gone” (Revelation: 21: 2-5).

“Take good care of creation. St Francis wanted that. People occasionally forgive but nature never does. If we don't take care of the environment there is no way of getting around it.” Pope Francis April 2013

Produced by the SMA Justice Office, African Missions, Wilton,
Cork. Justice@sma.ie

Society of African Missions (SMA)



Living Faith Means Living Justly

Care for Creation

Part One: Scripture

The Old Testament

Principle One: God is the Creator and Owner of All

“God made the earth and the Heavens.” (Genesis: Chapters 1 and 2).

“The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1 ff.)

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and all those who live in it.” (Psalm 24: 1-2).

“But ask the animals and they will teach you: the birds of the air and they will tell you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In [the Lord’s] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.” Job 12:7-10.

Cf also Amos 5:8; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Sirach 43:11-12.

“God looked at everything He had made and found it very good.”
Genesis 1:31

Principle Two: The Special Place of the Human Being in Creation

“God created man in the image of himself; in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1: 27).

- emphasis on the **equality** of male and female. Genesis 2: 21-24.

Principle Three: Human Beings are Stewards of Creation

“God blessed them saying to them Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Be master of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living creatures that move on earth....” (cf. Genesis 1: 26-30).

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to till it and to keep it.” (Genesis 2: 15).

- **sabbath rests:** cf Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:2-7.

- **prohibition against cutting of trees:** Deuteronomy 20:19-20.

- **treatment of animals:** Proverbs 12:10; 27:23; Deuteronomy 25:4.

- **treatment of birds and plants:** Job 12:7-10.

- **harmony in nature:** *“The wolf will live with the lamb, the panther lie down with the kid... the lion will eat hay like the ox... the baby will put his hand into the vipers lair, no hurt or no harm will be done....”* Isaiah 11:6-9

cf also Ezekiel 34:18; Joel 2:21.

The New Testament

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God..... All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into beingAnd the Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1-1-3; 14).

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.” (John 3:16)

In Jesus, God offers salvation to all humanity and to the cosmos.

“What we are waiting for, relying on His promises, is the new heavens and the new earth, where uprightness will be at home” (2 Peter: 3: 13).

- **Jesus made use of natural elements. He was a “knowledgeable interpreter” of nature, use of images and parables:** “The Darnel” - Matthew 13:24-30; “The Lost Sheep” - Matthew 18:12- 14. “The Sower & The Mustard Seed” - Mark 4; “The True Vine” - John 15:1-7;

- **He uses illustrations from nature to make His points:** “Look at the Birds” - Luke 12:24; “Are not five sparrows?” - Luke 12:6; “A tree can be told by its fruit” - Matthew 12:33.

- **Jesus asks us to look at nature and at people with respect** and He further cautions us never to become enslaved by things, but always to act as good stewards to bring about true harmony. cf. Luke 16:9-13.

St Paul adds his voice:

“[God] set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things to him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1: 9-10)

“[Christ] himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together....and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the cross”. (Col. 1: 17,20)



“.... The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now....” (Romans 8: 21-22).