

A photograph of a wind farm in a field at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. Several wind turbines are visible, their silhouettes against the bright sky. The foreground is a field of tall grass, also illuminated by the warm light of the setting sun.

# Faith and our climate crisis

2020 @ Bessels Green Baptist Church

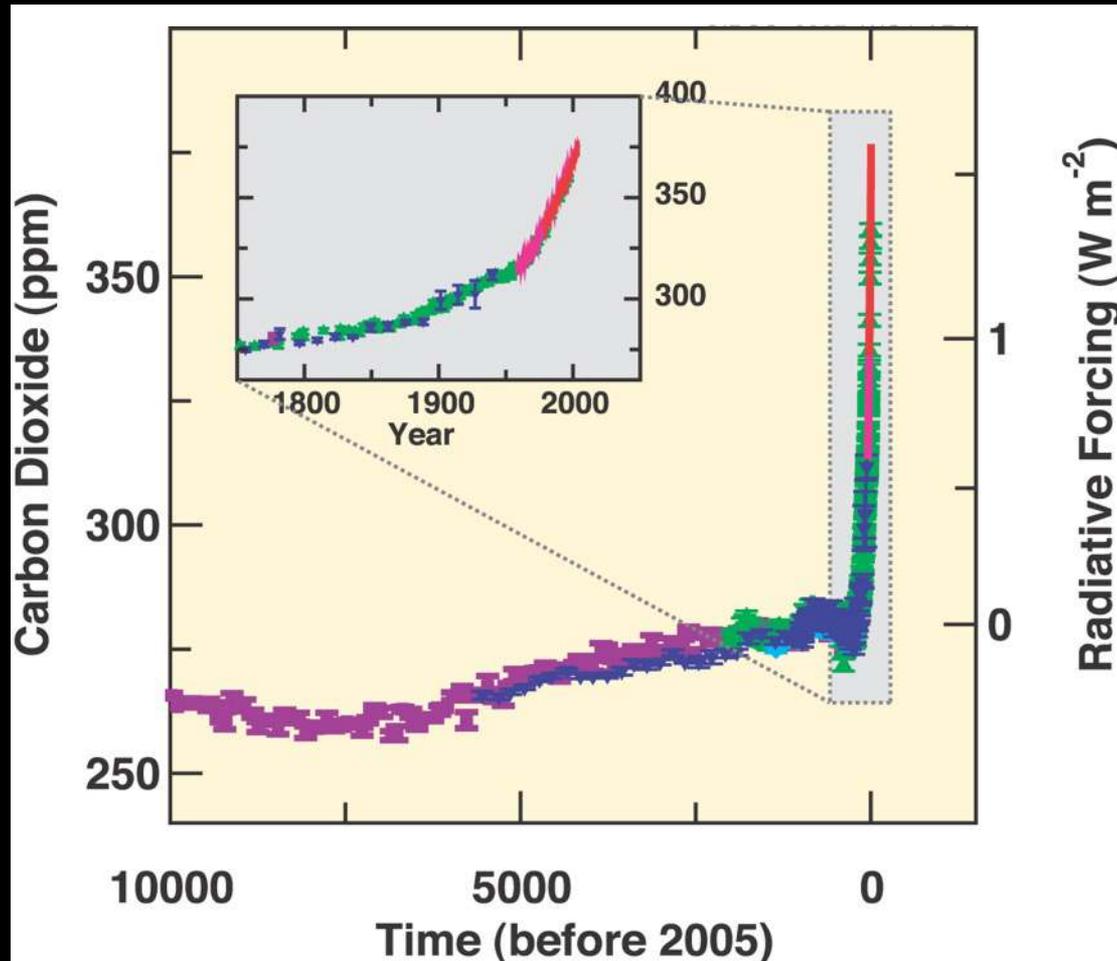
God saw that it was very good... but...



# Multiple causes and multiple consequences



# Greenhouse Gas Emissions



From the IPCC WG1 Summary for Policy Makers 2007 report:

Time to pay the bill...



“The scale of the crisis is larger than anything we have faced before.

Unless we recognise this as a spiritual crisis, we will not be able to solve it.”

Dave Bookless  
*Planetwise*



*National director of A Rocha*

# Genesis 1:26-28 (NRSV)

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and **subdue** it; and have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

# 1. Dominion

Domination?

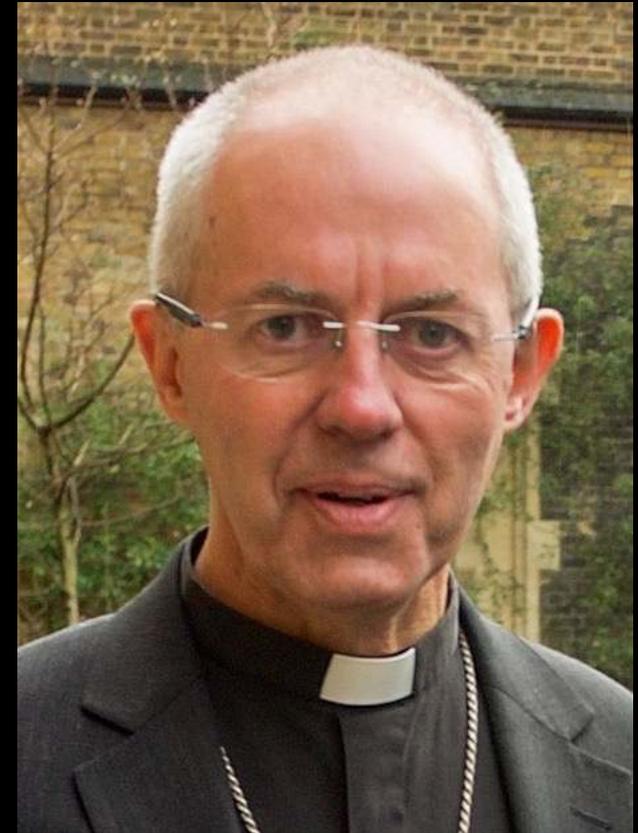


**WORLD DOMINATION**

Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155:1203–07 [1967]).

# 1. Dominion

“The idea of dominion has been interpreted by some Christians to mean that we can do whatever we want to the land—that it is ours to exercise our control and power over, whatever the cost. Yet this is profoundly mistaken, and fails to note the heavy responsibility laid on human beings, and their complete interdependence with creation, which means there is no space for human flourishing outside of the flourishing of the natural world.”



# 1. Dominion



The word used when the kings were called by God to 'rule' over his people and land, *radah*, is the same word that is translated as 'dominion' in Genesis 1:26 and 28 (NRSV).

Our rule of the Earth should be like that of a just monarch ruling over their nation.

Hodson, Martin. *A Christian Guide to Environmental Issues*

# 1. Dominion

“A Christian understanding of dominion must be discerned in the way of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Mark 10:43–44). The one who rules is the one who serves. Lordship means servanthood.”

*Brueggemann, W. (1982)  
Genesis (pp. 32–33)  
Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press*

# 1. Dominion (stewardship)

God created human beings;  
he created them godlike,  
Reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and female.

God blessed them:

“Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!

**Be responsible** for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth.”

*Genesis 1:26-28 (The Message)*

## 2. Genesis 3 – ‘Broken Relationships’



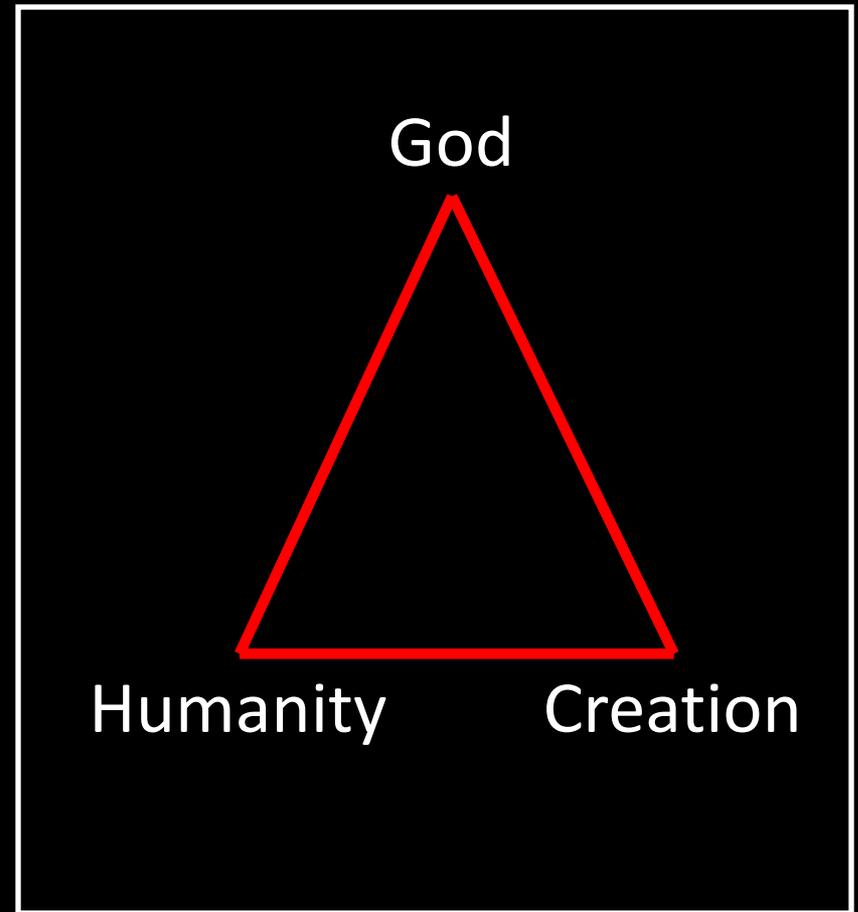
God



Humanity

## 2. Genesis 3 – ‘Broken Relationships’

1. Between God and humanity
2. Between human beings
3. Between humanity and the natural environment
4. Between God and his creation



## 2. Genesis 3 – ‘Broken Relationships’

The very ground is cursed because of you;  
getting food from the ground  
Will be as painful as having babies is for your wife;  
you’ll be working in pain all your life long.  
The ground will sprout thorns and weeds,  
you’ll get your food the hard way,  
Planting and tilling and harvesting,  
sweating in the fields from dawn to dusk.

*Genesis 3:17-19 (The Message)*

# 3. Restored Relationships

“God’s plan finds its fulfilment in Jesus, who affirms creation by choosing to become a part of that creation, and, by dying and being raised to life again.”

*Ruth Valerio,  
‘L is for Lifestyle’*



*Global Advocacy and Influencing  
Director, Tear Fund*

# 3. Restored Relationships

## Colossians 1

In him [Christ] **all things** in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—**all things** have been created through him and for him.

## Revelation 21



Behold I am making **all things** new.

# 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)



Reducing our carbon footprint



## 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)



“Meat is one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global’, contributing to land degradation, climate change, air pollution, water shortage and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity.”

*Report ‘Livestock’s Long Shadow’ (2006) from FAO’s website, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)*

## 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)

1. Consider swapping a meat-based meal for a meatless one each week.
2. If possible, subscribe to an organic veg box delivery.
3. Grow some of your own food this year (even just a few herbs in a pot, if you are short of space). Do you have a local Farmers' Market or farm shop you could use?
4. Try to buy meat, fish and seafood that is free range, organic, or 'freedom food' (MSC for fish/sea food) certified.
5. If there is a Fairtrade alternative, buy it!

*Valerio, Ruth. Life Issues Bible Study: Environment*

## 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)



## 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)



## 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)

1. Instead of driving, can you walk or cycle shorter journeys (and lengthen your idea of what is 'short'!)?
2. On fast roads, drive at 55 to 60 miles per hour instead of 70 (or more!). Anticipate what is ahead so that you accelerate and brake more gently, and try to move up the gears quickly.
3. Can you holiday in the UK instead of abroad this year, or travel by train?

*Valerio, Ruth. Life Issues Bible Study: Environment*

## 4. Discipleship (how should we live?)



God saw that it was very good... but...



# God saw that it was very good... but...

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

*Gus Speth*

Too late?



Too late? Maybe not... if we act.

