

The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad & Tobago

# *H oly S aviou r P arish*

*S unday 20th J une 2010*

*F ather's D ay*

## *Stewardship of Creation - Becoming a Green Parish*



***Heal the World***  
**Awareness, Caring, Action.**

*T heme for J une-R epair*

## Reading the Bible through Green Lens

**Calvin B. DeWitt**



### Biblical Principles for Creation Care

- *The Earth Keeping Principle*
- *The Fruitfulness Principle*
- *The Sabbath Principle*
- *The Discipleship Principle*
- *The Kingdom Priority Principle*
- *The Contentment Principle*
- *The Praxis Principle*
- *The Conservation Principle*

Last Month we looked at the first three of eight Biblical Principles for Creation Care, today we continue with *the Discipleship Principle, the Kingdom Priority Principle and the Contentment Principle*.

#### **The Discipleship Principle**

*We must be disciples of Jesus Christ—the Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler of all things.*

NO question about it—the Bible calls us to be disciples, or *followers after* someone. But we are not to be disciples of the first Adam, who neglected to serve (*'abad*) and keep (*shamar*) the creation. We must not follow those who choose to go their own way and do their own thing.



Instead the Bible tells us, we must be disciples of ‘the last Adam,’ Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45). In John 3:16 the New Testament teaches that God loved the world so much that he gave his only son—to bring true life, to make things right again. ‘For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ’ (1 Corinthians 15:22).

All who follow Jesus follow the example of the one who makes all things new, the one who makes all things right again (Revelation 21:5). Colossians 1:20 puts it this way: ‘God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.’

Who is this Christ we are to follow? He is the one *in whom* and *for whom* all things were created (Colossians 1:16). He is the one *through whom* God made the universe and *through whom* God redeemed his people (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16, 20; Hebrews 1:3).

God reaches out sacrificially to make things right again. Jesus Christ, the final Adam, undoes the damage done by the first Adam and his followers. While Adam’s followers bring death and degradation, Christ brings life and restoration (Romans 5:12-17). The children of God work as followers and disciples of the final Adam. People who are happy being Christ’s servant-stewards are the people for whom the whole creation is eagerly looking (8:9).

We must, then, be disciples of Jesus Christ. We walk in the footsteps of the one who reconciles all things. We are disciples of the last Adam, not the first. We work to reconcile all things to God in Christ.

### **The Kingdom Priority Principle**

*We must seek first the kingdom of God.*

Our culture today proclaims, ‘Seek first a job (money, success), and all other things will be yours as well.’ it is tempting to yield to this message and to follow people whose highest priority is to gather up immense material gains. But Jesus advises us to seek first the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness; then everything else we need will be given to us as well (Matthew 6:33).



Personal happiness, joy, and fulfilment are not what we seek first of all in life. Instead, we seek the kingdom of God and strive to sustain and renew God's creation. In seeking God's kingdom, we discover that happiness and joy are *by-products* of our stewardship; fulfilment comes as a *result* of seeking the kingdom.



Who will inherit this kingdom? Those who seek it as their first priority. Its inheritance is not for people who arrogantly exploit their neighbours, the land, and earth's creatures for all they are worth. Nor is the inheritance for those who carelessly and knowingly destroy the earth. Seeking God's kingdom first is our calling, our vocation. We affirm this calling whenever we pray as Jesus taught us: 'Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, *on earth...*' (Matthew 6:9-10).

### **The Contentment Principle**

*We must seek true contentment*

The fruitful and beautiful creation did not satisfy our first parents and succeeding generations. Even though God promised not to forsake or leave them, people chose to go their own way—grasping more and more from creation for selfish advancement. In our day we feel the effects of this relentless pressing of land and life to produce more. This relentless pressing is what so seriously degrading God's creation today. Our prayer should be that of Psalm 119:36: 'Turn my heart to your decrees, and not to selfish gain.'

If accumulating the goods of creation is selfish gain, then what is godly gain? Godly gain is doing the work God would have us do in the world. In 1 Timothy 6:6 we learn that 'there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment.' Contentment means aiming to have the things that will sustain us while not pressing beyond that. An Amish saying based on this passage goes like this: 'To desire to be rich is to desire to have more than what we need to be content.'

Why is it important not to pass the point of contentment? In the words of 1 Timothy 6:11, by not passing this point we can 'pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.' Hebrews 13:5 puts it this way: Keep your lives free from the love of

money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'

Being content helps preserve creation's integrity. All the things we use, all the things we make, everything we manipulate we accumulate derives from creation itself. If we learn to seek godly contentment as our great gain, we will demand less from the land. We will leave room for God's other creatures. We will be responsible stewards, caretakers, keepers of creation. We will regularly allow creation to heal itself and perpetuate its fruitfulness, to the glory and praise of its Maker.

### *In solidarity with creation* **KEY AREAS FOR ACTION**

This draft framework urges each person to commit himself/herself to stand in solidarity with God's creation. Together, let us meet the challenge of putting our faith into action. The following tips, which are not exhaustive, should assist us as we seek to reconcile ourselves with God's Creation:

- *Read, Pray, Reflect on the story of Creation in Genesis*

To develop an environmental spirituality, see resources in the supporting document to this draft framework ([www.rcsocialjusticett.org](http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org)). As individuals or in study / prayer groups / parish groups, pray for a conversation of heart—what Pope John Paul II called an “eco-logical conversion”.

- *Look around, discover and reflect on the beauty of God's creation and of our connection to it—locally and globally.*

In his 1990 Message for World Day of Peace, Pope John II wrote: “Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power; contemplation of its magnificence imparts peace and serenity”.

For reflection, see Marjorie Padmore's song, *God bless our Nation*: “*God bless our isles of tropic rare / of flaming Poinciana and shady immortelle / The warm are sparkling waters / That beat upon our shores / Beat out a tune that seem to tell /*

- *Learn about and educate others on the causes and effects of environmental degradation and about action that can be taken to promote the integrity of creation and to reconcile ourselves with God's creation.*
- *Examine and assess your lifestyle and consumption.* Pledge to make changes that will improve the ways in which you impact on and interact with the environment.
- *Strive to live simply.*
- *REUSE, RECYCLE, REDUCE, RESTORE. Practice these 4R's for sustainable living.* As far as possible try to buy products from recycled materials.
- *Prevent Pollution and Reduce Your Carbon Footprint,* e.g. plant a tree(s), use reusable bags, eat less meat.
- *Become an Advocate for God's Creation.*
- *Enjoy nature and live in harmony with it.* This is God's plan for His creation.
- *Evaluate the impact of your activities on the environment.* See Catholic Earthcare Australia—<http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/audit.html>— to find out how to conduct an environmental audit in your parish, home, school and community.
- *Promote sound environmental management practices/best practice in ecological stewardship,* e.g. energy efficiency: replace electric bulbs with energy efficient ones, turn off lights when you leave an empty room, unplug appliances such as cell phone chargers when not in use, use clotheslines instead of dryers; water conservation: fix leaky pipes, take shorter showers; waste avoidance: buy smart, e.g. items with little packaging; composing your food waste; using environmentally responsible products; and car pooling.



- *Assist in implementing Synod Resolutions*, for example, Resolution #6:3: Organise / encourage participation in events that promote good stewardship of God's creation, e.g. turtle watching, reforestation / replanting of trees, beach cleanup, etc. Organising / getting involved in clean-up activities and promoting anti-litter campaigns help to build pride in our communities and in our country.

In 2009 CCSJ organized turtle watching trips to Matura. A number of Confirmation Classes organised their own trips to Matura to watch leatherback turtles lay their eggs. This is one way of developing our awareness of the awesome nature of God's gifts to us.

- *Consider establishing/supporting the establishment of an agricultural programme* - including compost making and tree planting—in your parish and your local Catholic primary and secondary school. Urban schools can use pots for planting if there is no green space around the school. We should promote food security in Trinidad and Tobago and encourage people to buy locally grown food. Tons of fossil fuel are used to transport food from faraway places.
- *Schools and catechetical teams* should “integrate into formal education and lifelong learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life” (Earth Chapter). These could also be promoted through non formal education and youth work. Environmental issues can be addressed in all areas of the curriculum.

Activities could include: debating sessions, quizzes, poetry / essay writing, making / displaying posters, photographic exhibitions of the natural environment, agricultural projects, field trips / eco-tours, and providing opportunities for students to practice the 4 R's for sustainable living in their communities.

**NB:** this list is intended to highlight key areas for action to demonstrate our solidarity with all of creation. You can add your own creative ideas. Let us be transformed by God's grace to a new humanity. May God bless our efforts.



Taken from Catholic News Supplement  
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Reconciliation with creation.



## Steps to one great veggie garden.

**A BASIC vegetable garden is therapeutic, a source of healthy food and can even save you money.**

1. **Plenty of sun:** Choose a location in full sun, which means six or more hours of direct sun in summer. Producing succulent, savory vegetables takes energy—the sun’s energy—especially for fruiting vegetables such as cucumbers and tomatoes.
2. **Not soggy:** Your site needs soil that is well-drained. Roots have to breathe, which they cannot do if water sits in or on the soil for too long after rains.
3. **Keep it close:** Grow your garden as close as possible to your door. Preferably your kitchen door.
4. **Start small:** Too much garden may begin to feel like work.
5. **Fence your garden:** a fence, besides keeping-out rabbits and other hungry animals, helps define your garden visually.
6. **Make your garden pretty:** Yes it’s a vegetable garden, but even vegetable gardens can be pretty. Wooden picket can obscure and dress up a poultry netting fence.
7. **Go 4D:** Planning your garden in four dimensions is a way to harvest more from limited space.
8. **Feed and water:** Pay attention to fertilizing and watering.
9. **Weed it:** Weeds are much easier to kill—and haven’t had time to spread many seeds—when they are small, so weed it regularly and frequently.
10. **Love what you grow:** Grow vegetables that you like to eat, and choose the best-tasting varieties.

