



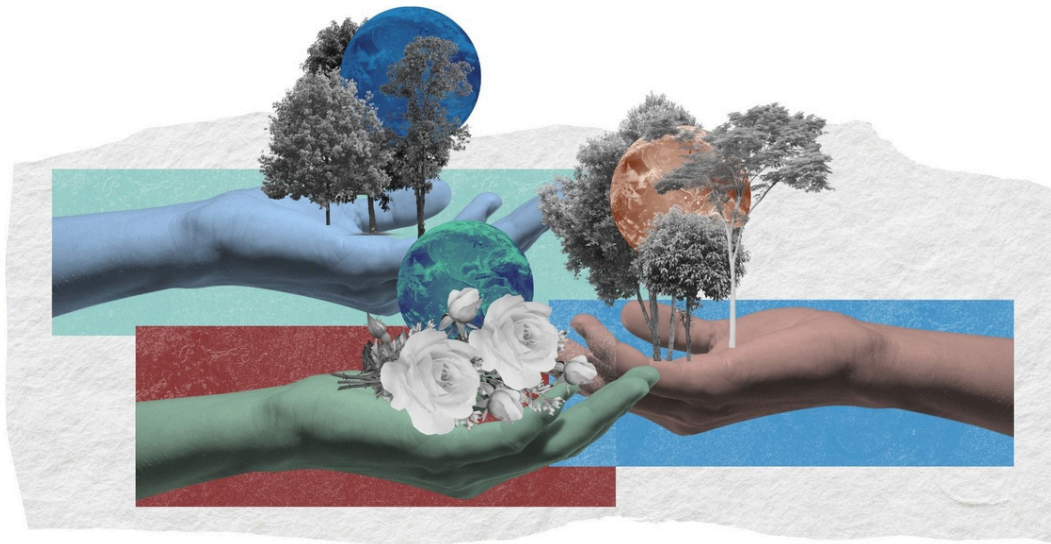
# Good News for All the Earth —

## THE KOREAN INVITATION TO RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL

As those gathered for the Global Creation Care Forum in Gonjiam, South Korea, immediately following the Fourth Lausanne Congress in Incheon, we invite the global church to affirm that God's good news is for all the earth, and to respond in repentance, prayer and action. This document builds on previous key documents including The Lausanne Covenant, The Manila Manifesto, The Cape Town Commitment, The Gospel and the Future of Cities, The Jamaica Call to Action, and the twelve LWCCN regional consultations on Creation Care and the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> It seeks to be deeply rooted in Scripture, invites us to take joy in creation and to prophetically address our contemporary ecological crises.

God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—has lovingly created a world of beauty, diversity and interdependence, and declared it all 'very good.'<sup>2</sup> Creation's goodness and God's providence are foundational to the gospel. As human beings we are created in the image of God<sup>3</sup> and also formed from the dust of the earth.<sup>4</sup> Thus, we are both part of creation, contingent and mortal, and also called apart within creation to serve and preserve God's world.<sup>5</sup> We acknowledge that, from the beginning, we have failed to relate justly and care lovingly and faithfully for the earth and its creatures. Human sin has broken our relationship with God, ourselves, one another and the rest of creation.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, our merciful God has not abandoned the world. After the Fall, God graciously took the initiative to covenant with people and with the wider creation. The first explicit biblical covenant, with Noah, repeatedly includes every living creature on the earth.<sup>7</sup> Later covenants with Abraham and the people of Israel build on this and continue to show God's sustaining care for the land and for human and nonhuman creatures within it.<sup>8</sup>



Through the Law, God made provision for the care of the vulnerable and for the earth. The rhythms and restraint of Sabbath,<sup>9</sup> Jubilee,<sup>10</sup> and agricultural festivals<sup>11</sup> connected people's relationship with God to their relationship with the land and its creatures.<sup>12</sup> Even in exile, God's people were challenged to plant gardens and to work for the flourishing of the city to which they had been carried.<sup>13</sup> The prophets passionately called for justice<sup>14</sup> and awaited the time when God would come to judge, to save, and to bring in an era of shalom—reconciled relationships with God, neighbour and the rest of creation.<sup>15</sup>

God so loved the world that he sent his only son, Jesus Christ, into the world to live a perfect life, be crucified, rise again and ascend to glory. In Jesus, God became flesh,<sup>16</sup> the Creator entered creation, so affirming the material world. Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of God,<sup>17</sup> including good news to the poor, freedom to captives, sight to the blind and forgiveness of sins.<sup>18</sup> In Christ's death on the cross, God defeated the power of sin and death and accomplished the reconciliation of all things on earth and in heaven,<sup>19</sup> granting hope for all that is broken, and eternal life to all who receive him.<sup>20</sup> The good news of Christ's saving work on the cross extends to all people, all cultures and societies, and the whole created order.

God's Holy Spirit, present since creation and at work within creation, groaning and renewing the face of the earth,<sup>21</sup> was poured out on the disciples, giving birth to the church. The Spirit also empowers the church to be the body of Christ in the world.<sup>22</sup> Creation is waiting for the children of God to be revealed,<sup>23</sup> and thus the church is called to declare and display God's good news for all creation. Caring for creation is vital to the church's response to the gospel and to the lordship of Christ, and is to be integrated into the discipleship of all believers and the mission of all God's people.

The good news of Jesus Christ includes his promised return to judge and to save, completing the gospel story.<sup>24</sup> God promises to destroy those who destroy the earth,<sup>25</sup> and Christ's victory over sin, death and evil will be fully realised. The whole creation, currently groaning under the burden of human sin, will be vindicated<sup>26</sup> and liberated from its bondage to decay.<sup>27</sup> Christ will make all things new,<sup>28</sup> and ultimately God's home will be with humankind.<sup>29</sup> The physical body

of the risen Christ, the firstfruits of new creation,<sup>30</sup> assures us of continuity and renewal beyond radical judgement and of the reconciliation of all things in Christ.<sup>31</sup>

This gospel, God's good news from creation to new creation, centred on the lordship of Jesus Christ, is the foundation of our hope<sup>32</sup> and compels us to respond. Our first response is to lament at creation's bondage and destruction. We invite all God's people to metanoia, repentance and transformative response, regarding our sins of selfish individualism, our corporate social and economic greed, and for often limiting the lordship of Christ over all creation to personal piety. We commit to fervent prayer for God's world and to faithful obedience to God's call to respect, care for and live in harmony with creation. As the Jamaica Call to Action states, 'we would care for creation even were it not in crisis' because creation care is a primary expression of our obedience to the lordship of Christ. Our response must take practical expression in our lifestyles, families, churches, communities and workplaces, in our engagement in society and culture, in protecting and restoring ecosystems and in addressing global ecological concerns. The following section demonstrates key responses in which this commitment can be expressed in these arenas, and we commend it for prayerful action.

# Our Invitation to Urgent Action

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## 1. A new relationship with God's created world

We recognise that our ecological crisis is at root a spiritual crisis, rooted in greed and idolatry. For many Christians, there is also an impoverished understanding of Christ's lordship and the scope of the gospel. We call, therefore, for a renewed understanding of the inherent value of the earth and nonhuman creatures as created,<sup>33</sup> sustained<sup>34</sup> and redeemed by Christ.<sup>35</sup> We call on Christians everywhere to study<sup>36</sup> and delight in<sup>37</sup> God's world, recognising the earth as our common home,<sup>38</sup> and embracing our dependence on God's provision through the ecosystems of which we are part. We embrace our human role, made in the image of God, to give leadership within the community of creation through humble and servant-hearted care for the earth and its creatures. We call for all Christians, in our personal lives, churches, workplaces, and societies, to be engaged actively in protecting, preserving and restoring habitats and ecosystems, declaring and displaying the lordship of Christ through the flourishing of creatures and places which were made for God's glory.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. Lifestyles

As disciples of Christ, our witness is hollow unless we practise what we preach about caring for creation. Jesus' teaching is clear about the dangers of loving money and hoarding wealth,<sup>40</sup> yet many Christians' lifestyles are indistinguishable from those of consumerist cultures. We recommend An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle <sup>41</sup> and call on believers everywhere

to repent of our materialism, turn away from greed<sup>42</sup> and commit to a life of contentment and sacrifice. Sharing, sabbath rest and connection to the earth bring justice and peace, and bear witness to Christ's sufficiency especially as we serve the interests of others in need both near and far.<sup>43</sup> In particular, we urge action around energy use, sustainable travel, waste and pollution, and production and consumption of food and other consumer goods (clothing, technology, etc). Living simply and generously as Jesus did, whatever our circumstances, is an act of hope, joyful worship and faithful obedience to God.

### 3. Churches and Christian Organisations

**Local churches:** Caring for creation in churches arises primarily from a desire to proclaim and demonstrate the lordship of Christ, and also in response to our current urgent ecological crisis and its impact on the most vulnerable. Our response as God's children begins with lament and earnest prayer to seek God's heart for his world. As the body of Christ,<sup>44</sup> we are also called to care for creation in our teaching and worship, discipleship, use of resources, buildings and land, and our missional priorities. We call upon churches to include creation care in all their ministries and with all ages.<sup>45</sup>

**Education and Training:** It is essential that theological education and formation (seminaries / Bible colleges / online courses), includes a biblical theology of creation care integrated throughout the curriculum and accompanied by practical teaching on how churches can respond. Practical examples will depend on context and include enhancing green spaces and creating community gardens, worshipping outdoors with creation, Bible studies and curricula for children and young people, wilderness camps, reducing waste / consumption, recycling programmes, restoring local spaces, advocacy on climate justice, and partnering with local community groups.

**Networks and Missions:** We encourage churches to support creation care initiatives in finance and prayer, recognising that creation is 'included in the redeeming love and mission of God . . . [and] must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people.'<sup>46</sup> We specifically call on the Lausanne Movement to include creation care in all gatherings and statements as integral to the fulfilment of the Great Commission. Given the scale of the crisis we face, and the creational mandate to all humanity to reflect God's image in care for creation,<sup>47</sup> the worldwide church needs to work collaboratively with those outside the church, seeking common ground and acting together in caring for God's earth and its creatures.

### 4. Workplaces

Creation care is integral to whole-life discipleship and thus impacts every sphere and workplace sector.<sup>48</sup> We affirm the God-given vocation of those called to work that protects and restores land, air and waters, including regenerative agriculture, forestry and fisheries, wildlife and marine conservation, waste reduction and management, sustainable design and renewable energy. We also urge all in workplaces, especially in business, entrepreneurship, education, arts, design and construction, politics, science, technology and finance to use their God-given



skills to witness that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it,<sup>49</sup> by using resources with restraint, recycling wherever possible and seeking a circular economy.<sup>50</sup> We invite collaboration with 'Business as Mission' and 'Workplace' ministries in integrating creation care, seeking the wellbeing of people and the flourishing of places before financial gain.<sup>51</sup>

## 5. Communities

God places us in particular locations,<sup>52</sup> to be a blessing to the cities, communities and ecosystems within which we are planted.<sup>53</sup> The kingdom of God, described as yeast, salt, light,<sup>54</sup> is a transforming presence right where we are. We are called to know, love, work and pray for the human and nonhuman communities in which we are embedded. This can take practical form in gardening and food-growing, observing and learning about local wildlife, and partnering with organisations caring for wildlife or advocating for sustainable local solutions. It involves Christian engagement in civil society, serving alongside people of many backgrounds, in schools, community groups and local politics, ever seeking a vision of God's kingdom 'on earth as in heaven'.<sup>55</sup>

## 6. Society

The vision of God's kingdom extends beyond the local, to regional, national and global levels. As Christians, we should be known for loving, respecting and serving our neighbours nearby and across the world, especially the marginalised and vulnerable,<sup>56</sup> speaking up and acting for justice,<sup>57</sup> and practically demonstrating nature's flourishing.<sup>58</sup> Christians can engage in the design of cities, towns, and villages, 'because in God's created order people and places are inextricably tied together'.<sup>59</sup> We share God's concern regarding the suitability of cities for human wellbeing and creation's flourishing.<sup>60</sup> At a structural level, we should seek economic policies and systems which recognise nature's intrinsic value and preserve its ecosystem services, penalise those who pollute and destroy the natural world, and incentivize those who work to restore God's creation. As citizens and residents, we can engage with policymakers, seeking the flourishing of the natural world as a primary objective.

## 7. Global Ecological Concerns

As recognised in the 2012 Jamaica Call to Action, 'We are in a crisis that is pressing, urgent, and that must be resolved in our generation.'<sup>61</sup> The response since has been deeply inadequate, both from Christians and wider society, and the crisis is worsening fast. We need to talk, pray and act about this in our churches and communities.<sup>62</sup> We are already transgressing most of the Planetary Boundaries which are vital for future generations to flourish. Every global region is experiencing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, soil erosion, water stress and pollution, with impacts on agriculture, fisheries, migration, and human physical and mental health. This is a crisis of great injustice as it impacts poorest communities most severely. It also affects most harshly those nations that have done least to

cause the problems, whereas nations whose wealth was built on environmental exploitation can more easily afford to mitigate its impacts.

Therefore, out of love for God, our neighbours and God's world, we call for and commit ourselves to a rapid and just transition from fossil fuels towards renewable energy, and for adequate climate finance for mitigation and adaptation. We support nature-based solutions that address the climate and biodiversity crises as well as global injustices which are deeply intertwined. As a matter of biblical justice, it is important that the voices of those who suffer the worst impacts of nature's destruction—marginalised communities, indigenous peoples, and those whose livelihoods depend directly on nature—be at the heart of discussions and solutions. We invite conversation and action amongst Christians and all our neighbours on these issues, and affirm the many helpful resources, technologies and ways forward to address with urgency the crises we face together.

## Invitation

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*'God intends our care of the creation to reflect our love for the Creator.'<sup>63</sup> In other words, our life with creation reflects how we live our life with God. We ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see God's good purposes for creation in Scripture (God's word) and to be aware of the groaning of creation (God's world). We invite the global church, present in villages, towns and cities, amongst rich and poor in every nation to proclaim God's good news for all the earth, rediscover our relationship with creation, and commit to prayerful action. We affirm our biblical hope for God's earth based on the risen Christ, the firstfruits of the new creation. Creation declares and displays God's glory, and we joyfully join in solidarity, bearing witness that Jesus is Lord of all the earth.*

*If you accept our invitation to care for God's world, please add your name using this form. You can sign either in an individual capacity or on behalf of an organization. Alternatively, you may download the document in PDF form, sign it, and share it with others to encourage participation. We also encourage you to share that you have signed the Korean Invitation on social media, linking to it and using the hashtag #KoreanInvitation.*

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

# Endnotes

1. LWCCN = Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Network. The twelve conferences, from 2014-2022 covered North America, Latin America & the Caribbean, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, West & Francophone Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, Middle East & North Africa, South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and Oceania / Australasia.

2. Genesis 1:31
3. Genesis 1:26-28
4. Genesis 2:7
5. Genesis 2:15
6. Genesis 3:7-24, Romans 1:18
7. Genesis 9:10-17
8. Exodus 20:10, 23:4-12, Deuteronomy 11:15, 22:6-7
9. Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15
10. Leviticus 25
11. Exodus 23:16, 34:22-26, Deuteronomy 16:9-17
12. Isaiah 56, 65, Hosea 2
13. Jeremiah 29:5-7
14. Isaiah 1:17, 56:1, 61:8, Micah 6:6-8, Amos 5:11-24
15. Isaiah 61:1-11, Micah 4:1-5, Hosea 2:16-23
16. John 1:14
17. Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 17:20-21, John 18:36
18. Luke 4:18-21
19. Colossians 1:19-20
20. John 3:16-17
21. Genesis 1:2, Psalm 104:30, Romans 8:22, 26-27
22. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
23. Romans 8:19
24. Luke 1:32-33, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 2 Peter 3:3-13, Revelation 19-22
25. Revelation 11:18
26. Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and the Moral Order*, (Leicester, IVP), 1986
27. Romans 8:21
28. Revelation 21:5
29. Revelation 21:3
30. 1 Corinthians 15:20
31. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Revelation 21:5
32. 1 Peter 1:3
33. John 1:3
34. Colossians 1:17, Psalm 104:27-30
35. Colossians 1:19-20
36. Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Kings 4:29-34
37. Proverbs 8:22-31
38. [Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home](#)
39. Romans 1:20

40. Matthew 6:24-34; 19:16-30, Mark 12:41-44, Luke 6:20, 24; 12:15, 33-34, James 5:1-5
41. This document was affirmed by both the Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Alliance.
42. Luke 12:15
43. Proverbs 22:15, Philippians 2:4
44. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
45. [EcoChurch](#) is a good example of a church-based programme, and A Rocha International's [Resource Hub](#) is also useful.
46. [The Cape Town Commitment](#), 1:7
47. Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15
48. Colossians 3:17
49. Psalm 24:1
50. [Virtuous Circle](#) by Tearfund and the Institute for Development Studies
51. Jeremiah 29:7, 11
52. Acts 17:26
53. Jeremiah 29:5-7
54. Matthew 5:13-16, 13:33
55. Matthew 6:9-13
56. Matthew 12:30-31, Luke 10:25-37
57. Micah 6:6-8
58. Mark 16:15
59. [The Gospel and the Future of Cities](#)
60. Jeremiah 29:7
61. [The Jamaica Call to Action](#) - produced by the Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Network
62. Katharine Hayhoe's [TED talk](#) and [article on climate solutions](#) are useful here.
63. John Stott, Foreword to *The Care of Creation*, ed. R.J. Berry, Leicester: IVP, 2000.



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