



CARE FOR CREATION

MISSIONS MOMENT

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As soon as you open to the first page of the Bible, it is impossible to deny that our relationship with the earth should play a huge role in our faith journey.

Alongside the creation of humankind, God created a lush and wild earth. The creation story depicts beautiful harmony among every living thing. God entrusted humanity to rule over plants and animals.

Genesis 1:29-30 depicts God speaking to humankind. “29 God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so.”



As we know, the full integration between humankind and the earth did not last very long. Humans sinned by eating the fruit that God had declared off limits. The first manifestation of sin in the world was for humans to relate to the Earth simply as they desired, without accountability to God. Once sin entered the world, the harmony of Eden was broken.

We continue to be dependent on the earth. It is our source of life! But the relationship is filled with tension instead of harmony. The Earth is suffering unprecedented and devastating levels of degradation resulting in unnatural changes to biodiversity, air and water pollution, ozone depletion, land destruction and eradication of wildlife.

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The United Nations forecasts that by 2050 there could be 25 million to 1 billion people forcibly displaced due to changes to the environment.

Pollution of air and water and uneven food production threaten the health, well-being and very survival of millions of people.

There is a lot of destruction but there is also hope. We get to be a part of God's redemption story. The path to healing God's creation will involve facing massive systemic problems. By advocating for the earth, we are working toward bringing God's kingdom to earth. The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine puts it like this: 'God's authority over the created order does not mean rigid and overbearing control but rather a caring, dynamic, interactive relationship with his creation. He works in co-operation with his creation to fulfil his purposes for it. ... Our challenge is to treat the earth well in the light of increasing population and diminishing resources. The world was made to praise God and reveal his glory (Psalm 19:1-6); our stewardship of it furthers that end.'

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Here are some practical actions and habits you can start on your journey to care for creation:

- Prayer
- Donate to environmental charities and organizations
- Raise awareness among your circle of influence
- Educate yourself and others about how we can prevent environmental issues
- Learn how to properly recycle
- Adopt the habits of reduce, reuse, recycle
- Cultivate a garden or plant a tree. Learn how to take care of the earth.

Since Earth Day is this month and it is getting warmer outside, this time of year is a great time of year to develop habits and develop a stronger relationship with God's creation.

For more information and practical responses to taking care of the environment, you can read the Care for Environment International Positional Statement at salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips

