

PART I

FOR THE LORD WE LOVE

The Cape Town Confession of Faith

7. WE LOVE GOD'S WORLD

We share God's passion for his world, loving all that God has made, rejoicing in God's providence and justice throughout his creation, proclaiming the good news to all creation and all nations, and longing for the day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.²²

A We love the world of God's creation. This love is not mere sentimental affection for nature (which the Bible nowhere commands), still less is it pantheistic worship of nature (which the Bible expressly forbids). Rather it is the logical outworking of our love for God by caring for what belongs to him. 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.' The earth is the property of the God we claim to love and obey. We care for the earth, most simply, because it belongs to the one whom we call Lord.²³

The earth is created, sustained and redeemed by Christ.²⁴ We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. We care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world, but for the Lord's sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says 'Jesus is Lord' is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.

Such love for God's creation demands that we repent of our part in the destruction, waste and pollution of the earth's resources and our collusion in the toxic idolatry of consumerism. Instead, we commit ourselves to urgent and prophetic ecological responsibility. We support Christians whose particular missional calling is to environmental advocacy and action, as well as those committed to godly fulfillment of the mandate to provide for human welfare and needs by exercising responsible dominion and stewardship. The Bible declares God's redemptive purpose for creation itself. Integral mission means discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the gospel is God's good news, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for individual persons, and for society, and for creation. All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people.

PART II
FOR THE WORLD WE SERVE
The Cape Town Call to Action

PART IIB
BUILDING THE PEACE OF CHRIST
IN OUR DIVIDED AND BROKEN WORLD

5. CHRIST'S PEACE FOR HIS
SUFFERING CREATION

Our biblical mandate in relation to God's creation is provided in *The Cape Town Confession of Faith* section 7(A). All human beings are to be stewards of the rich abundance of God's good creation. We are authorized to exercise godly dominion in using it for the sake of human welfare and needs, for example in farming, fishing, mining, energy generation, engineering, construction, trade, medicine. As we do so, we are also commanded to care for the earth and all its creatures, because the earth belongs to God, not to us. We do this for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Creator, Owner, Sustainer, Redeemer and Heir of all creation.

We lament over the widespread abuse and destruction of the earth's resources, including its biodiversity. Probably the most serious and urgent challenge faced by the physical world now is the threat of climate change. This will disproportionately affect those in poorer countries, for it is there that climate extremes will be most severe and where there is little capability to adapt to them. World poverty and climate change need to be addressed together and with equal urgency.

We encourage Christians worldwide to:

- A. Adopt lifestyles that renounce habits of consumption that are destructive or polluting;
- B. Exert legitimate means to persuade governments to put moral imperatives above political expediency on issues of environmental destruction and potential climate change;
- C. Recognize and encourage the missional calling both of
 - (i) Christians who engage in the proper use of the earth's resources for human need and welfare through agriculture, industry and medicine, and
 - (ii) Christians who engage in the protection and restoration of the earth's habitats and species through conservation and advocacy. Both share the same goal for both serve the same Creator, Provider and Redeemer.