



CHRIST'S COSTLY GIFT OF RECONCILIATION

WEEK 6

'For a reconciled relationship to God's creation'.

Scripture: Ephesians 4: 22-28 NRSV (Anglicized)

Reflection

This week we pray with our partners in Christian Aid in support of the churches' efforts to reconcile humanity to God's creation, to repent and make reparation for the abuses that have contributed to the climate emergency that threatens our future. For its 2022 Church consultation event Christian Aid took the question: How can we help each other be more united in hope with our global neighbours? In the discussion that followed it was noted that one hopeful sign in recent years is the more consistent attention given to issues of climate justice in a Church context. Clearly we have still a long way to go if we are to truly live up to our professed concern for the safeguarding of the gifts of creation, but we have moved from a situation in which climate justice was just one more item on our long list of social justice concerns, to one where it is recognised as foundational, not least in the work of peace and reconciliation.

Today's Scripture reading holds before us the responsibility and potential for renewal in our relationships with God, with one another and with the whole of creation. Increasingly, churches speak about this reconciling work in terms of loss and damage placing before us the consequences of our choices — in our lifestyles, in our consumerism, in our engagement with the work of climate justice — especially for the poorest and most vulnerable, and for future generations. Grounding this work in a vision of reconciliation, keeping before us the hope of renewal, helps us to understand the sacrifices we are called to make as an investment in a better future for all. It calls us to seek solutions that protect vulnerable communities that live far from us in terms of geography, as well as those close to home who experience fuel poverty, or are at risk of loss of livelihood because of the economic and cultural changes that accompany the work of climate justice. The Christian vision of our common humanity resists any attempts to cast these different groups in opposition, recognising our interdependence and binding us together in solidarity.

Christian Aid's Global Theology Adviser, Bob Kikuyu, has published a paper offering [theological reflections on the theme of Loss and Damage](#). The paper highlights the contribution churches can make to this work, speaking out of our Christian values, underlining in particular the moral imperative for action on climate justice. Churches are encouraged to consider their role in response to the failure of relationships demonstrated at successive high-level international conferences which failed to secure the kind of urgent and radical restorative action in solidarity

with the poorest and most vulnerable communities around the world that is required to secure their future. We are encouraged to consider how, at a time of threat, churches can offer an alternative narrative of hope and recovery by framing the conversation in terms of reconciliation.

Questions

- Is climate justice a consistent theme when churches come together in your area?
- How could you help raise awareness of the theme of loss and damage in your local church or ecumenical context?
- How might you support young climate activists in your local church and/or community?

Actions

- Consider the 2021 [Joint Message for the Protection of Creation](#) from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury. What actions points could be developed from this for your local church or ecumenical networks?
- Consider using the [Christian Aid Church resource on loss and damage](#) to support engagement through prayer, awareness-raising and advocacy in your local context.
- Research and discuss which groups in your local area may feel most at risk from issues relating to the climate emergency. How can you help them feel heard and included in the work of climate justice?

Prayer

Loving God,
We acknowledge the need for repentance
for our abuses of your creation,
for our neglect of our responsibility
to protect those at risk from climate breakdown.
Kindle in our hearts a sense of solidarity
that will guide us to renewal of relationships
with each other,
with you,
and with all of creation.
Keep before us the hope
that all things can be restored
in your grace
if we embrace the sacrifices
demanded by justice.
Amen