



CREATION SUNDAY

An introduction

In the beginning was the Word... All things came to be through him.

John 1:1,3

Praise the Lord, my soul... How many are your works, Lord!

In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Psalms 104:1,24

Creation Day is a worldwide Christian observance on September 1. Many churches celebrate it on the following Sunday, so it is also called '[Creation Sunday](#)'. Christians mark central events in the story of our faith on certain days, such as the incarnation at Christmas, the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter, and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Likewise, the annual celebration of Creation Sunday is an invitation to commemorate the divine act of creation, the first step of salvation history, and reflect upon the central conviction that God's loving authorship of and faithful presence to all that is created is worthy of our gratitude and praise. This brief paper¹ explains why Christian congregations may wish to celebrate Creation Sunday.

1. CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL CREATION

The New Testament proclaims Jesus as the pre-existent Creator of heaven and earth: 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' (John 1:3, cf. Gen 1:1). Moreover, Christ continues to sustain the universe ('in Him all things hold together,' Col 1:17) and through Jesus' death and resurrection God is pleased 'to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven' (Col 1:20). He is 'the Alpha and the Omega' (Rev 22:13). Scripture proclaims the risen Christ's Lordship extends to all creation. God has 'placed all things under his feet' (Eph 1:22) and all creation will bow before him (Phil 2:9-11). All who proclaim 'Jesus is Lord' should recognise his Lordship not only of our individual lives but of the whole creation. Creation Sunday helps proclaim Jesus as Lord of all.

2. THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF CREATION

God as Creator is a foundational, unifying biblical tenet for all Christians. The Bible begins with the rich story of the creation of all that exists with the refrain, 'God saw that it was good'. After the creation of land animals and humans, 'God saw *all* that he had made, and it was *very good*' (Gen 1:31). A consistent thread throughout Scripture declares God's creative deeds, ranging from elaborate accounts (e.g. Gen 2, Ps 19, 104, Job 38-39, Prov 8:22-31) to condensed proclamations (e.g. Ex 20:11, Neh 9:6, Isa 44:24, Jer 10:12-13, Jonah 1:9, Acts 17:24-25, Rom 4:17, Heb 11:3, Rev 4:11). The Bible teaches that God created all that exists out of love. We believe that this God who created all that exists is One God who exists eternally as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19) and who chose to create and sustain the diversity, complexity and beauty of the natural world (Ps 104). God calls humanity to share in the care of that world (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15), serving and preserving creation so that it might worship and bring glory to God. Creation Sunday provides an opportunity to celebrate the divine act of creation and offer our gratitude for the beauty of God's handiwork.

¹ Paper drafted by an ecumenical working group of representatives of Pentecostal World Fellowship, Lausanne Movement / World Evangelical Alliance (LWCCN), Baptist World Alliance, Mennonite World Conference, Salvation Army, and Council for World Mission.

3. CREATION IS INTEGRAL TO THE GOOD NEWS, THE GOSPEL WE PROCLAIM

The Gospel, God's good news, is wider than the salvation of individual souls alone (Luke 4:14-21; John 3:16-17). It is God's glorious plan to undo the corrupting effects of sin and death in every dimension and reconcile the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19; Col 1:20). Just as sin has broken our personal relationship with God, so it has damaged every part of creation (Gen 3:17-19; Hos 4:1-3). The first biblical Covenant, God's response to a broken world, included not only Noah and his descendants but 'all life on the earth' (Gen 9:10-17). Creation has been 'subjected to frustration' and, because of Christ's saving work, creation 'will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God' (Rom 8:20-21). In our sharing of the Gospel with people, creation also has an evangelistic impact, clearly displaying 'God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature' (Rom 1:20). Thus, Creation Sunday can become part of the Gospel proclamation of redemption.

4. CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF DISCIPLESHIP

The very first command in scripture includes caring for the world and its creatures. In Genesis 1:28 God blesses humanity, encourages us to be fruitful, and to 'Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' In the context of God creating and declaring all creation 'very good' (v.31) and calling Adam to 'work' and 'take care of' the garden (2:15), this 'rule' should not be seen as self-serving domination but in line with the Old Testament vision of 'shepherd Kings'. We are to serve and preserve creation, reflecting God's desire for his world to flourish and thrive. The Genesis command continues with God's call on Noah to include creatures of every kind in the ark (Gen 7:2-3), with injunctions to treat animals with respect (Ex 20:10, 23:12; Prov 12:10), with the Psalms recording creation's praise of its Creator (19, 104, 148), and with Jesus teaching and modelling an ethic of listening to and caring for the earth and our human neighbours (Matt 6:25-34, 10:29-31; Mark 4:35-41). Creation Sunday provides an opportunity to reflect, repent for the ways we have failed by mistreating and abusing God's good work, attune our vision to suffering around us, and to encourage Christians to see care for our common home as integral to our identity as disciples of Jesus, the Lord of creation.

5. MISSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMBEDDING CREATION AND CREATION CARE IN OUR CYCLE OF WORSHIP AND TEACHING

In the Gospels, we are reminded that the mandate to care for creation includes the needs of the most vulnerable. 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me' (Matt 25:40). Today, many people suffer from the destruction of the natural world. The loss of homes, livelihoods, and communities make human flourishing challenging if not impossible. There is a need for hope that is real and tangible. As Christians, we share the biblical story of God as Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, of a fallen humanity and a broken world restored in Christ, and of a future and a hope both for people and for God's world. Creation Sunday provides an opportunity to collectively acknowledge deep suffering in our world and renew our commitment to participate in healing actions that are signs of the good news we have in Christ.

6. CELEBRATING THE CREATOR ENABLES US TO JOIN WITH CREATION IN WORSHIPING GOD

God's people in the Old Testament celebrated festivals linked both to God's actions in history (eg. Passover, cf. Ex 12) and God's provision through creation (eg. First Fruits and the Feast of Weeks, cf. Lev 23:9-21). The Psalms frequently express creation's praise of God (Ps 8:1-4; 19:1-6, 65:8-13; 66:1-4; 96:1-13; 148:1-14). Psalm 98 states 'Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music ... Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy' (4, 7-8). Celebrating Creation Sunday can help us to give thanks to God for sustaining all life through creation, and to experience our worship as part of the worship of all creation.

In summary, Christians around the world are united in our belief in God the Creator and share in wonder that all things were created through Christ. Our different traditions and denominations can come together to celebrate God's gift, the created world, our common home. Creation Sunday invites us to offer our unique and diverse gifts as we celebrate and proclaim Jesus as Lord of all creation.