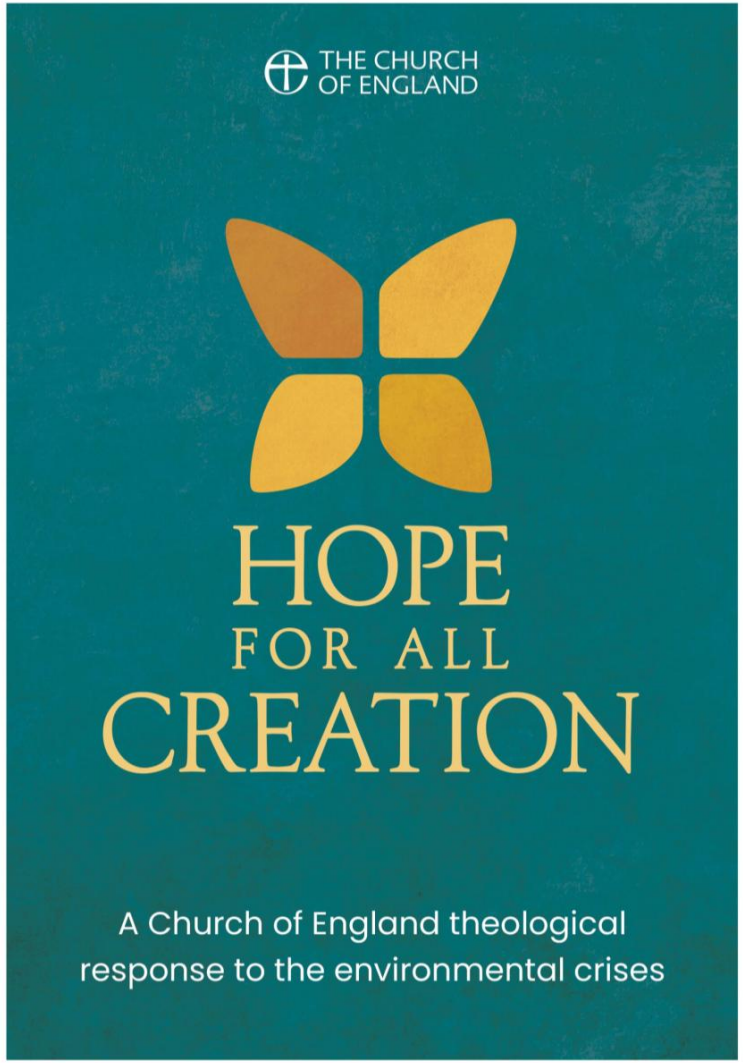
Dr. Ben Fulford

Chair, Theology and Environment Working Group, Faith and Order Commission

Associate Professor of Christian Theology, University of Chester

HOPE FOR ALL CREATION

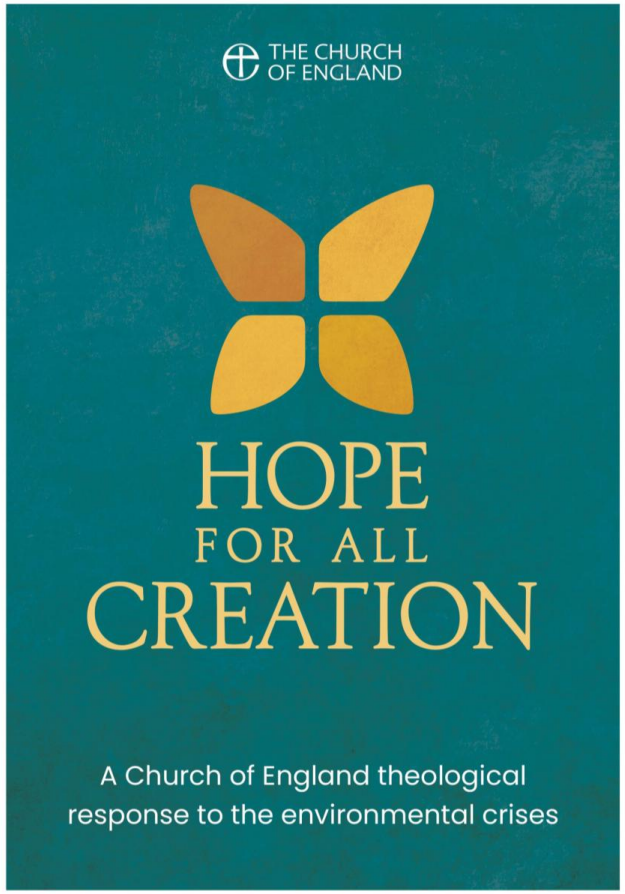


Introducing *Hope for All Creation*

- Hope for All Creation sets out the Church of England's understanding of the environmental crises and how its faith speaks to it.
- It tells of God's deep and enduring commitment to the whole creation.
- A guide to faithful living and resource for Christian ministry
- A contribution to discerning how we exercise wise, responsible stewardship of our planet.

Introducing *Hope for All Creation*

- Origins in joint initiative of the Church's Environmental Working Group and its Faith & Order Commission
- Need for a comprehensive theological document to accompany environmental initiatives in the Church
- For/from the Church of England
- Supporting the whole people of God in this aspect of mission
- Teaching document of the House of Bishops



Members of the FAOC Theology of the Environment Working Group

- Prof. Nicholas Adams (FAOC, University of Birmingham)
- Revd Dr Dave Bookless (A Rocha)
- Jo Chamberlain (National Environment Officer, C of E)
- Canon Dr Ben Fulford (FAOC, chair, University of Chester)
- Dr Guido De Graaff (Deputy Theological Advisor to HoB)
- Revd Margot Hodson (John Ray Initiative)
- Revd Dr Timothy Howles (Laudato Si' Institute, University of Oxford)
- Bishop Anderson Jeremiah (FAOC)
- Tash Jesson (Faith & Public Life, FAOC)
- Dr Hilary Marlow (University of Cambridge)
- Dr Anupama Ranawana (Durham University)

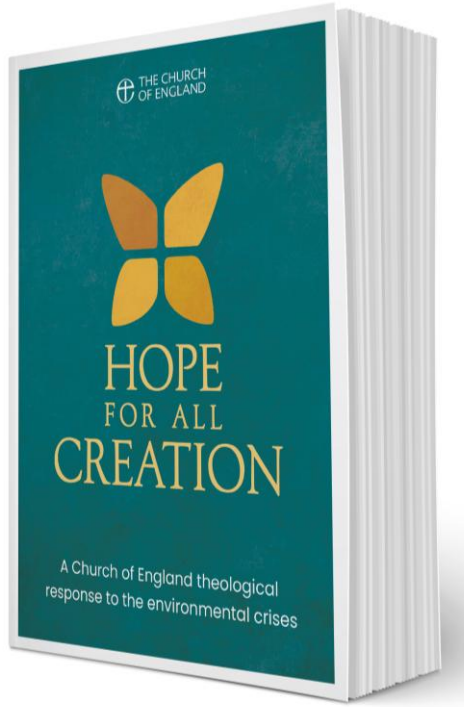
‘Restoring our relationship to the rest of creation is part and parcel of God’s saving work and of his coming kingdom. To care for creation in partnership with others, to show solidarity with the vulnerable, to be prophetic in speech and action on these issues – locally, nationally and globally – is to live out this faith and hope.’

Archbishops of Canterbury of York,

From the Forward to *HfAC*

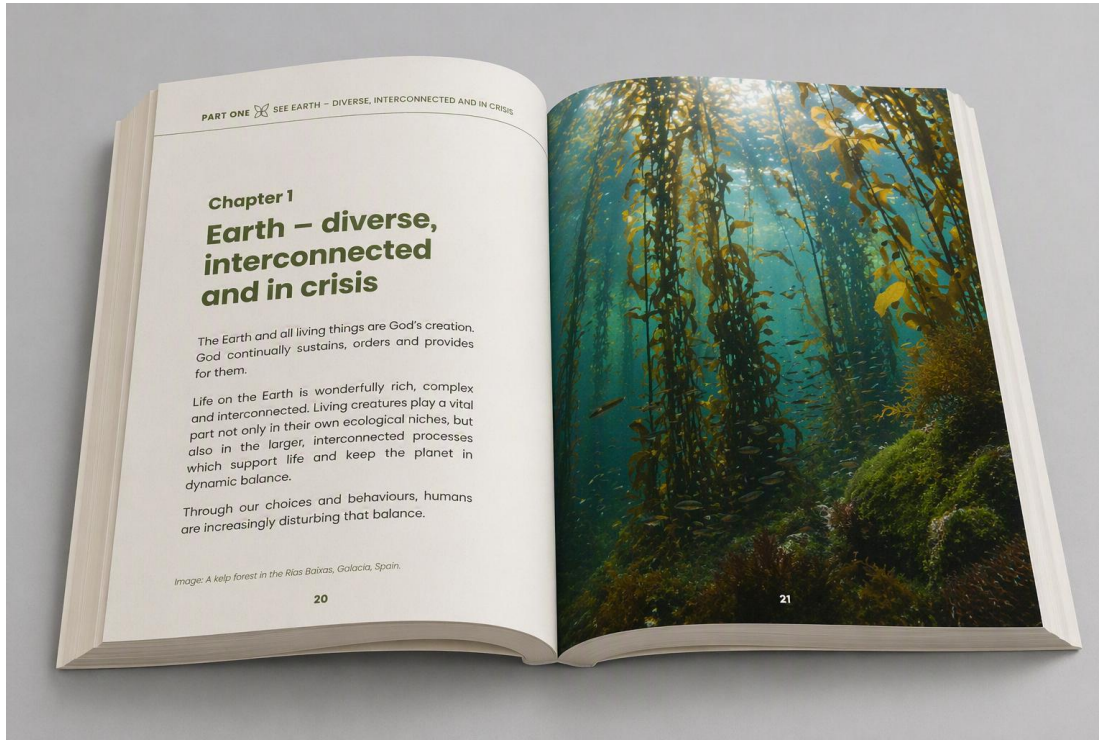
Structure

- **Introduction**:
  - Anglicans attending to the environmental signs of the times building on the legacy of environmental action and spirituality in our tradition
- **Part One – See**
  - An invitation to consider our contemporary environmental situation in light of the planetary boundaries framework and the impact of human activity on the interrelationships that characterise creation.
- **Part Two – Reflect**
  - A theological interpretation of this situation and reasons for Christian hope, drawing on Scripture and Christian tradition.
- **Part Three – Respond**
  - Ecological conversion and the shapes of faithful response to God's creative and redemptive action, locally, nationally & globally



Part One: See

- The richness, complexity and interconnectedness of all life on Earth, God's creation
- Human disruption of that interconnectedness since the Industrial Revolution
- The assessment that humans have exceeds 7/9 Planetary Boundaries
- A consequence of many human societies living in defiance of the delicate balance of Earth's interconnected processes and relationships
- 'Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.' (Hosea 4:3)



Part Two: Reflect - Creation

- ‘O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.’ (Ps 104:26)
- The triune God as the active source and sustainer of this interconnected creation and creaturely life,
- in/through the Earth’s cycles and processes and the agency and interactions of creatures (*creatio continua*)
- Humans are part of this interdependent creation and have a responsibility to care for it (Gen. 1-2)



‘…all creatures have a direct and ongoing relationship to their Creator, and matter to God in their own right. Their worth and significance are not measured by their utility or aesthetic value to human beings.

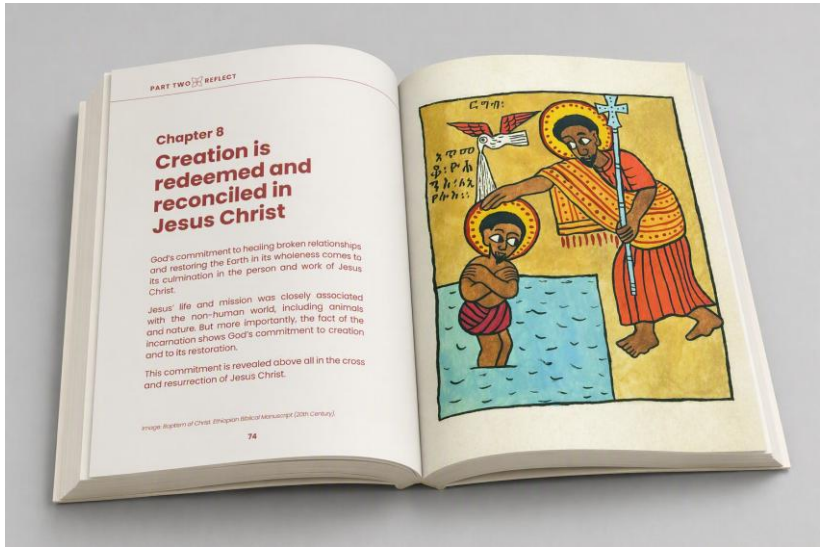
- ‘God ‘lingers lovingly’ over every wild creature described in the speeches [Job 38-41], like a proud and delighted mother, and allows them to develop their own qualities and the freedom to be themselves.’

From *HfAC* chapter 4

‘In both [Genesis] creation accounts there is an emphasis on human beings coming from and living in close dependence on the fertile soil, and on the plants and fruit it yields.

‘Humans are not set apart from nature, but… among a great variety of animals and birds – whom they know well enough to name…

‘Human beings are tasked with working with and for the Earth, observing its ways and respecting its limits.’



Part Two – Reflection – Disruption and Restoration

- The environmental crises express 'a defiance of creaturely dependence on the Earth and other creatures and a rejection of responsibility for them.'
- Sin ruptures humanity's relation to God and our relationships with the Earth, other creatures & one another
  - Gen. 3-6, Hos. 4:2-3, Is 5.70-10, Amos 3.9-11, 4.7-9, Rom. 8:22)
- The resulting disruption of the natural world is a desecration of God's Earth: ecological sin linked to ecological injustice
- God is committed to mending our broken relationships with God and other creatures & restoring wholeness to the Earth
  - Covenant – Temple – Sabbath – Laws re land and animals – Promise of Peaceable Kingdom
- Above all in the reconciliation and renewal of all creation in Jesus Christ and in his coming reign
  - Mk 1:1-11; Jn 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-20, Rom. 8.19-22; Phil. 2:10-11; Eph. 1:10; Rev. 5:13, 22
- Christians are called to anticipate this hope in the power of God's Spirit, following Christ and confident in his presence

‘The Incarnation… shows the depth of the triune God’s commitment to and solidarity with all creation and how far God is prepared to go to redeem it. Jesus Christ enters the community of all living beings, with its complex web of interdependencies, in order to participate in it and ultimately redeem it…’

‘The ultimate destiny of humanity lies with the whole created order in a reconciled, renewed and liberated creation, saturated with God’s presence and united in the praise of God.’

From *HfAC* chapters 8-9

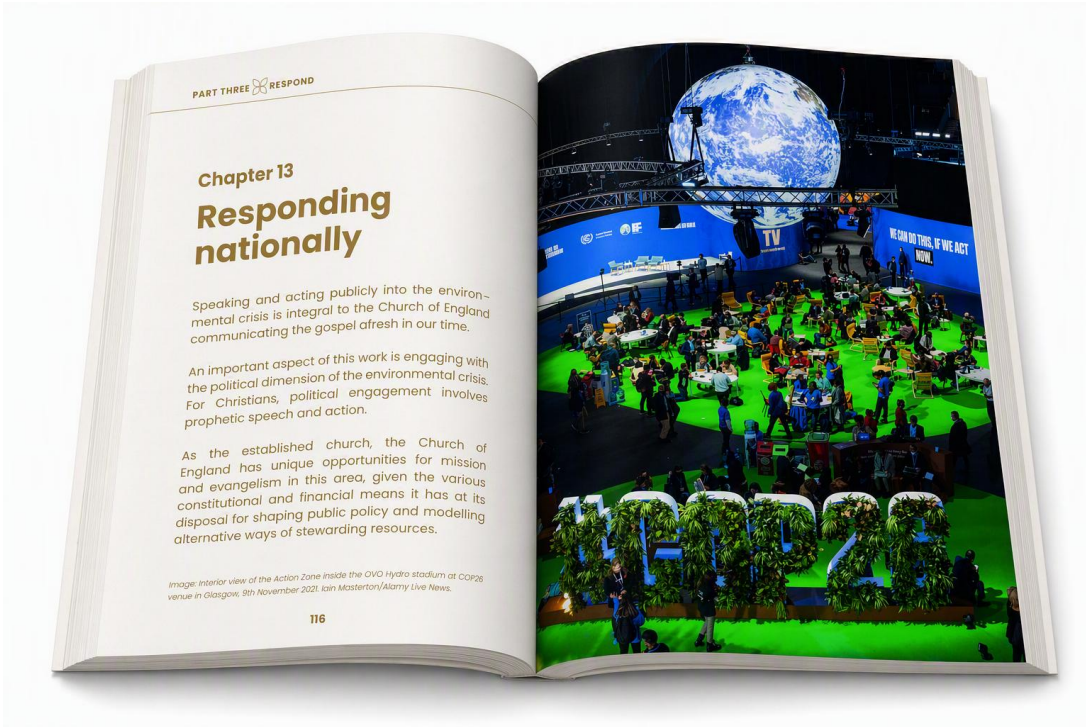
Part 3: Respond

Christians are called to respond in **ecological conversion**, turning to God & other creatures and the poor

Locally: in church life and local communities, extending the 'care of souls' to farmed animals, wildlife, trees, land and water, modelling care of the Earth

Nationally: in prayer, prophetic speech and action; modelling decarbonisation, sustainability and conservation

Globally: with churches in the Anglican Community and ecumenical partners, listening, collaborating, showing solidarity, working for climate justice



Church of England: Hope for All Creation



‘In this critical moment, Christians are called to respond to our current ecological situation in a profound conversion of our lives and imaginations, to repair our broken relationships with our fellow creatures, and to anticipate the joyful coming of God’s kingdom on Earth.

‘… working alongside those of shared purpose and good will, we can embody the spiritual transformation our world needs, living in the hope that God alone can provide.’

From the Introduction to *HfAC*

Church of England: Hope for All Creation

Any questions?

HOPE
FOR ALL
CREATION