

## A Rocha Commitment to Creation Care

The A Rocha Commitment to Creation Care gives a clear biblical basis for A Rocha's work, rooted in the story of God's purposes from creation to new creation. It was developed through substantial consultation across the A Rocha Worldwide Family, with insights from many cultures and church traditions. It brings a unity of commitment to the A Rocha family, but is also intended for personal and group study and to be shared with all who seek to care for God's creation.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, we bear witness to the divine authority of the Bible. This is summarized in the Nicene Creed and is the basis for the following affirmations of the historic Christian faith and is the foundation of our work.<sup>1</sup> We come from many cultures and church traditions, yet are united in our desire to be faithful to Jesus, and to demonstrate Christ's Lordship in caring for God's world.<sup>2</sup>

- 1. God and Creation:** We believe in one God, existing eternally in mutual loving relationship as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In love, God created all that exists from the farthest reaches of the cosmos to the complex ecosystems of Earth. God delights in the natural world in all its wildness, beauty and mystery, declaring it 'very good'. Creation, in turn, is a source of wonder and wisdom, and a witness to God's divine nature and eternal power.
  - We rejoice in the beauty, diversity and complexity of the natural world, and commit ourselves to delighting in and treasuring God's good creation.
- 2. How we know God:** God is known supremely in Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Bible, through the Holy Spirit and also through creation. Our knowledge of God, therefore, comes through our relationship with Christ, commitment to the Word of God and our experience of creation, in worship, relationship, creativity and the scientific investigation of life and its intricate interconnections and dependencies.
  - We commit ourselves to worshipping and following Jesus as Lord, studying the Bible and seeking to glorify God as we study, learn from and care for God's created world.
- 3. Humanity and Creation:** Human beings exist as creatures of the Earth, made in the image of God and given responsibility to reflect God's character in knowing, delighting in and caring for their fellow creatures and the whole Earth. Yet, human sin and rebellion against God mean alienation and brokenness in our relationships with God, people and the rest of creation. Sin leads to God's judgment, and it permeates and damages every area of life, including creation, which is subject to frustration and groans under the weight of human selfishness and sin.
  - We confess our involvement in selfish choices and sinful behaviours which damage God's creation. We commit ourselves, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to repent, to lament and to renew our vocation to serve and conserve God's creation, living in it and using it responsibly and sustainably.

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<sup>1</sup> A Rocha's origins lie within the Evangelical Christian movement as reflected in our foundational Basis of Faith. Within our leadership, we welcome those of all Christian traditions who accept the A Rocha Commitment to Creation Care.

<sup>2</sup> We work with a range of national and global denominations and networks. In addition, we partner fully in practical action to care for God's world with those of other faiths and none, and with scientific and environmental organizations.

4. **God's Covenant with Creation:** We believe God does not abandon creation, but in love continues to sustain and renew the Earth and all of creation. As recounted in the biblical narratives, God reaches out to a wounded world both in judgment and with the anticipation of renewal. God's covenant promise through Noah includes a future and a hope not only for people, but for all life on Earth and the Earth itself. In the accounts of land and people in the Old Testament, in times of both exile and settlement, and through prophetic visions of restored peaceful relationships, God's purposes consistently include not only people, especially the poor and marginalized, but also non-human creatures and the land itself.
  - We respond to God's initiative by committing ourselves to pursue justice and peace, mutual learning and collaboration in our relationships, and the thriving of the communities and ecosystems within which God has placed us.
  
5. **Jesus' Life and Death:** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, in whom God's good and glorious purposes for humankind and all creation come to fulfilment. In Jesus, God dwelt among us, taking on flesh and entering into creation, participating in the very life and matter of the world. In Christ, God entered into the suffering and brokenness of the world and revealed a new way of living within God's Kingdom of justice, peace and joy. In Christ's death on the cross, God defeated the power of sin and death and accomplished the reconciliation of all things – human and nonhuman – giving hope for all that is broken and spoiled, and eternal life to all who receive Him.
  - We care for creation motivated by our affirmation that Jesus is Lord. His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension give us purpose and hope for humanity and all creation.
  
6. **Future Hope:** The bodily resurrection of Jesus is the sign and guarantee of hope for humanity and for the whole creation. Christ will come again to renew all things, to destroy evil and death, and to bring the fullness of the Kingdom of God to Earth. The Bible speaks of both judgment and hope, discontinuity and continuity regarding God's new creation. We affirm, with the Apostle Paul, that creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay, to share in the freedom of God's children.
  - We seek to live in the power of Christ's risen life, through delighting in, learning from and participating in God's renewal and re-creation of the world.
  
7. **The Church's Mission in Caring for Creation:** Creation care is integral to the gospel, the good news of Christ. As those who follow Jesus as Lord, we are called to live as citizens of Christ's Kingdom and members of Christ's body on Earth, the Church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we participate in Christ's healing and reconciliation of relationships with one another and with all creation.
  - We respond to the call to follow Jesus joyfully and sacrificially in loving our neighbour, living simply and caring for creation. We call upon churches and all who follow Christ to join us in prayer, advocacy, and practical action on behalf of God's world. We delight in working with individuals, communities and organizations of many kinds as we fulfil this calling.