

Session 9: The role of the Church in creation care



How would you finish the sentence 'The kingdom of God is...'?



9 Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...

Matthew 6:9-10

'The kingdom of God is bringing heaven to earth' says Dave Bookless. Similarly, Swiss theologian Hans Küng says, 'The kingdom of God is creation healed'.

If the role of the church is to build the kingdom of God, the church first needs to decide what it is, and where it will be built.

A church which believes it must wait for the end of the earth before it sees the kingdom of God will become a holding bay or a lifeboat, waiting for the arrival of a kingdom it has no part in bringing about.

A church which believes it is bringing heaven to earth that others may see the kingdom of God will become the active body of Christ, partnering with God in the arrival of His kingdom on earth.

This is a church where caring for the poor, tackling injustice and caring for creation are issues of the kingdom of God, and part of the church's task.

As Rachel Mash says, It is a church likely to draw people to Jesus as they see the church doing 'something which matters'.

In building the kingdom of God on earth, the church as the body of Christ has the opportunity to embody the same incarnational love.

We can all take up the offer which the young person in this video received: to say, 'we used to go to church, now we are church'.

Discuss

What do you think about the claim that 'The kingdom of God is creation healed'?

Which vision of the church most excites you? Why do you think this is?

Would people look at your church and say 'these people worship a creator God'? What would have to change for this to be true?

Ruth Padilla DeBorst says that, 'the main claim on our lives is God's love'. What would it look like for the church to take this seriously in our present global environmental context?

Pray, asking God how you can be part of His church, building the kingdom of God on earth.

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