

## Notes for Event

(Use notes also from Caring for Creation – the new frontier of mission see A Rocha website)

Start with Prayer – thanking God for what's around,  
For the people here but for him especially

- *Where* I am coming from
- *What* we can do
- *Where* go from here

### Introduction

As some of you may know I have a keen interest in birds – but it's more than just about birds for me. It's about the whole of creation and how that stirs me. The only way I can sum it up really is by using the word worship.

When I go out in the countryside something happens to me – I can't quite put my finger on what it is always. But as I am a Christian I am pointed to my creator. Hopefully for those of you here creation does something to you too.

But again it's more than that – it goes beyond this sheer enjoyment and desire to name creatures (for me at least), the drinking in of sights, smells and sounds. It needs to be expressed also in a response not just at the wonder of it all (even things I have seen before cause me to wonder) but in a response to God. (but that needs to go somewhere or could I say *some whom* i.e. God the creator – Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

How can we maintain what is around us and somehow make it better in our own small way. When I say make it better I mean, not that I or we need to improve the good but to take hold of that which has been marred and play our part in demonstrating to the creation that we are sons and daughters of God that which the creation is waiting for eagerly and longingly. **And keeping the good, good!**

Being someone who has been intently aware of the creation through my life. It has come to my attention in my own struggle with where I fit into the issues of conservation and what that means as a Christian. That - *We as Christians need to realise that Creation and redemption are inextricably at the centre of Christian mission* – I don't claim that quote it's from climatologist Sir John Houghton, you will have seen it on the flyer.

It's on the back of this from my own passion and me saying what I've said in a not so elaborate way that I would like to introduce (that was a long introduction and he's only just starting they said!) the idea of a green group that we as a church can get behind – possibly with a long term view of uniting with other churches and other conservation groups **locally and ultimately through this integral mission reach out to all of creation here in the Guildford area locally – that obviously will involve peoples lives us working out our faith and who Jesus means to us in community.**

To think globally act locally **is a much banded around phrase in conservation circles** but it still holds true. And today we start in a small way.

You will have noticed on the flyer and in the church bulletin that there is a name, logo and tag line for this group of God's ACRE: Works, Talks and Walks. I will elaborate as I continue.

The group is not meant to be a burden on you or your time as many of you are busy people. **But as Christians we are meant to be good stewards of our time, money and every area of our lives.** Creation Care is not just the responsibility of the few, it's all of our responsibilities. As mankind/people kind we were given the mandate to rule over the earth not in a despotic way as a dictator but in partnership with the Father as stewards. It's a way to make corporate what many of us are doing individually such as through walks and activities **and to explore some of creation themes being preached on like rest, sabbath and stewardship.**

*("We've thought that the gospel is about us - selfishly and our relationship with God as human beings and actually the Gospel is about good news for the whole of creation. We have to have God's perspective that doesn't put human beings at the centre but puts Christ at the centre".*

This is why this group is being convened due to our responsibility as Christians to Creator God. It's an opportunity to continue dialogue with other Christians on creation care themes. A number of people within the church are doing this stuff already and the church is already being made aware of such issues as recycling and so on. So it's a way of bringing it under one banner.

Also it's an opportunity to reach into the community and share why we believe we should care for the planet – especially in our local area but also further a field by maybe getting involved in the political process as well such as supporting green moves in government etc. or raising concerns. This all needs to be done in the power of the Spirit as it does seem that there is no hope but we of all people have hope.

There are a number of resources I have access to and different organisations which can help here such as A Rocha; Christians in Conservation. And no doubt you are thinking also of others and at the same time of things we could do. This leads nicely into the next stage there is a lot more I could say but we will hopefully explore these ideas over the next few weeks and months. I would like to say at this point I am fallible and not the fount of all knowledge on these issues but I can/could point you to people who could help with questions or issues that you have.

At this point I would like to show a short film which says in another way why we should do creation care from one of the groups that do it best both nationally and internationally the already mentioned A Rocha.

But before I start it off I would like to say that the video may bring up issues and thoughts for you **[PIECES OF PAPER? To write on]** you will have time for questions and comments (gulp!)

## **CLIP**

### **What and where**

In my thinking about this possible group I have come up with these ways we could go: (see powerpoint list – re-prepare break down into manageable chunks) Elaborate on the document.

I was going to talk about why the name, logo and tagline. It was difficult to not come up with a name that wasn't already being used.

God's Acre is a term used by some to refer to church yards. I wanted to incorporate that into it as we're doing this as a church. One of the ideas was to maybe create a wild space that we could care for that also gave wings to using the name. Also acre is a small unit of area and it's best to start small – deal with what we have. Hopefully we can learn through the time in the group to tend our own patches as I think gardening also has a part to play in this (speak to Debbie she likes doing that even though she's the first to admit she's not an expert!). The earth is the Lord's as Ps 24:1 says so we are just tending it, caretaking it for him – so get onboard all you care takers!! I wanted to use ACRE as an acronym, acrostic so it means as you may have noticed already **A**ction in **C**reation **R**edeeming **E**arth. Contrary to what some believe (and a belief from the enlightenment period) He is involved in the earth actively not only directly but also in partnership with us – people. The redeeming Earth speaks of ongoing work which is what the gospel is about – taking back what has been stolen. We are the redeemed, he redeems and he and us together are redeeming the earth – so there you go. And of course it requires action on our part – he's already active. So that's the name.

### **The tag line:**

**Works** – his works what he is doing, our works what we are doing and what we need to do. This will include practical conservation work (parties), possibly lobbying, recycling etc.

**Talks** – Elaboration of creation care theology, practical 'how to' talks on creation care, what we can learn about God from nature and the word. (Talks on his works in other words)

**Walks** – Guided walks, with yours truly or others also capable who I know, just enjoying **being** outside together not necessarily guiding formally. Incorporating what is already going on in church life

NB. It won't be me doing it all hopefully there is room to explore and expand together. Also I am working on a couple of web pages as a place to find out more (resources) and to say what we're about.

**The Logo** – hopefully self explanatory a small globe (like the planet) with various animals leaving there marks – representative.

To show the world we like being church together by doing this as well – not to rush it!

### **Questions and comments**

**Finish with some prayers from the floor/me**

**Tea Coffee/cake**