

## 15. RESOURCES: WORSHIP AND PRAYER

### When is Creation?

Creation is all the time, but because the liturgical year follows the story of redemption the world's creation by God is not celebrated with a major festival - officially. However, in some churches **Harvest Thanksgiving** and **Mothering Sunday** have, for the last century, been treated as major festivals by many parishioners regardless of official policy. It seems there is a strong drive to celebrate creation.

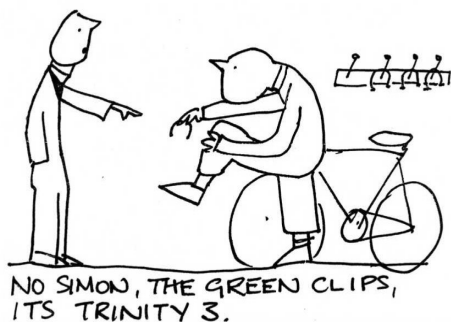
In the Book of Common Prayer the third Sunday before Lent (or Septuagesima) was when the creation narratives were read at Mattins and Evensong, though not at Holy Communion.

In the days of the ASB Creation was the theme of the 9th Sunday before Christmas. Now, in the Common Worship Lectionary, it has moved to the **Second Sunday before Lent**.

The European Christian Ecology Network is encouraging churches to adopt the period from the 1st September to the 2nd Sunday in October as **Creation Time**. And many churches are following this. For many of us that coincides, of course, with Harvest Thanksgiving.

Christian Ecology Network and A Rocha are encouraging people to keep the first Sunday in June as **Environment Sunday** because the early summer is most suitable for outdoor events, the Wildlife Trusts, promote the first week in June as "wildlife week" and the United Nations has declared June 5th as World Environment Day.

But the ecological crisis challenges us to think not only about Creation but also many other gospel themes in the light of what is happening to the world: Sin, the Incarnation of Christ, the Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Hope of eternal life. All these are relevant to the situation we are in. So we need to be looking to pray and worship God at many other times with an awareness of what is happening to the life of the world.



### Sources

The European Christian Environmental Network publishes resources for worship. Go to [www.ecen.org](http://www.ecen.org) and look particularly for its worship materials under Creation Time.

### The Eucharist

**New Patterns of Worship** (CHP 2002) contains a Holy Communion Liturgy: All Creation Worships (p458) **Times and Seasons** (CHP 2006) has material, especially under the section The Agricultural Year (p599). Don't be put off if you live miles from the nearest cow! There is material there for everyone.

Also the Church of Scotland's **Book of Common Order** contains propers which strongly reflect the theme of Creation: index Creation, especially p136, 151

### All Age Services of the Word

**New Patterns of Worship** (CHP 2002) contains material for all kinds of services: index - God in Creation.

There is also a wealth of material from the Iona Community.

See **The Iona Abbey Worship Book** (Wild Goose Publications 2001), especially the Service of Prayer for Justice and Peace (p73f) and the Creation Liturgy (p135f).

Also in **A Wee Worship Book** (4th Incarnation, Wild Goose Publications, 1999) the theme of God as creator is strong in many of the liturgies, not only in its acclamations of praise but also in confessions and intercessions.

The A Rocha Environment Sunday Pack: **The Heat is On**, contains a variety of worship materials on CD.

### Hymns

Some hymnbooks have a section on Creation in their index. In others you have to look under Harvest. But in some of the older hymns the theme of God as creator is addressed in hymns indexed under Praise and Thanksgiving, Morning, Evening or God's Glory. In the old hymnbooks it was sometimes hard to find hymns on Creation, except in the Children's Section - as if only children could appreciate God in the world. However there is a slowly increasing number of hymns to God the Creator. But more are needed.

The winners of the 2006 BBC competition 'Hymn for the Green Church' are available on:

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/music/hymn writing

The A Rocha pack, **The Heat is On**, contains suggested hymns from the books **Songs of Fellowship** and **Mission Praise**.

David Osborne has produced a guide to hymns which relate to ecological themes in the hymnbooks **Hymns Ancient and Modern**, **Songs of God's People** and **Common Ground**. (link)

Many hymns from **The Iona Community** are relevant to services with an ecological concern.

### The Dark Side

The Creation is not just bright and beautiful. The life of earth is scarred by human activity, but without humanity there was still pain, death and extinction. It is possible for our worship to neglect this as we extol the glories of creation and fail to think about its dark side.

Here the Psalms are good, seeing the harvest as God's blessing with the enthusiasm of people who know what it is like to go hungry. Some of the old hymns of Isaac Watts or Joachim Neander also have a realism about them, as well as great hopefulness.

Among recent hymn writers Kathy Galloway, Anna Briggs, Brian Wren and Fred Pratt Green have depth as well as good phrasing. **Common Ground** (St Andrew's Press) is a useful ecumenical hymn collection.

### Prayers from across the World

By definition, environmental issues are global issues. In praying about them we are praying with people across the world.

**Harvest for the World** (Christian Aid 2006) In these prayers and readings writers around the world celebrate the goodness of creation and the miracle of growth, and also reflect on the human toil that is involved.

Janet Morley, **Bread for Tomorrow: Praying with the World's Poor** (SPCK/Christian Aid 1992)

### Pilgrimage

Simon Bailey, **Stations: Places for Pilgrims to Pray** (Cairns, 1991) is a small book with prayers to help the reader make the place they are be a part of their prayer.

David Osborne, **Pilgrimage** (Grove, 1996) explores the concept and gives practical advice on making a pilgrimage.

### Animals

Some churches have pet services. Others have rogation services when animals are blessed.

Andrew Linzey, **Animal Rites: Liturgies of Animal Care** (SCM Press, 1998) might be helpful, as might **A**

**Service of Animal Welfare** published by the RSPCA in 2004.

Almighty God, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

*Alternative Collect for the Second Sunday before Lent*  
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### The Celtic Tradition

Prayers in the **Celtic Tradition** are in numerous collections, often extracted from a Hebridean collection known as the **Carmina Gadelica**.

The writing of modern prayers in the Celtic style has been encouraged particularly by the work of David Adam and of Philip Newell, whose many collections are readily available.

### The Iona Community

Based in Glasgow but with residential centres on the island of Iona the Community has a strong strand of environmental concern and also draws on the Celtic tradition for some of its inspiration.

For prayers, readings, meditations and play scripts see particularly:

Mary Low, **Cherish the Earth: Reflections on a Living Planet** (Wild Goose Publications, 2003)

Kathy Galloway, **The Pattern of our Days: Liturgies and Resources for Worship** (Wild Goose Publications, 1996)

Ruth Burgess and Chris Polhill, **Eggs and Ashes: Practical and Liturgical resources for Lent, Holy and Holy Week** (Wild Goose Publications, 2004)

Neil Paynter and Helen Boothroyd, **Holy Ground: Liturgies and worship resources for an engaged spirituality** (Wild Goose Publications)

For hymns see particularly the following collections:

**The Iona Abbey Worship Book**

**Heaven Shall Not Wait** (Wild Goose songs vol 1): creation and incarnation

**Enemy of Apathy** (Wild Goose songs vol 2): Easter to Pentecost

**Love from Below** (Wild Goose songs vol 3): celebrating the seasons of life

**Many and Great**: songs of the world church vol 1

**Sent by the Lord**: songs of the world church vol 2

**There is one among us**: chants and responses

**Come all you people**: chants and responses

**The Courage to Say No**: songs for Lent and Easter

**Love and Anger**: songs of faith and social justice

**One is the body**: songs of unity and diversity

**I Will Not Sing Alone**: songs for the seasons of love

### **Anthologies**

In **Anthologies** it is always a matter of knowing where to look, and trying various possible themes in the index.

The following might be helpful:

Angela Ashwin, ***The Book of a Thousand Prayers***

(Harper Collins 1996)

Philip Law, ***A Time to Pray*** (Lion 1997)

Hannah Wild and Jennifer Wild, ***The Christian Meditation Collection***, (Lion, 1998) see especially part I, The Gift of Life and part 8, The Gifts of the Spirit.

### **Spirituality and Simplicity**

For further reading :

Richard Foster, ***Celebration of Discipline***, (Hodder, 1980)

Gerard W. Hughes, ***God in All Things*** (Hodder, 2003)

Melvyn Matthews, ***Delighting in God*** (Fount, 1987)

Sara Maitland, ***Awesome God: Creation, Commitment and Joy*** (SPCK, 2002)

Anthony de Mello, ***Awareness***, (Harper Collins, 1990)

Richard Rohr, ***Simplicity: The freedom of letting go*** (Crossroad, 2003)

Anne Richards, ***Sense Making Faith*** (CTBI, 2007)

### **Bible Readings - Creation Time**

David Osborne has devised a lectionary for five weeks of Creation Time, to tie in with the Common Worship Lectionary.

(link)