

**The Anglican Communion in Canada and beyond our borders celebrates the Season of Creation during the month of September, as we have done so for the last decade or so. This Sunday is the third Sunday in our observance of the Season of Creation.**

**Today, I wish to speak with you about humanity's role in the stewardship of Creation. I want to examine at our relationship with our Creator; and our relationship with all God's creatures, including all the peoples who inhabit this planet, earth.**

**Remember the great commandment Jesus spoke of when he was asked what is the greatest commandment from our God and Creator? We know the answer pretty much by heart, don't we? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, and your soul, and your strength,; and love your neighbour as yourself.**

**So, let's begin by looking at who we are as human beings.**

**Bill Hybels, an American theologian writes this, and I am quoting here. "By our human nature, we want to be prosperous, strong, successful, and influential." End of quote. (pause) Let's face it, none of us wishes to fail in life. Each of us is born with a desire to survive. No, (pause) not just to survive, but a desire to thrive and to prosper in all we do. That seems to me to be the driving force which keeps everyone moving forward and looking out for our own well-being. Each of us holds hope for the future. Hope is at the centre of our existence while we are in this life.**

**But Jesus came to the earth with other priorities.**

**Bill Hybels goes on to say this, "[Jesus] came to serve, not to be served. His ways are not our ways, yet He invites us to follow Him and**

**[to accept] His ways, [as our ways]. We all hold hope for our future in this life, but to follow Jesus means having 'life' now and for all eternity and having that 'life' abundantly." Again, end of quote.**

**There are two parts to the great commandment to which Jesus refers. The first, and most important, is to love God above all else. Loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, is our first priority. When we don't have a loving relationship with Our Creator, it is impossible for any of us to have a proper relationship with the world around us. And it doesn't seem to matter how close or wide one draws the circle of life, the circle in which we dwell, if you are in a loving relationship with God, then you should be able to be in a similar relationship with your neighbour. So, keeping the second part of the great commandment is completely dependant on our relationship with God, and in our keeping the first part of this commandment.**

**Again, Bill Hybels makes this very short statement, "Love demands positive action" – We need to have respect for others, honouring their person and their wishes, being honest in our dealings, being gracious toward one another, and being a blessing for those who are less fortunate than we are. This is what relationship looks like. But is that what we see in our world today? (pause)**

**Think about it, no one intentionally hates oneself. We believe we each have value in this world. Yet, we each see the world and all creation in terms of how the world affects us. We give little thought of how our actions might affect others around us. We fail to treat others as we would wish to be treated. We have forgotten how to be kind, to be compassionate, and to be loving toward our sisters and brothers.**

**In this same way, we have failed to be good stewards of God's gift of creation. God created all things and Genesis chapter one tells us that God saw that all this handiwork was good. And God continues to create even as we live out our lives on this planet, we call earth.**

**So this raises questions about our relationship with God and with all His gift of creation.**

- 1) What is our place in God's creation?**
- 2) How can we come to know God better through living in His gift of Creation?**
- 3) How do we use the gifts God has given each of us to the glory of Our Creator?**
- 4) How are we to be stewards of His created order?**

**So, what is our place in God's plan for creation? In Psalm 124, the psalmist tells us that God not only created us, but also that God is there as our helper. Our place in creation is God's doing, and not our own. It is God's name that is majestic throughout all the universe, not ours. The Creator's glory fills all the universe which we have been able to only glimpse to this point. Yet His glory is bigger than all we can understand. It is God who is the one true God. God is bigger than all creation, itself. He is God and there is none before our Creator.**

**The universe, as we know it, contains some 100 billion galaxies with more stars than there are grains of sand on all the shores of this planet, Earth. And this planet, we call Earth, is not a very large planet on the scale of things. There are many planets which are smaller, many more that are larger, and probably many billions more of which we know nothing about, as yet. Our Sun is a mid-range yellow star located somewhere out in our galaxy among some 300 billion stars**

**which share this one small corner of God's creation. Our place in all of God's creation is pretty insignificant, when we stop to think about it.**

**God's marvellous creation is unequalled by all the efforts of humankind. Yes, we have made some advances in science, the arts, medicine, engineering, psychology, and many other disciplines. But none, (pause) none of this, can compare with what God is doing. Our efforts are nothing without God's help.**

**Yet God has given us a special place in creation. The psalmist writes these words in Psalm 8, "God made [humans] a little lower than the heavenly beings [the angels and all the hosts of heaven], and a little lower than God, Himself". (pause) We are made in the image of our Creator, and we have been given stewardship over all creation. But that does not mean that we can do whatever we want with God's creation. Stewardship does not translate into being rulers, kings, or having dominance over God's creation. Rather, it means to 'take care of creation, to guard it, to watch over it, to protect creation against all the threats from every source, including ourselves.**

**Humanity is meant to be stewards, to be servants, to serve the needs of all God's creatures, the animals, the creatures of the air and the water, and the land and seas, themselves.**

**Bill Hybels further offers this final comment, "Creation is a powerful witness to the existence of God. Humanity [has been en] trusted with the stewardship of all [God's] creation." End of quote.**

**So why then, do we not care about our fellow human beings?**

**Why do we not share the resources of God's creation fairly, across all peoples and all nations? Why have we failed to be what God wishes us to be?**

**God has made us stewards of all creation. But we need to remember that every decision we take about how to use these gifts of creation, every time any of us pollutes the land, the water, the air, or any living thing, what we do will affect the lives of people, and affects God's creatures and this island home we call Earth.**

**Don't you agree it is time for us to return to living by that great commandment shared with us in the gospel? Today is the third Sunday in the Season of Creation celebration in our Anglican communion. The Season of Creation and our humanness are not separate, nor distinct from each other.**

**God has never told us not to be stewards of His Creation. If we love God and our neighbours as the Great Commandment suggests, it is time for all humanity to step up and find the means to right the wrongs we have visited on God's creation. Are we willing to do our part?**

**Amen.**