

The 7 Rs for sustainable living

God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’ (Genesis 1.28)

This is a tough passage for creation care. It has been argued that “Christianity, particularly Western Christianity, is to blame for our ecological woes.”

And we cannot deny that Christians have used this passage to exploit the rest of creation, rather than being faithful



stewards of it as God’s image-bearers.

For a more detailed look at this passage, see the Michael R. Stead essay referenced below.

He concludes that “we may need to repent of attitudes of cruelty to God’s creatures or indifference to God’s creation, and to repent of insatiable greed which has fueled excessive consumption to the detriment of our environment;” and then, we also need to be part of the

solution.

Individual action: Expand your “Rs” – reduce, reuse, recycle is a good start, but let’s consider 7 Rs for sustainable living, seven being the biblical number of perfection:

- **Rethink:** Think about the environmental impacts of your choices.
- **Refuse:** Be discerning about what you really need; avoid items whose environmental costs are high (and let the seller know)
- **Reduce:** Borrow or buy secondhand when possible; buy food or items with minimal to no packaging, refill containers.

• **Reuse:** Use items as long as possible or find new uses for them.

• **Repair:** Fix items instead of buying new ones; choose options less likely to break when buying.

• **Repurpose:** Give unused or unwanted items to those who need them.

• **Recycle:** Properly dispose of items so their materials can be broken down and reused.

Parish action: Determine the ecological footprint of the church or parish. The **360° carbon calculator** is a free and easy to use tool which enables churches and charities to measure their carbon footprint from different activities

including energy, travel, food, waste and water.

Resources: (links and more resources at nb.anglican.ca/GreeningUp):

- To ‘Rule Over’ and ‘Subdue’ the Creation by Michael R. Stead, Anglican Church of Australia: <https://anglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/To-Rule-and-To-Subdue-in-Genesis-1-Michael-Stead.pdf>
 - 360° carbon footprint calculator: <https://360carbon.org/>
- Cheryl Jacobs worships at Christ Church Cathedral and is trying to live greener...***