

## Study 4 – Hope

As Christians that are passionate to bring about positive change, it can sometimes be disheartening when our efforts appear to bear little fruit. In the absence of a global agreement sufficient to contain dangerous climate change many campaigners have found it easy to fall into despair. How have you felt about the prospects of our leaders working together to contain dangerous climate change?

This study aims to remind us that the Christian faith is one of hope. For Christians, despair should constantly be driven back by the promise and hope that we have in God, who is ever at work to redeem the earth and all its people

1. Spend a moment to think about what your ideal world would look like. What are the main things that stand out to you?
2. The book of Genesis begins by painting a picture of the world as God originally intended. This is a world that is filled with life and beauty. Here all of humankind's physical, emotional and spiritual needs are fully met, man and woman exist in perfect relationship with God and one another and the earth is a place of abundance and harmony, free from death and decay. To most readers it is the very image of paradise.

a) How does this compare the ideal world you described in question 1?

Unfortunately this was a paradise that was soon lost. When sin enters the universe it fractures creation and things begin to fall short of God's original plan.

*Read: Genesis 3:8-24*

- b) What effect did Adam and Eve's sin have on the ground/earth? How does this compare to the way our actions are now affecting the planet through climate change?
3. In his letter to the Romans the apostle Paul reminds us how the sin of humanity has profoundly affected all of creation, human and non-human alike. It is because of sin that all the earth has been frustrated from reaching its true purpose according to God's original design. Paul expresses this vividly when he says creation remains in 'bondage to decay'.

*Read: Romans 8:18-23*

- a. In spite of Creation's current sufferings what image does this passage from Romans paint about what is happening and will happen to the earth and its people?
4. It is in the climax to the book of Revelation that we see the most brilliant depiction of a world that has been redeemed and reconciled by God.

Read: Revelation 21:1-7 and 21:22- 2:7.

- a. In what ways is this image similar to the paradise of Eden?
  - b. How does this passage as well as the passage in Romans make you feel about what God is doing with Creation?
5. Many Christians feel that since God will redeem creation in the end, the environment is simply not something that we need to worry about. "After all", they say, "this earth is going to pass away and God is going to bring into existence a new earth and a new heaven." New Testament scholar Barbara Rossling says that thinking like this actually misunderstands how God is working to redeem the world. She says that God has already begun his redemptive work on earth and he is calling us all to partake in it with him. In her opinion, the message of Revelation is that God is at work, bringing to an end all the evil of the world, and those that would follow him should stop seeing themselves as citizens of this world and start seeing themselves as citizens of the coming kingdom of God.

Do you agree with Rossling? How might being citizens of God's kingdom affect the way you treat Creation and the people around you now?

6.

### Lessons from the Ozone problem

Sourced from "Common Wealth" by Jeffrey Sachs

*In the mid 1970s, 3 groundbreaking atmospheric scientists, Paul Crutzen, Sherwood Roland and Mario Molina put forward an argument that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were depleting stratospheric ozone and in doing so, endangering humanity. Since the ozone layer protects earth from the ultraviolet radiation of the sun, its depletion posed a grave health hazard to people as well as a danger to crops and marine phytoplankton, which are the base of the vast majority of oceanic food webs.*

*After these initial studies were undertaken by Crutzen, Roland and Molina, scientists began to debate the new and still controversial findings about CFCs. The first reaction of businesses and industries that relied heavily on CFCs was to attack the new findings. The Chairman of DuPont, the world's leading manufacturer of CFCs for refrigeration and aerosol sprays, famously described the theory as "a science fiction tale... a load of rubbish... utter nonsense." Very soon afterward, though, further scientific research confirmed the initial findings and a scientific consensus emerged. The public began to rally behind the issue, with many roused to action by a shocking 1985 satellite picture that showed a visibly gaping hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica. What followed next was the development and adaptation of a safe alternative to CFCs by a number of industry leaders; this made the prospect of abandoning the harmful chemicals more palatable to the broader industry.*

*The final stage was the adaptation of global framework for action under the guidance of the United Nations. One of the key protocols to arise from this was the Montreal Protocol. Under this protocol the world began phasing out the use of CFCs in industrialised countries, while giving poorer countries extra time to phase them out as well. When DuPont realised that it could eliminate CFCs through the use of other chemical compounds, it signalled the U.S. government to support even tighter standards.*

*In the end the world rapidly, indeed almost painlessly, headed off a major man made threat.*

What are some of the similarities that you can see between the ozone problem and the current problem of climate change? What do you see as the main factors that led to the ozone problem being fixed?

7. Jeffrey Sachs, in his book “Common Wealth” identifies four key steps that are needed in tackling global issues like the ozone problem and climate change: (1) scientific consensus; (2) public awareness; (3) the development of alternative technologies; and (4) a global framework for action. Of these four steps, the two that are most hampering efforts to tackle climate change are public awareness and a global framework for action. In what way do you see that you could help the progress of these two steps?

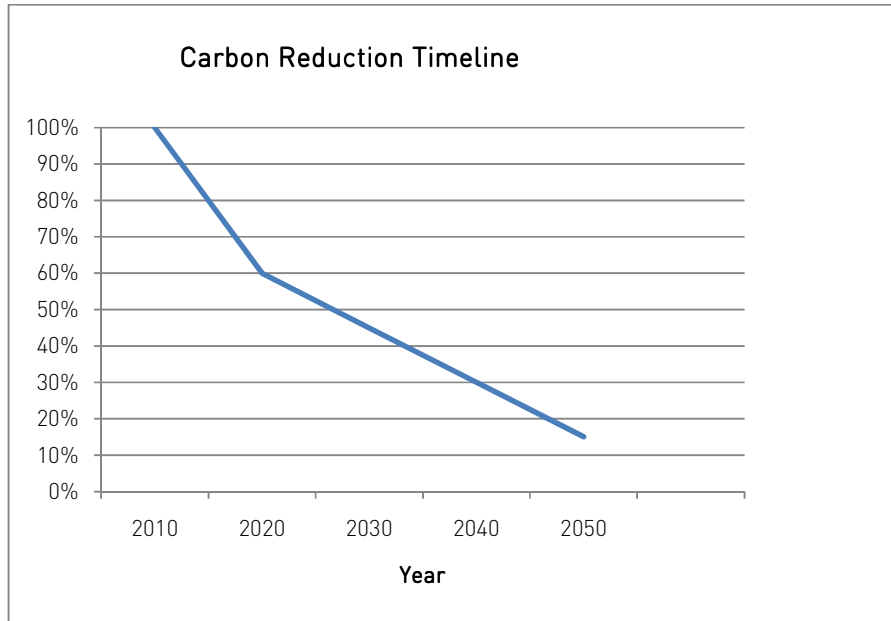
#### *Factbox*

#### *What is an ETS?*

The main climate change solution that governments around the world are proposing is called a “Cap and Trade” system. In Australia it’s also known as the “Emission Trading Scheme” (ETS) or “Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme” (CPRS). In its essence “Cap and Trade” is basically a quota on carbon.

Most scientists agree that we need to keep the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to below 450 parts per million to avoid a serious climate catastrophe. In order to do that the developed world needs to reduce the amount of carbon they use by somewhere between 80-90% on 1990 levels by 2050. So step 1 is reaching an agreement and committing to the reduction.

Step 2 involves reducing the amount of carbon we emit each year, so we can start working toward the 2050 target now. Of course the quicker we move the less greenhouse gasses we put into the atmosphere and the easier it’s going to be in the long run. This is where the “Cap and Trade” mechanisms comes in. The government sets the maximum amount of carbon that is allowed to be used each year, an amount that reduces over time. This reduction timeline might look something like the graph below (Next Page)



The government then creates and sells carbon permits, ensuring they stay under their carbon ‘cap’ for that year. Companies wishing to pollute have to buy these permits, which imposes on them an added cost. Rather than pay this cost every year, companies have an incentive to find ways to become more environmentally efficient. What’s more, if companies are particularly environmentally savvy and don’t need to use all their carbon permits they can on-sell them to other companies (that’s the ‘trade’ part). As the ‘cap’ shrinks each year, the permits will become more and more costly (because there’s less supply), so the incentives to become more environmentally efficient continue to grow. If a “Cap and Trade” system is implemented well, then we can have relative certainty that our carbon output will fall and the worst elements of climate change will be averted. In and of itself it may not be

- As a result of this study series what practical steps will you take to live a more climate friendly life and create a more climate friendly world?

### Just for Kicks

Read the following poem and then spend some time in contemplation and prayer, thanking God for all that he is doing to make the world whole again.

#### GOD'S GRANDEUR

*(Gerard Manly Hopkins)*

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
 It will flame out, like the shining from shook foil;  
 It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
 Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
 Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
 And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent:  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings.