

PRAY FOR CREATION CARE

Seven prayers from Malcolm Duncan

Malcolm Duncan focuses on seven areas to help you and your church pray for our relationship with creation and the gospel. "Pray for..." is designed to enrich your prayer life and help you engage more deeply with various topics.



1. THE GOODNESS OF CREATION

The grandeur of the Sahara or the Victoria Falls; the intricate detail of moss on a tree trunk; the complex networks of organisms in the soil sustaining the life of the planet; the delicate balance of the ecosystem in the Congo rainforest. Sheer beauty and creativity exists in every corner of creation. The whole created world that we live in celebrates how good and glorious our Creator God is.

Creator of all,

We thank you that the earth is yours, and everything in it. Help us to see the beauty of the world – from the grandeur of cascading waterfalls to the delicate intricacy of a dragonfly's wings. Help us to remember that you see everything across your creation.

From Cape Town to Cairo, you notice the sparrow that falls to the ground, you hear the cry of the orphan and you see the sorrow of the widow. In the vastness of the universe, you notice us. We pray that we too will notice the world around us and that we will be careful with your creation.

Thank you that you continue to create and you continue to invite us to take our place in the world you have made – may we do so with thankful and humble hearts. We pray that you will give us eyes to see the beauty and the possibility of the world and that your people will be a good witness to the rest of the world. May our attitudes and actions toward creation point to you.

Amen



2. TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

We take a moment to recognise the ways in which we have failed to reflect God's attitude towards the earth. The ways in which we have forgotten that we are created to be dependent on the earth and that our lives are interconnected with it. The ways in which we have used resources from Africa without thinking of our God-given responsibility to nurture and respect the whole world.

Sustaining God,

You call us to care for creation and you place us within it. Forgive us when we have pillaged the earth for our own ends and treated it like our treasure trove. We confess that too often Africa has been mined rather than honoured, ravaged rather than respected, plundered rather than loved.

Forgive our greed. Forgive our arrogance. Forgive our selfishness.

We pray that you would help us, your people, to care for the earth where you have planted us. Help us to play our part in protecting the planet and give us the courage to call for change in the way we engage with our environment.

Help your church across the continent of Africa to lead the way in renewable energy, in sustainable farming and in ethical use of the resources that the land, air and sea offer us. May we be at the forefront of environmental responsibility. Help us to see the possibilities that caring for your creation offers us and may we see the opportunity for mission and prophetic action in caring for the earth.

Amen



3. CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

For many people in Africa agriculture is a matter of subsistence, of survival. But it is also one of the largest economic activities across the continent. Conservation agriculture teaches farmers how they can care for the environment whilst increasing their crop, lock carbon into the soil and reduce soil erosion, providing both for people's immediate needs as well as safeguarding the future.

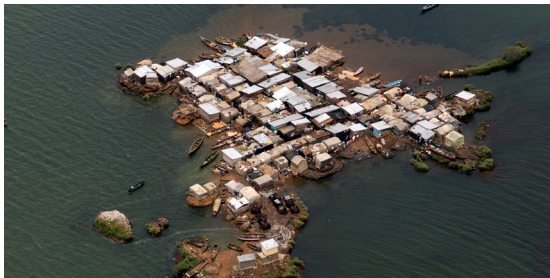
Giver of the land and all good gifts,
When you created humankind you commissioned us to tend to the land and to care for it. Thank you that through the land you provide us with so much – a bountiful sign of your generous heart.

Help your people to lead the way in ethical and sustainable agriculture. In those communities where farming is an exercise in survival, we pray for the ability to tend the land in such a way that it becomes a means of flourishing. Where families face uncertainty because of drought, poor soil or overuse of the land, bring guidance, wisdom and support so that the land may become a means by which you bring income, improvement in living standards and greater provision.

We lift to you all those who seek to help others improve their farming techniques and technology. Cause your people to be generous with their time, their talents and their tithes, that communities across Africa might be supported into sustainable farming and improved approaches of conservation in agricultural activity.

May your people understand the deep cultural and spiritual connection that many in local communities and groups feel to the land, and may they respect it. May the generations to come be blessed with good crops, wise use of seed and improved methods of farming.

Amen



4. HEARING WHEN HUNGRY

Issues of justice are close to God's heart because he values the worth and dignity of the individual. But there are also practical implications. As one of Peter Cameron Scott's original group of pioneering missionaries asked: "Tell me, what is the use of preaching the gospel to people who are gripped with the awful pain of hunger? How can they grasp it?"

God of the poor, friend of the weak

You see and hear the cries of the hungry – help your people to see and hear them too. Forgive us when we see the physical needs of people as irrelevant to their need of Christ. Help us to see that hope looks like something.

May our actions and priorities seek to serve people where they are. Help us to be your unconditional channels of compassion, support and care to those who are in need but help us not to turn the communities we seek to serve into objects of charity only. Give us the courage, and the humility, to see the beauty, the possibility and the equality of communities across Africa. Help us never to mistake

condescension for compassion.

Deliver us from arrogance and pride and help us always to stand with the poor, rather than objectifying the poor.

We pray our words and actions will demonstrate, holistically and powerfully, that the good news breaks the power of sin, shame and guilt and that the same good news enables us to serve, support and stand alongside those who are hungry. May we always see the people before us as people and never as problems or objects.

Amen



5. THANKFUL FOR THE HARVEST

God designed the earth to provide for and sustain human life. Trees that are essential to the air we breathe, bacteria working on a microscopic scale keeping us healthy, soil providing a harvest so that we can eat. In many areas of Africa people rely on the earth to survive, but we have become increasingly disconnected from how and where our food is grown, and we can forget that it is a good gift from God.

Providing God,

Thank you for the sustenance you offer us through the land. From the maize we eat, the wheat we harvest and the crops we use to the seeds we plant, the soil we plough and the sun, wind and rain that nourish the land, we acknowledge that we are utterly dependent upon you.

Without you, the land produces nothing. Without you, we have nothing to place in the land. We pray that you would help us to see that each harvest is your gift to us. We pray that we would never take them for granted.

We are sorry that in so many parts of the world, the link between your provision and the food on our tables has been broken. Forgive us for our

arrogance and help us to be thankful for your bountiful supply.

We pray that you would sustain and support those communities where harvests will be poor this year, and that you would enable those whose harvest is plentiful to share their supply. We include all people in this plea and ask that you would help us not to be greedy, or to take what we do not need.

We pray that we would learn from many across the continent of Africa, who understand their dependence on the land. We pray that we will see the land as the means by which you provide for us and that we will be thankful.

Amen



6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND POVERTY

It is most often those who have contributed least to the change in climate who are disproportionately affected by extreme weather. It exacerbates existing poverty, hunger, disease and inequality. When Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique and Zimbabwe in 2019, more than 1,000 people lost their lives, and many more their homes and livelihoods.

God of justice,

Thank you that you see the plight of the poor and you hear the voice of the silenced. We pray for climate justice. We ask that your people would hear the voices of those who are silenced and marginalised in the world. We confess that we have not done enough to stand up for those whose homes, livelihoods and futures are being ravaged by climate injustice and the crisis our planet is facing.

We hold before you our frustrations with the lack of global effort on climate change and pray that the hearts of women and men will be softened. Help the rich Global North, which has exploited the planet for so long, to take their financial and

strategic responsibilities seriously for the Global South, including the nations of Africa. May good intentions and plentiful words be matched by commitment to action, investment and support.

We pray that your people will be your hands and feet to those who have lost so much because of environmental changes and we ask for a steady nerve and determined will in addressing the issues of poverty that climate change has created.

Amen



7. CREATION AND THE GOSPEL

'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.' Mark 16:15. The good news of the gospel is good news for us, but it is also good news for creation too. We are called to communicate the gospel by the way we live in the whole of the created world. The gospel needs to touch every part of our lives – our society and environment too, as well as our hearts.

Lord of life,

The very creation groans in anticipation of the gospel. We confess that we live in a world that has been fractured by sin and we acknowledge that the impact of sin goes to the very ground we stand upon and the air we breathe.

Thank you that the cross is the answer to individual sin and that it is the answer to the fractures in the world. As the cross was plunged into the ground at Calvary, thank you that its impact reaches to the centre of the created world and out to the edge of the universe. Thank you that its power reaches back to the first moment of time and forward to the last moment of earthly existence.

We pray that you would enable us to understand more deeply the call you have placed upon us to preach the gospel to the whole creation. We thank you that you loved the whole created order so much that you sent your Son to rescue it, and to rescue us.

Help us to proclaim the hope of the gospel to women and men, girls and boys and communities across Africa, but help us to also see that the gospel sets free whole communities, regions and nations.

May we see the great power of the cross, even in creation, and may we be heralds of hope to a world caught in fear and uncertainty.

Amen

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Pray with us online

You can also continue praying with us through our regular online prayer meetings. To find out when the next meeting is and to sign up, visit: eu.aimint.org/prayfor



Malcolm Duncan leads Dundonald Elim Church. He is an author, chairs Elim's Ethics and Public Theology Task Force and is Theologian-in-Residence for Spring Harvest and Essential Christian. Malcolm is husband to Debbie and father to four adult children.

Africa Inland Mission serves and partners with churches to fulfil the Great Commission and advance the gospel among Africans who have the least opportunity to hear about Jesus.

Learn more: eu.aimint.org



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