

Title

The Anglican Communion's Fifth Mark of Mission aims to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation: In what ways are Church Communities Living a life of Biblical Stewardship: Practice and Interpretations of Christian Stewardship within Down, Dromore and Connor Diocese.

Abstract

Over recent years the Church has been seen to be taking more interest in the care for the environment. In 1967 historian Lynn White Jr, wrote his famous essay blaming Christianity as the main source of the environmental problem because the Christian world view promoted an attitude of human dominion, which he interpreted as domination, over creation. White's comments over the decades have been taken to task and analysed by many scholars on history and theology who have responded to show that dominion in Genesis 1:28 can hardly be claimed to be the ideological cause of all our ecologic woes.

Nevertheless, the debate about our environment has been theologically reinterpreted and a central theme emerged in the readings of the text, that humans were given the responsibility to protect and care for the wellbeing of God's creation through stewardship. Since then, the concept of environmental stewardship has taken a leading role in the teaching of the church as a model for human attitude and behaviour towards creation.

In May 2015, the Church of Ireland published its response to the environmental crisis in its Environmental Charter. In this dissertation I first set out to explore the emergence of the Anglican Communion's Fifth Mark of Mission, models of

stewardship from a biblical perspective and trace relationships to the Church of Ireland's Environmental Charter 2015. Secondly, I survey the steps now being taken to meet those objectives in practice through an online parish-based questionnaire and interviews with clergy who are aware of and were involved in the *Charter's* development and in the implementation of environmental projects in the Dioceses of Down, Dromore, and Connor since its publication in 2015.