

## **Views from the Pews: How do we respond to the environmental crisis?**

It cannot be coincidental that the first 8 Chapters of Genesis contain two powerful stories about humanity's relationship to the natural world.

The Fall story operates on many different levels, and could occupy a whole theological seminar, but we can deduce the following propositions from it;

1. God's creation was a deliberate and careful act.
2. Our responsibility for creation is explicit.
3. There are clear rules about our access to and use of finite resources, especially those that may have commercial value (was there only one apple?).
4. God patrols Creation, and expects compliance.
5. Non-compliance has drastic consequences. So for instance does the rainforest represent the Apple? What about fresh water, ice, and clean air?

If we are in doubt, the tale of Noah's Ark contains very blunt language, about non-compliance, its consequences, and about God's obvious irritation with humanity's bad habits. But we may be able to discern a good number of hopeful lessons;

1. God is always looking for partners to care for creation.
2. Noah used his own boatbuilding skills in compliance with heavenly specifications.
3. God kept to the bargain.
4. Noah did too, and was rewarded by his family's survival.
5. Noah had skills, but he relied chiefly on listening to God.

New Zealand is wrestling with many resource-management crises, many originating from assumptions about infinite resources, or from misunderstandings of God's request that we 'till and keep' Eden. But we have a growing band of Noah's descendants here, many working within driving distance of the Cathedral. Take Maungatautari, Hamilton Gardens, Pureora Forest, and the recently opened restoration project opposite Hamilton Zoo. It is no coincidence either that walking in these places restores spiritual wellbeing.

Make no mistake, such projects are firmly based on the oldest of Biblical ideas.

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