

The New Creation Mandate

Corinthian Vision

This is a bold statement from Paul about Christian salvation. But what about ...

1. The scale of it – he's talking anyone and everything: a whole new creation
2. The confidence – yet Paul leads a very small unknown religious movement of just a few thousand
3. The lack of evidence – the Corinthian church is fractious and not a great example of new creation

In addition, Paul also insists on saying that this *Jewish* Messiah, Christ, is the key to God's salvation plan. Seven times Paul in this passage refers to Jesus as the Messiah whom God is using to bring salvation.

These things are challenging. Paul's ministry lasts for just ten years, but 2000 years later Christianity is global. One thing explains how this tiny movement came to change the world: **Jesus' resurrection**.

National: Five Es

At this time in our nation, we need hope for a new world. I believe Jesus' resurrection is our hope.

The vaccines are helping to control the pandemic, and the combination of the lockdown being slowly lifted and the coming of Spring is giving us all new hope. Yet we face at least five major challenges:

Environmental – UN COP 26 is going to be a key focus for us in the UK: but what will we do personally?

Economic – we are seeing a growing disparity of rich and poor: 20% of us live on or below poverty line

Ethnic – there is, despite the recent HMG report, a need for greater racial equality and opportunity

Europe – our relation with the EU is overlaid by vaccine nationalism, but they are our close neighbours

Epidemiological – the UK may be moving fast with its own vaccinations but what about the wider world?

These are huge challenges. The Roman Empire faced similar ones, not least regular pandemics. It is into this world that Paul speaks when he says 'if anyone is in Christ – the Messiah – there is a new creation'.

Now, we might be put off by the scale of the vision, and be tempted to see our faith as just a personal matter. We might think that we are just a minority in a majority secular culture, and we might not think our Christian communities are good examples of what the new creation looks like, **but Jesus is risen!**

Global

The UN has a programme called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are 17 of them. They cover everything from clean water to eradicating poverty to tackling climate change. It is easy to see these goals as applying only to other nations and not to us in the UK or Europe. But the SDG's are global.

Religions change the world. Today this is recognised in development circles: we're a force for good. For Christians, the new creation is based in the resurrection of Jesus. This isn't about the world to come but about the world that is here. We pray for God's Kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth, now, as in heaven – the other part of creation that joins with us, helping us fulfil this **new creation mandate**.

There are billions of Christians across the world. We are all facing similar big crises to the ones I've outlined: the Environmental, Economic, Ethnic, European or regional relations, and the Epidemiological. We are all called to work together in the hope of the resurrection that has begun in the Risen Lord.

Call to Action

During Holy Week Jesus went from national hero on Sunday to death on a cross by Friday. We believe this was more than a personal crisis but we believe that this person Jesus, chosen by God, is not only the Messiah of the Jewish nation, but also the Saviour of the world. The new creation is here now in him.

The five Es which I've mentioned are to be met by a sixth 'E': the **New Creation Mandate of Easter**. Christians, let us take up this challenge of the New Creation Mandate. As Paul says, today is the day of salvation. Let's show that Jesus is risen from the dead by making our contribution to the new creation.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.