



## Statement of Faith | CMC

The Oxford Dictionary defines a worldview as 'a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world'. A worldview presents an overview or a big picture of life to help provide meaning to things.

All worldviews (ie., ideologies- such as Secular Humanism, Marxism, Cosmic New-Age, Postmodernism and other religions) tend to have an explanation or something to say about our Origins, Meaning, Morality, and Ultimate Destiny. Therefore, as with all worldviews, the Christian view covers a period of time that starts before the beginning of creation and continues beyond the end of world history. This means it runs from eternity to eternity; from before the world was made to the coming of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 22:1).

The Christian worldview is unique because the story of the world is also the story of Jesus. It is only possible to tell the story of the world by relating it to Jesus.

The opening words of the Bible declare that 'In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth' (Gen 1:10). Science now acknowledges that the universe had a beginning. The Bible then goes on to say that God saw that it was good, even very good (Gen 1:25,31).

Jesus was 'in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him not anything was made that was made' (John 1:3). Jesus will be present at the end of the history of the world; indeed, the end will occur when he returns "and delivers the kingdom to God the father" (1 Cor 15:24). The Apostles' Creed notes that at that time 'he shall come to judge the quick (ie., living) and the dead'.

Neither the story of the world nor the story of Jesus have reached their conclusion. Consequently, detailed factual accounts of these events are not possible. Only at that time 'when things are fully known' will it be possible to understand the final meaning of the world in its relationship to Jesus Christ. (Bible and Ecology: Richard Bauckham, 2010, p. 144)

Despite this, the Bible affirms that its worldview is about 'the relationship between God, human beings and non-human creation' (Bauckham p 145). These were relationships present in the Garden of Eden as noted in the first two chapters of the Bible.

Sometimes in the Christian tradition, the non-human creation (the natural world) has been overlooked; and at other times there has been a perspective that humans are so much a part of the natural world that our natural tendencies are almost something we have needed to be liberated from (Bauckham p 145).

Either way, it is clear that the relationships between humans and nature, and between people have suffered a breakdown from the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Once our relationship with God was severed, it had negative consequences not only for human beings but also for the non-human creation.

But God had a plan to restore all these relationships and for their negative impacts to be rectified, through the coming of Jesus.

'God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him' (John 3:17).

For human beings, this meant 'whoever believes in him may have eternal life' (John 3:16).

The relationship between humans and God is therefore able to be restored during a person's lifetime. A believer becomes a child of God and, at the resurrection, when Jesus returns '...we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is' (1 John 3:2).

There is also hope for the non-human creation which at present 'must be redeemed because, like mankind, creation has been subject to a fall' (Romans F.F. Bruce IVP 1977 p 169).

At the return of Jesus, 'the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole of creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now' (Romans 8:21-22).

The creation has 'its moment of release, when God does for the whole cosmos what he did for Jesus at Easter' (Evil and the Justice of God. N.T. Wright SPCK 2006 p 75). At Easter, the resurrection of Jesus was a bodily resurrection which was the beginning of the new creation: a new creation not just for humans but for the whole community of creation (Bauckham p 171).

With the return of Jesus and the end of world history, the Bible reaches the moment it had been pointing towards all along. This is described in the vision of the new earth and a new heaven and the holy city (the new Jerusalem) coming down out of heaven from God and the loud voice from the throne of God declaring that the dwelling place of God is with mankind and he will be with them as their God (Revelations 21:1-3).

This is the time when creation will truly be good, very good, as was foreshadowed in the first chapter of the Bible. The new creation is in some ways reminiscent of Eden with the same relationships, but goes beyond what Eden offered. God in a new creative act confirms he is going to 'make all things new' (Revelations 21:5).

The vision of God's future can help to inform and shape the present because "the present ... does not contain its full meaning within itself, but only in its relatedness to what is yet to come" (Imagination for the kingdom of God, Trevor Hart, chapter 11/1, God Will be All in All, First Fortress Press, 2001, p 49).

To imagine a world of goodness, truth, and beauty is to take a large step towards seeing, in our mind's eye, the world which God intends to bring about through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is the world towards which we are to direct our Spirit-given energies' (Wright p 74).

Seeing Eyes: The Charlotte Mason has said when discussing the children's appreciation of nature: "Eyes and No Eyes go for a walk. No Eyes comes home board. He has seen nothing, been interested in nothing, while Eyes is all agog to discuss a hundred things that interest him".

Let us all be like 'Seeing Eyes' and be in awe at the wonder and majesty not only of the creation that was in the beginning, but of the true creation which lies ahead.