

He saw it was
GOOD

AN MAF BIBLE STUDY

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK



Foreword

The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it (**Genesis 2:15**). God's command is clear, we are responsible for looking after God's creation. **Psalm 24** says, 'The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.'

The earth belongs to Him, and He loves it, sustains it, and restores it. We all have a part to play in ensuring that the land, the sea and everything in it is stewarded well. Churches and mission agencies are now recognising that caring for creation is a biblical mandate. But it is one which has been sadly neglected. Little by little, humanity has moved away from honouring our heavenly Father and everything He created for us as a loving act.

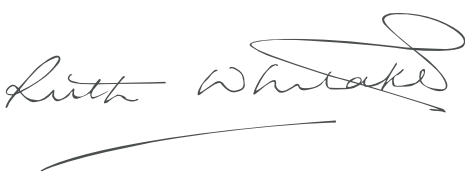
The United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development is the world's response to rectifying what humanity has forgotten. It is a framework that can help us all to consider and redress all the imbalances that have occurred. It gives us a framework for considering how, as Christians, we can start to restore the planet and its inhabitants.

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) chime with the compassionate examples of Jesus found in the Bible, and overlap with MAF's belief that every community, however remote, should have the essentials for life. MAF is committed to managing our environmental impact as part of our integral missional obligation to care for all God's creation. This means caring for the people and our planet. We strive to pursue wise stewardship and mitigate our impact on the environment as we pursue our mission of bringing help, hope and healing through aviation and technology.

Many of the people we serve are among those most affected by climate change, with many suffering from droughts and increasingly extreme weather patterns. By reducing wasteful consumption in our offices and seeking sustainable ways to minimise our carbon footprint impact on the environment, MAF operations across the globe constantly seek to care for God's creation.

The education of staff and volunteers, our partnership with those engaged in looking for new ways to make our planet a better place — along with our investment in appropriate technologies — all help towards MAF's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship.

'He saw it was good' is a Bible study tool we can use as Christians. As you journey through the six sessions, I hope that it will inspire you to pause, think and take action to start to repair, maintain and prosper life on our beautiful earth. Doing so will enable people everywhere to flourish and to enjoy the Lord's creation now, and for generations to come.



Ruth Whitaker, MAF UK Chief Executive Officer

How to use this workbook

Welcome to *He saw it was good*, an inspirational six-session, interactive MAF Bible study, introducing the topic of sustainability through the themes of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

Each session contains videos, stories, Bible readings, discussion points, prayers and a time of reflection:

Part 1: Introduction

A short video explaining the theme of the study

Part 2: Scripture

A key Bible passage to read as a group

Part 3: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 5 'Ps'

A short video explaining the SDG topics linked to the session theme

Part 4: Devotion

A reflection from an MAF staff member on the role MAF and the wider Christian community play in the sustainability agenda

Part 5: Review

A few questions for group discussion based on the devotion

Part 6: MAF story

Hear the background to an MAF story and watch it unfold

Part 7: Reflection

A few discussion questions, to challenge your group on the content so far

Part 8: Repentance

Thought-provoking questions for a time of silent personal reflection

Part 9: Prayer

Some prayer points to focus your time

Part 10: Response

Session summary and action points to take away

Part 11: Find out more

Optional additional MAF story to continue the journey

Use these handy session-by-session workbooks to guide you through the study.

These are designed to be used in conjunction with the online study content linked in the *He saw it was good* email series from MAF UK. The workbooks allow space for you to jot notes and answer the questions posed during the study.

SESSION 1

Our Global Home



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce themselves, the aims and vision of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and the topics covered in this Bible study. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to Him. For He laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths. Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their Saviour. Such people may seek You and worship in Your presence, O God of Jacob.'

Psalm 24:1-6 (NLT)

We will be returning to this verse later in the study.

The SDGs and the 5 'Ps'

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through what the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are and why they were created.

As you watch the video, fill in the boxes below showing the 17 different Sustainable Development Goals. If you don't catch them all the first time, ask your group leader to play the video again. Powerpoint slides with the answers will be displayed after the video.

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Devotion



Written by Chris Macrae

How can the Bible and our Christian faith help influence the global response to and promotion of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Agenda?

This is probably the question that most comes to mind as we begin our Bible study series looking at the whole issue of sustainable development.

A good place to start is to go right back to the beginning of creation — where it all began. In **Genesis 1**, we see that God created a perfect world for us, with everything made for our enjoyment as human beings.

Later, however, the Bible shows how we wasted it all. Now, if we fast forward to the 21st century, we see that the fate of the planet we call 'home' is at the forefront of the debate on climate change — the effects of which can be seen everywhere we look.

Genesis 1:29-30 says, 'Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground — everything that has life." And that is what happened' (NLT).

The biblical story of creation names us — that's you and me — as stewards, or caretakers, of God's creation. Our responsibility and dominion over creation shouldn't be seen as a license to exploit it.

The Bible is clear that we must protect the environment from sinful greed. It's not something that should only concern those who are passionate about the welfare of the planet. It's something in which all Christians should take an interest and be concerned about.

This is not just about concerns for environmental issues or climate change, it's about the overall sustainable development of our planet, and everyone on it. We have a unique role, given to us by God, as His helpers in promoting what is right, good and true.

It's a role that includes *all* human beings, not just Christians. As Christians, however, we have an important part to play in advancing the Sustainable Development Agenda for the good of our planet and everyone living there.

I say 'our' planet — though we know that it isn't in fact 'our' planet. **Psalms 24:1-2** says, 'The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to Him. For He laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths' (NLT).

I love this Psalm! It's a reminder that the earth is the Lord's, and we haven't stewarded it well through our actions, greed and desire for profit.

According to Kjell Nordstokke in *The Sustainable Development Goals In The Perspective Of Christian Faith And Theology*, 'The Bible largely tells stories about

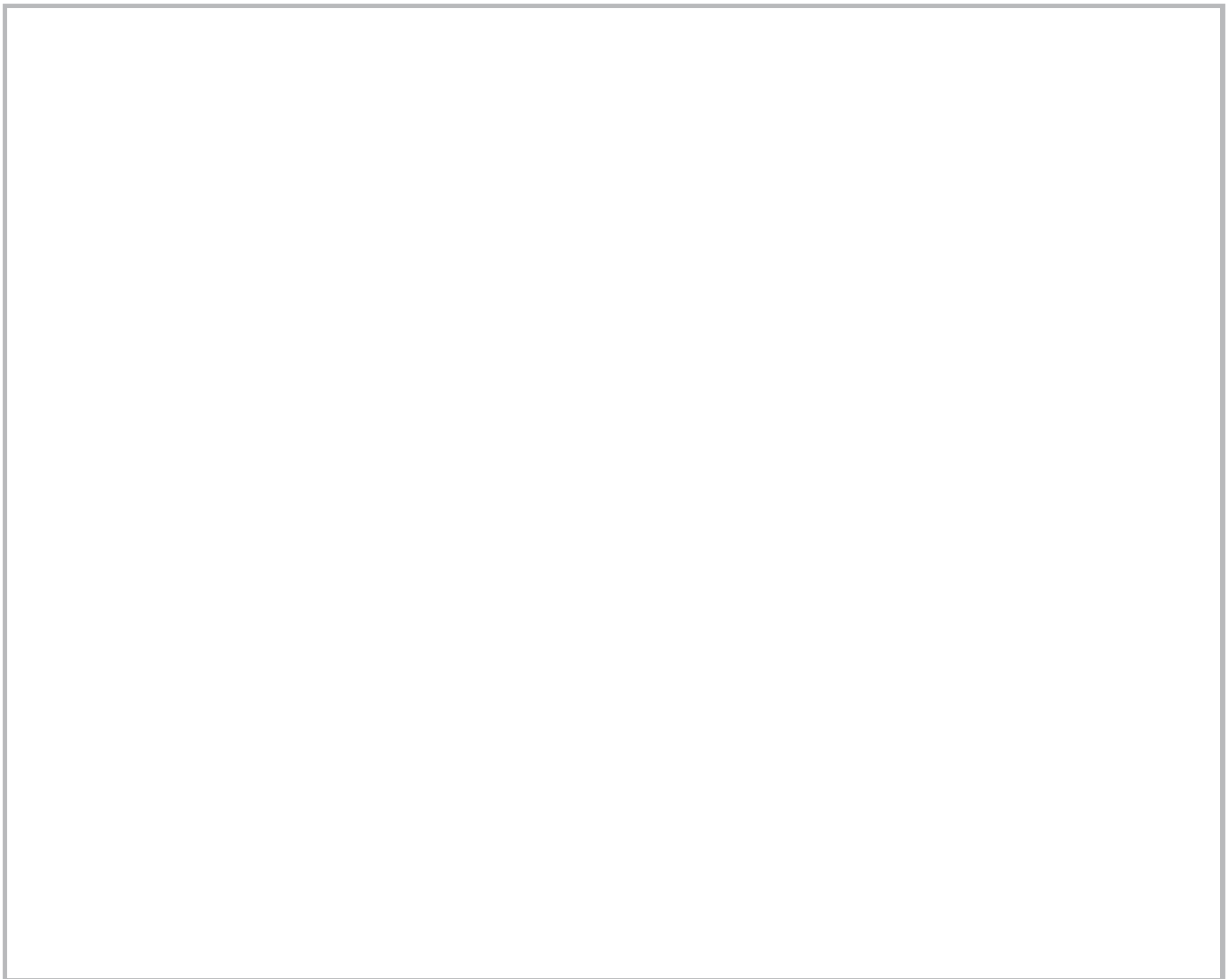
ordinary people and their everyday lives. They include experiences of drought and hunger, sufferings due to war and violence, and a constant fear of being struck by illness or misfortune.

'These experiences from daily life on the one hand reminded people of their vulnerability, but they also filled them with awe regarding creation, its greatness and generosity. They recognised that they belonged to a reality far beyond their understanding.'

In **Matthew 22:37-40**, Jesus teaches us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and — of equal importance — that we must love our neighbour as ourselves.

However, to do this and not promote the cause of the planet's sustainable development, which involves everyone living on it, seems to go against the grain of Jesus' teaching.

In this Bible study series, we want to consider these things through the lens of the United Nations' '5 Ps' — People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. We also want to challenge ourselves, as Christians, to discover how we can help advance the cause of sustainable development through our concern for God's Kingdom.



Review

Consider the phrase in **Psalm 24:1-2**, 'everything in it'. David is saying that it's not just the world that belongs to God, but also 'everything' in it. Think about our role as stewards of God's creation. What level of responsibility do we have, and how should we react to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda?

Read **Psalm 24** in its entirety. If the world and everything in it belongs to God, what does this Psalm tell us about how we should worship Him in response to this truth?

MAF Story

Your group leader will show you the next video, with your first glimpse into the work of MAF. Your presenters will introduce the video which was filmed and narrated by filmmakers Mark and Kelly Hewes.

Reflection

Think about **Psalm 24:1-2** again. What does it mean when it indicates that we are under God's ownership and control? Does this scare you or comfort you? How does this influence your daily walk with God?

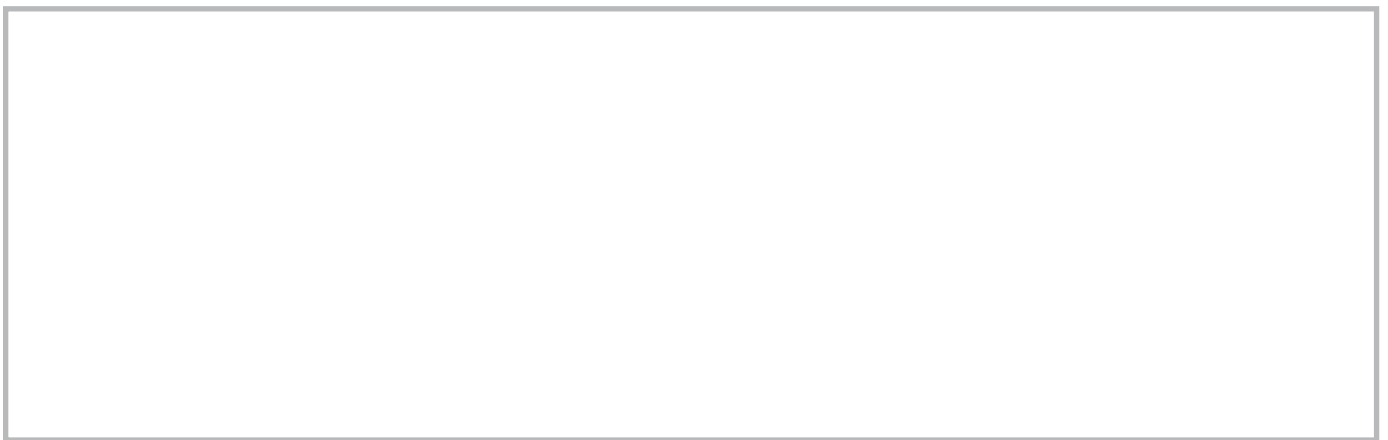
In what ways does Jesus' commands in **Matthew 22:37-40** enable us to understand our role as Christians in relation to sustainable development? Reflect on the ways that the command to love our neighbour can influence how we think about the drive to ensure a sustainable future for the planet and everything in it.

What emotions did you feel as you watched the MAF video and considered what life is like for people living in some of the remotest parts of the world? Has this altered your perception of what isolation is like?

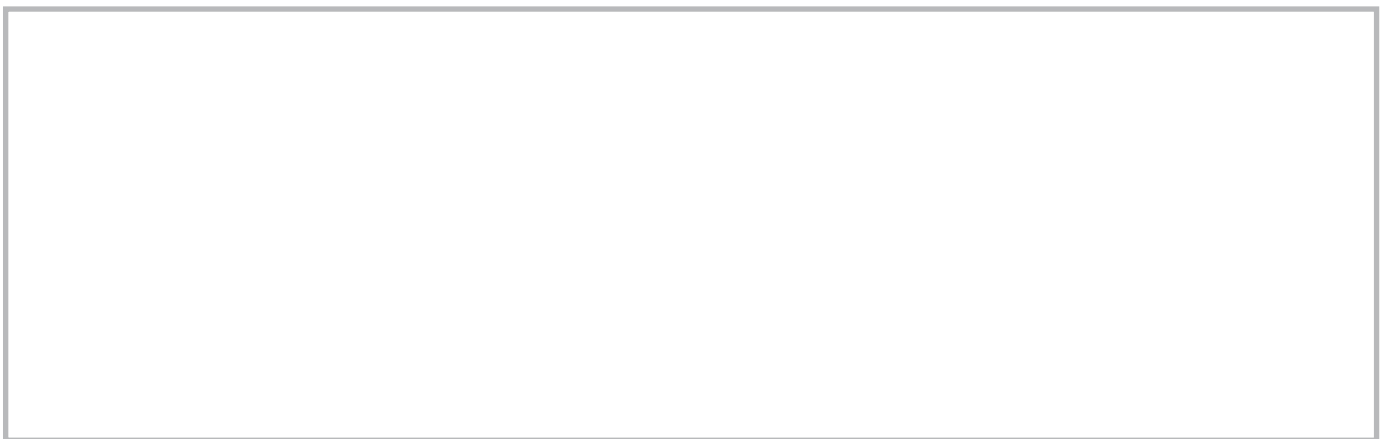
Repentance

Depending on how your leader is running your course, you can either ponder these questions during the study, or use them in a personal time of reflection on your own after the study is over.

- When thinking about **Psalm 24:1-2** and how everything on the earth belongs to God, it's good to realise that this also includes you and anything you may be worried about. It includes anything which causes you stress or anxiety. Take a moment to lift these things to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him that these concerns are not yours to keep, and that He goes before us in everything we do.



- Take time to consider what isolation means for people living in the remotest parts of the world. People who don't have access to life's essentials. Think of times in your own life where it was easy to take the connectedness that we enjoy for granted. Then, having done so, ask God to help us to be aware of the needs of those who are often most affected by issues such as climate change, but who contribute the least to its problems and causes.



Prayer

- Pray for those who live in isolation and who don't have easy access to life's essentials. Pray that, when it comes to physical or spiritual poverty, they don't get 'left behind'.
- Pray that, through MAF's life-saving flights, our planes continue to reach remote people groups with the essentials for life. Pray too that we can help advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- Pray for those in positions of influence, whether in governments or organisations working to advance sustainable development. May they continue to drive forward the change needed to achieve the goals and aims necessary to care for God's creation. Pray that God will instil in them the wisdom and awareness needed to achieve significant progress.
- Pray that the Church will embrace the challenges posed by the Sustainable Development Agenda so that a generation of Christians will emerge who can speak passionately about the need for good stewardship of God's creation.

Jot down any other areas you would like to pray for — for example, prayers for the state of the world, the work of MAF or the Sustainable Development Agenda.



After today's study, please consider becoming part of a *For the Sake of the World* prayer group. To find out more, or to set up your own group, please visit <http://forthesakeoftheworld.com>

Response

To close this first study, you will hear again from presenters Sheonagh and Matt. They will challenge you to think about what practical actions you could commit to as a take-away from this session.

Why not write down what you would like to do in the space below? For example, if you do not already, committing to pray for MAF and other organisations as they work to support the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Find out more

If you would like to hear another MAF story related to this study, please let your group leader know and you can hear it as a group, or visit www.maf-uk.org/findoutmore

MAF Discovery Air Pass

Why not continue on your journey with MAF and get your free MAF boarding pass and join us on a journey of discovery to visit places rarely featured in travel brochures, and to meet people living far from the tourist trail. Sign up for our Discovery Air Pass journey and see the world from a unique perspective.

'Fly' with MAF from country to country and find out what it's like to live, work and serve in some of the most isolated places on earth. Every couple of months, you will receive inspiration by post or email: updates from our pilots, real-life stories, fascinating facts and opportunities to support our work. Check in at www.maf-uk.org/discover-now