

*Keeping on the fairway that  
leads to eternal life*

*March 2011*

by PGA Chaplain  
Rev. Graham Lawrence

**Salvation is for the earth also.**

The last few months in Australia and New Zealand has seen some of the most devastating natural disasters in our lifetime. Lives have been lost and properties destroyed. Record floods and cyclones in Queensland followed by the earthquake in New Zealand have left both countries with enormous re-building. This is apart from the many other earthquakes and natural disasters happening around the world.



How does all this fit in with the God that we believe in? The God that we believe is all powerful and loving and could stop these things happening? While we can look at human causes like where we build and climate change, the larger question remains a challenge of how these tragedies

fit into our Christian and biblical worldview.

While there is more than one interpretation of this question I wish to offer a framework for our understanding. *(Just a note of clarification : when I use the word **earth** I mean the material earth and when I use the word **world** I include human life).*

The bible starts and ends with a creation of the world and everything in it that is good. While there are some who believe that the original earth God made was faulty, I do not hold to this view. The bible ends with the promise of a new heavens and earth where there is no more suffering pain or death and so this would include a renewal of the earth or a new earth as we know it. But where did it all go so wrong?

It's where humanity starts to get involved that the problems occur.



**Our Link with the Earth**

When we read the creation stories of Genesis Chapter 1 to 3 we discover humanities essential dependency of the earth for life. Indeed we are created from the dust of the earth. It is God who breathed life into us that made

us living creatures. Being created in God's image and likeness distinguishes us from the rest of creation. This distinction includes being given dominion to rule over the earth God placed us in.

The point is while we are distinguishable from the earth we depend on the earth to live. Put simply God gave us the earth to live in, rule over, care for and enjoy.

For the reasons mentioned above we have every responsibility to care for our planet and think about those who will follow us. This is our responsibility given to us by God in Genesis.



**The Fall – where things went wrong.**

The world and everything in it was spoilt by what we call the fall in the Genesis Chapter 3. This refers to Adam and Eve's failure to trust or obey the commands of God in the Garden that he had prepared for them to live. We know the story well.

The result of Adam and Eve's rebellion and pride was removal from the Garden, death and various punishments each for the man and women. Included in

this punishment is an unfriendly earth in terms of prosperity and pain free living?

In short the earth around them also suffered along with Adam and Eve, in line with our essential link with it. Paul makes this point in Romans Chapter 8 of the New Testament when he says: ***“The creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”***

This passage reinforces what we believe of the Old Testament that humanity shares a bond with the earth and that as one suffers; the other does also. However, just as Jesus came to rescue us from our sins and judgment so too did he include a restoration of the earth. As we long for the restoration of our life beyond the grave so too does our earth long to be set free from its bondage to decay to enjoy the reason for its existence.

I realise we don't usually talk about the earth in this, but clearly it had a purpose in being created by God.

All donations to the ministry are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to SCA Inc Links.



### **The Future of the Earth and us**

The good news we believe in is one day God will restore a people and a place where they can again enjoy the fruits of the Garden of Eden with God as our companion.

Whether it is a natural disaster, an accident or a murder or a cancer or just death from old age, they are all part of a fallen world that Jesus has come to rescue us from. The good news we proclaim through Jesus is that he has won the victory over sin and death and has promised an eternal inheritance to all those who believe. That inheritance is always pictured with a place to live.

### ***Sports Chaplaincy Australia Links***

***Rev Graham Lawrence***

30 The Broadway

Punchbowl NSW 2196.

Ph/Fax 02 9740 9069.

Mobile: 0427 40 9069

Email –

[slmlinksaus@optusnet.com.au](mailto:slmlinksaus@optusnet.com.au)

Links Website

[www.linksca.org.au](http://www.linksca.org.au)

### **God's Plan**

In the life of Jesus we already see a beginning of a restoration of the earth in the way he calms the storms that threaten life, feeds the hungry, heals our bodies and conquers the spiritual world that opposes God.

What the world seems to miss is God's commitment to the earth and his promise to restore the earth back to its original purpose along with his people.

We can speculate on the kind of life and earth this will be, but like waiting to open our presents at Christmas, we wait with expectation.

Jesus gives us this hope of a better world to come and we can trust him who loved us so much he gave his life for our salvation.

This promise of a renewed earth that Jesus came to save gives hope in a world that is unstable and dangerous.

I hope in any way I have not belittled the hurt and pain that I realise these tragedies bring. Our response to such an event is to offer our compassion and support in every way that is possible to those who suffer. God lives with us through these tragedies.

However we believe that God will one day bring all suffering to an end and establish the rule of Jesus in a place we can call home. In this new home God will live with us.