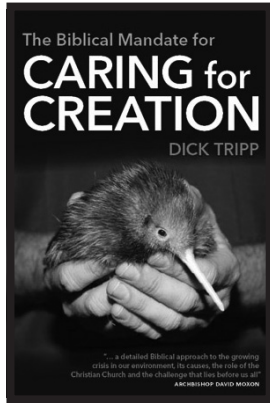


THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR CARING FOR CREATION.

DICK TRIPP.

AUCKLAND: AVERY BARTLETT BOOKS, 2011. \$25.00; 158 PP.
ISBN 978-0-473-19374-4.



The author of this book is a well-known Christchurch Anglican clergyman, and his book is part of a helpful series that spans the major questions of Christian theology. In this latest small volume Tripp tackles one of the big issues of our age, the state of the earth and human interactions with its ecosystem. The Biblical Mandate for Caring for Creation is a good book. It is an excellent overall introduction to the now vast literature on Christian ecology. Tripp first engages helpfully with the issue of whether Christians are to blame for the ecological crisis. In five helpful chapters at the beginning he sets out the reasons why there is a crisis, an overview of the causes, a brief history of the environmental movement, the charges by Lynn White Jr. and others against Christianity, and then gives an overview of the contemporary Christian ecology literature and associated movements. These are brief but informative chapters by someone who himself has read very widely. He gives succinct arguments which are peppered by many quotations from other sources. These quotations serve to heighten interest in people from Jürgen Moltmann, one of the preeminent theologians of the age, to Dave Bookless of A Rocha International.

The next section is the essence of the book. Here he helpfully summarises a Christian theology of creation, showing in a very readable and engaging way that Christians were always mandated to care for creation and to love it and live carefully within it. He covers Genesis, covenant, Israel, Christology, Church and eschatology. Along the way Tripp gives not only a mandate for being green, but a useful summary of Christian Theology as well. He is always attuned to the spiritual aspects of this struggle when he insists that a part of the Christian care of creation involves repentance, and not only programmes for ecological restoration.

The last chapter, "A Tale of Two Cities," is an example of the way in which he alludes to ancient Christian texts and draws usefully on contemporary ones to make his point. He calls his readers to choose between the values of Babylon (imperialistic, rich, full of hubris and bound for destruction) and those of the New Jerusalem.

If the topic is always in danger of being dry and preachy, Tripp never is. He includes not only theology but poetry, hymns and psalms, and he gives a sense of the grandeur and beauty and mystery of creation throughout. He deals with the science by absolutely affirming human primate origins and the repercussion of this fact for our solidarity with other life forms and our embeddedness within the natural ecosystem for which we must care.

Any exploration of this topic must touch on the problem of evil and the persistence of death and disease and extinction long before humans arrived in the last seconds of geological time. Tripp introduces the theology of the human fall, but deals only sketchily with these issues which themselves deserve a much longer treatment.

I would highly recommend this book to thoughtful Christians everywhere, or to those who want an overview of a sometimes confusing topic. It is very suitable for small groups in churches and seminaries. This little book will also serve as an excellent overview of Christian theology for those who wonder what on earth we believe.

NICOLA HOGGARD CREEGAN. Nicola is a trustee of A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand.

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