

Session 3: Creation & Fall

Introduction

“The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ reframes everything, bringing hope, life, and meaning to every part of human culture. And yet many of us can’t see how our faith shapes much of everyday life and experience.”¹

“Sunday to Sunday, the in-between days, where was Jesus?”²

“I didn’t think about the whole of who I am, what was I passionate about, or how God uniquely made me.”³

“What are God’s purposes for us? What does it mean to be made in the image of God? How do we live in the world, but not of the world?”⁴

“God wants to make us more ourselves.”⁵

“He is holding all things together, and that he is reconciling all things to himself.”⁶

We’re exploring, “How does the biblical story reframe our story?”

“We live out of our stories.”⁷

“So be located in the story, the biblical story, in which God reveals himself, his character, and his life.”⁸

¹ Mark Mayhew, Marketplace Institute, Regent College. (Mark is one of the main presenters of this Series.)

² Hugo Ciro, CEO of Level Ground Trading, Victoria, BC.

³ Christine Lee Buchholz, Consultant and Board Member, Restavek Foundation, Falls Church, Virginia.

⁴ Mark Mayhew.

⁵ Hans Boersma, Professor of Theology, Regent College.

⁶ Amy Sherman, Author, Kingdom Calling, Senior Fellow, Sagamore Institute.

⁷ Rikk Watts, Professor of New Testament, Regent College.

⁸ Sarah Williams, Professor of History, Regent College.

“We live in a world of competing stories that are culturally trying to shape our sense of who we are and how we should live. Rather than attempting to create our own identities, somehow we need to be located in the biblical narrative. How do we do this?”⁹

“The Bible is a big story that makes big claims. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end that makes sense of all of life. We’re in the middle of a story. It tells us why we’re here and where we’re going.”¹⁰

“Over the next five episodes, we’re going to be exploring the biblical drama. Like the disciples on the Emmaus road, many Christians are familiar with this story, but they still struggle with a sense of connecting who they are with what God wants from them.”¹¹

Hugo Ciro’s Story

I clearly knew that I wanted to be a business man, although, having become a Christian, interestingly, my faith made me question, ‘Is being a business man compatible with being a Christian?’

“Hugo Ciro is the CEO of Level Ground Trading, a direct fair trade company trading coffee, tea, and fruit from around the world. Originally from Columbia, he is now based in Victoria, Canada.”¹²

Growing up, I felt that I had this entrepreneurial bug in me. It was very much there. I was very drawn by my family – uncles and aunts – who were very entrepreneurial. I would say that Columbia, in a nutshell, (Columbian people) are happy people, warm, friendly, gregarious, but also very industrious.

⁹ Mark Mayhew.

¹⁰ Erin Antosh, The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, & Culture. (Erin is one of the main Presenters of this series.)

¹¹ Mark Mayhew.

¹² Mark Mayhew.

“Hugo graduated high school in Columbia and moved to the States to study business, before finally moving to Canada for work.”¹³

There was a huge conflict in those days in my life, having become a Christian at age 17 - 18, and having this passion to serve God, but also, as a result of having come from Columbia, a sensitivity for the poor – a feeling that poverty really should be eradicated, it’s not a good thing, How can I be part of that? So, all those things were, you know, I was struggling with all those things. How can I put together a life that allows me to be a good Christian, in service, using my education and my burning desire to be an entrepreneur? Huge conflict. How do you do that? How do you put all those together?

I used to go for runs, and my run would take me to the top of Mount Tolmie, which is a mountain peak here in Victoria where you can see the ocean and the city – 360°, absolutely breathtaking, beautiful. I would walk around the stones and rocks up there and pray – pray to God, ask him for wisdom, ask him to give me a purpose. What is it that God wants me to do, with who I am, with the tools I have, with how he made me to be? There’s got to be a reason why I’m here. What is it? That’s what I struggled with. Where was Jesus Sunday to Sunday – the in between days? It was difficult to truly know that he was there. I was forced to make a choice, I felt. Either a choice of living for myself, so, get a job, make some money, or serve Jesus.

“This is a choice that many of us feel we have to make. It’s as if our work, our gifts, and our passions are in conflict with our call to follow Christ. Why do we have this tension? What’s missing?”¹⁴

“We need to go back to the beginning. All stories have a beginning, and the beginning of the Bible is critical. It frames the rest of the story.”¹⁵

¹³ Mark Mayhew.

¹⁴ Mark Mayhew.

¹⁵ Erin Antosh.

“So, what does Genesis tell us about who we are and what God’s purposes are for us?”¹⁶

Genesis 1:1 – 4, 26

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

The cosmos is a creation

“So, where does our biblical narrative begin? Well, of course, with Genesis 1 and 2. It’s a story, not just about us, but about the cosmos – the heavens and the earth. It’s a story about life, the universe, and everything – the earth upon which we walk, but also the sky, in which we see the stars and the planets. And Genesis claims, first of all, that this cosmos is a creation, and not something else. In the beginning, someone created the world.”¹⁷

So, the world is not eternal, as it is in some eastern religious traditions, and also in some western thinkers like Aristotle. In Genesis, the cosmos has a beginning. And other biblical books assert that it has an end. We find ourselves, indeed, in a story, right in the middle of one. And like all stories, there is an author. God created the heavens and the earth.

¹⁶ Mark Mayhew.

¹⁷ Iain Provan, Professor of Biblical Studies, Regent College. (Iain is the main speaker for this session.)

There is order to the cosmos

Plato thought of ultimate reality in impersonal terms. So did Aristotle. So did classical Hinduism and Buddhism. But in Genesis, one personal, almighty God created the heavens and the earth at a particular point in time. And that is why there is order in the cosmos. That is why there is an order to this particular planet of ours – an order that enables life to flourish here. Planets don't need to possess this kind of order, no other planet in our solar system possesses it, and possibly no planet anywhere in our universe. But here there is order.

It wasn't always this way, says Genesis, 'once the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.'¹⁸ But then God brought order out of chaos in a creation pictured as lasting six days.

Days 1 – 3 deal with the problem of the world being without form, a particular structure and shape is imposed upon it, it becomes habitable.

Days 4 through 6 deal with the world's emptiness – planets and stars are placed in the heavens, birds and sea creatures in the air and the seas, land creatures on the earth. The Creator makes things the way they are, providing both habitation and the inhabitants that make up our world.

The world that thus emerges is not divine, says Genesis. It is made by God; it is not part of God. Elsewhere in the ancient near east, people believed that there was significant continuity between the gods and the world, enlisted essentially to worship the world as divine. The sun and the moon were worshiped as gods, for example. But in Genesis, that's not so. The Word of God goes out from God, in Genesis 1, and creation happens outside of, not inside of God. And so, the sun and the moon are not divine; they are simply lights that light up the earth.

This divesting of the world of divinity, does not lead to devaluation of the world in biblical thinking. Quite the contrary. Even though the world is not divine, it is,

¹⁸ Genesis 1:2.

nevertheless, a sacred place. Its sacredness is indicated in the way that the metaphor of the temple is used in Genesis 1 and 2.

Temple

Ancient near eastern temples were often designed to reflect the structure of the whole cosmos. They were supposed to be mirror images of the universe, and to signify a particular god's universal rule. So, there was, in the ancient world, a very close connection between creation and temple.

Light

It's interesting to note, then, that in our Genesis creation account, the Hebrew word that is used for the sun and the moon as lights in the heavens, is the Hebrew word, *me'or*, which is almost always used elsewhere in the Old Testament of the sanctuary light in Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness.

The work is finished

And when we are told that God finished his work in creation on the seventh day, the wording is very similar to Exodus chapter 40 [verse 33], where Moses, likewise, finished the work on the Tabernacle.

Water

And when we are told in Genesis of the gathering of the waters into the one place to serve a useful purpose as seas, perhaps we remember that in the precincts of the Temple in Jerusalem, there was an impressive molten sea – a large basin with water in it.¹⁹

Eastern entrance

And when we are told that the Garden in Eden had its entrance in the east side, well that's exactly where the entrance to the Temple in Jerusalem was.

¹⁹ 1 Kings 7:23 and 2 Chronicles 4:2.

God's image

And finally, what about the image of God that's placed in creation in Genesis? Doesn't that remind you of the way in which an image of the deity would have been placed in a temple in the ancient world upon its completion?

So, what are we reading about in Genesis 1 and 2? We're reading an account of the building of a cosmic temple in which God can live and be present through his image. And so, although the world is certainly not divine in this story, it is sacred like a temple."

"One of the ways in which biblical scholars have increasingly been able to understand the creation account, is that it seems to be based on the idea of building a temple – that it's a great temple that's being constructed, it fits the language of temple construction from other literature of that period. And, if you build a temple, the last thing you put in the temple is the image of the god who is to be worshiped. This was the convention in the ancient near east, and this account follows that convention."²⁰

"Christians are able to say, 'the world is good.' But we actually have a reason for thinking it's good. And that is, a good God, out of his good character produced this world. This is the biblical narrative from the very beginnings of time. The world is not haphazard, it's not accidental, it isn't the result of wars of the gods, which is what pagans often thought. The ancients thought of the world as haphazard for their mythical reasons. Moderns, who imbibe a thoroughly accidental view of the creation, view creation as haphazard in exactly the same way an ancient pagan did, but for different reasons. And a Christian can still draw on that beautiful Genesis narrative and say, 'No, we think it's good because this has been produced with intention.'"²¹

²⁰ Loren Wilkinson, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Regent College.

²¹ John Dickson, Pastor and Founder, Centre for Public Christianity.

Humanity

And that immediately gets us to the question of our own role in this story. If that is, indeed, the big story, what does that mean for our understanding of ourselves? What does it mean for the question, ‘What am I supposed to do?’

In Ancient Mesopotamia

In the ancient world, human beings, generally, were not held in high regard. They had no great value. In the midst of ancient Mesopotamia, the cosmos comes into being along with the gods and for the benefit of the gods. The cosmos is fundamentally where the gods live. To put that in a different way: the cosmos was *for* the gods. The ancient cities built in various parts of the cosmos were also *for* the gods. Within each city you would have found a temple, and guess what? The temple was *for* the gods. And within each temple, you would have found this physical representation of deity – the image of the god whose temple it was. And the ongoing presence of that image was intrinsically bound up with the fertility, the prosperity, the peace, and the justice of the city state.

So, how did you go about ensuring that fertility, prosperity, peace, and justice actually happened? Well, you had to keep the god happy. You had to satisfy his needs. And now, and only now, do human beings enter the picture in ancient Mesopotamia. Ancient Mesopotamian texts consistently tell us that human beings were created to do the work that was necessary for the continuing existence of the gods – the work with which the gods themselves had become weary.

So, what is a human being in that worldview? What are we? We are slave labour for the gods – a not very well disguised form of slavery. The human task in this story was to service the temples that lay at the centre of the cosmos, to make sure the gods remained happy. If human beings got that right, they would receive benefits in return.

In Genesis

Well, the book of Genesis does not tell that story, does not share that narrative. The God of whom the book of Genesis speaks does not have needs, just like human beings – he does not create human beings to meet his needs. His presence in his cosmos temple does not depend on the satisfaction of those needs, and the world was not created for the gods in the first place. The world was created for creatures. And those creatures do not need to feed the gods; God blesses them, says Genesis 1, with food. And none of these creatures of God was created as a slave for the gods. That includes human beings, whose position in the biblical story is a remarkably exalted position. And one of the ways in which Genesis indicates that, is precisely in moving them out of the role of being caretakers of the divine image in a temple, out of that role, and into the role of being the divine images in the temple.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

These are the images of God who dwell in God's temple. And that is why, of course, in biblical faith, human beings are not supposed to worship images. We are the images.

Now, if we don't exist as slave labour for the gods, what is our destiny?

Genesis 1:26 says this: 'Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and everything else.' Ruling the created order, is precisely what the gods of the ancient near east were believed to do through their images. It's also what the kings of the ancient near east were believed to do. But in Genesis 1 it is the destiny of all human beings to rule over the cosmos. We are all kings.

The centrality of human beings in God's story is further developed in Genesis 2 where we hear the language, not of kingly ruling, but of priestly mediation. We are placed in God's garden, says Genesis 2:15, 'to work it and to take care of it,' literally, to serve it and to keep it. This is religious language. It underlines the importance of, and the sacred nature of, our human task.

We are called to serve the earth – that is, to reverence it, to respect it. We are called to keep the earth, which is to conserve it. So, the dominion or rule that is given to us by God is evidently not a lording over the rest of creation; it is a sacrificial looking after creation. We are kings and we are priests, and we are called to imitate God in his own creativity, in his own ruling over the cosmos, in his own providential care for other creatures. That is what we are here for – just and self-sacrificial governance of the earth.

What does that involve? It involves, I think, the maintenance of three sets of relationships (you see this also in Genesis 1 and 2).

1. The maintenance of our relationship with God is the primary one, pictured in these chapters in terms of unbroken communion with God who walks in the garden and talks with his image-bearers.
2. Secondly, our right relationships with our fellow human beings – the Genesis idea of being naked and not ashamed.
3. And thirdly, the idea of the right relationship that we ought to have with the rest of creation, expressed in these chapters in the sense of kinship that there is between human beings and animals who both, after all, emerge from the ground, from the same place.

When these relationships are alright, biblical faith proposes, then all of God's creation will know *shalom* – a Hebrew word that means fullness of life, well-being, flourishing. So, our human vocation is to be kings and priests just like that, under God, bringing *shalom* to God's temple cosmos.

“We give creation a voice, we can articulate what creation is, we can express the nature of creation, we can understand it, and we can, through that understanding – through our art, through our science, through our technology, through what we make – we can take creation, and not diminish it, but appreciate it – give it a voice, lift it back up to God and, in that very gesture of lifting back up (I might suggest, for those

of you in a liturgical tradition, the action of a priest in lifting up the bread and wine of communion), taking these gifts from the earth and from human skill, and offering them up to God in thankfulness. And there's a sense in which all of human culture could be that kind of an offering – a kind of priestly offering – taking the goodness of creation, appreciating it for what it is, letting it be what it is, shaping it into something even better, even richer, and giving it back to God.”²²

“We're meant to act; we're meant to create; we're culture makers. I think the best way to understand culture is everything that human beings make in the world. So, it includes, not just the arts, not just high culture, not just low culture, but it includes food, it includes clothing, it includes buildings, it includes cities, it includes cameras and microphones and laptops... All these things are the result of human beings creatively applying their ingenuity and curiosity to some aspect of the world and making something that then endures over time and is passed on from generation to generation. But there's another side of culture-making that's just as important, and that's what I would call culture-keeping. Cultivating the world is not just about creating, it's not just about innovation, it's also about preservation. It's taking the good things that come to us from previous generations, and indeed from the natural creativity of God – the original goodness of creation – and keeping it at least as good as it already is.”²³

“I think the biblical narrative really reframes our understanding of work from a purely instrumental view of work to what I would call a high calling view of work. What I mean by a purely instrumental view of work is the notion that our work is simply a means to an end. So, either our work is simply a pay cheque so that we can buy the things that our family needs, or our work is simply a platform to tell people about Jesus and invite them to a Bible Study. Our work is, in fact, accomplishing those things, but the biblical narrative helps us to understand that work itself has an inherent purpose, not just an instrumental purpose. The work itself matters. God cares about lawyers, but he cares about law. He cares about engineers, but he cares about engineering. He cares about artists, but he cares about art. So, the work itself really matters.”²⁴

²² Loren Wilkinson.

²³ Andy Crouch, Author, *Culture Making*, Executive Editor, *Christianity Today*.

²⁴ Amy Sherman, Author, *Kingdom Calling*, Senior Fellow, Sagamore Institute.

“What is the goal of all this – all this human activity of cultivating and creating? I think the biblical word for it would be the glory of God, which we use a lot, but we don’t often define. The best definition I’ve come to is, it’s the magnificence of true being; it’s the full unfolding... – the glory of anything or any person is the full unfolding and flourishing of who they are or what that thing is. The glory of God is meant to fill the earth. It’s meant to fill every space. And the amazing thing about God, the Creator God revealed in the Bible, is that this God is just as concerned about the small and the seemingly humble, as this God is about the great and the majestic.”²⁵

“The Bible, in Genesis 1 and 2, gives us God’s original vision for life. But what about the brokenness of the world? Does sin and the Fall negate God’s purposes for all of life?”²⁶

The Fall

What’s the best way of understanding what Christians typically refer to as *the Fall*? I think the best way of understanding it is probably this: that Genesis 3 describes the diminishment of *shalom* in the midst of alienation and disfunction in creation. Genesis 3 describes the breakdown of all the good relationships I’ve just described. It tells us that human beings are no longer right with God, and consequently they are at war with each other, and consequently they are not able to function properly as kings and priests in the world, and because of all this disfunction, *shalom* diminishes.

Alienated from God

Human beings, we’re told, become alienated from God. They try to grasp equality with God by becoming autonomous, moral beings, inventing themselves.

Alienated from each other

Human beings are now also alienated from each other; they’re created to be one flesh, naked but not ashamed, but now the man and the woman in this story are at odds with each other and they hide from each other. That’s the point of the fig leaves. Having hidden from God, they hide from each other, they blame each other for their predicament, they wrestle with each other for power,

²⁵ Andy Crouch.

²⁶ Mark Mayhew.

and the trouble spreads out through Genesis 4 all the way through the remaining early chapters of Genesis as the infection, if you like, spreads outwards.

Alienated from creation

And more than that, human beings are now alienated from the non-human creation. In Genesis 9 the animals flee in terror from human beings, in Genesis 3 the ground will not cooperate with them anymore. Human work becomes hard labour which ceases only when we return to the dust from which we came.

Right relationships get broken. Things don't work as they should. Does that mean that the world is irrevocably changed? Does it mean that a good world has become bad?

We need to be careful, I think, at this point. Certainly, moral evil has entered the world and certainly evil has damaged the world, but biblical faith never gives up on the belief that the good Creator who designed this good world is still involved in blessing it. God is still involved in caring for it. And from a biblical point of view, the world remains fundamentally a good place, even though evil has worked its way in.

'The heavens declare the glory of God,' proclaims Psalm 19, and they do so now, in this world that we know about. There is still *shalom*, even though it has been diminished by evil.

It's very important to recognize that truth, given the prevalence of worldviews, including quasi-Christian worldviews, that tend toward a very negative view of the material world. But in biblical thinking, the world is not a problem to be overcome, it is not a mistake, it does not trap human beings where we were never meant to be and where we do not truly belong, the world is not a place of shadows and illusions that only dimly reflect a real world somewhere else. There are problems that arise within God's world, certainly, but the world itself is not a problem to be overcome.

And as to the problems that do need to be overcome, well, the great news is this: that God himself is working to overcome them. We are not on our own. God himself is working to redeem his world, to save it, to remove the evil that has spoiled it to some extent. God himself is working to restore and to transform all those broken relationships I just mentioned.

And so, when the biblical prophets look ahead to the end of the biblical story, and they speak about a new level of awareness of sin, a new experience of cleansing from sin, they have tremendous confidence in this God's ability to deliver on that. They look forward to a time when God, who has never abandoned this world and gone somewhere else, when that God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh – a transformation that is universal, that is radical, that goes to the very roots of who we are, and restores to us what those folks first possessed in the garden – intimate knowledge of God.

The prophets also speak, not just about the transformation of our relationship with God, but also about the transformation of human society – the restoration of community. And they speak about the transformation of creation itself. 'The wolf will lie down with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat,'²⁷ in a new world order, a new natural order, a new heavens and a new earth.

And this means, for us, when we ask the question, 'Who am I?' and 'What should I do?', it turns out there are biblically two callings – two vocations, and not just one.

1. We are called, first of all, to get right with God and to get right with each other, so that we can fulfill our creation mandate – so that we can be the kings and the priests that we were called to be and created to be.
2. And then, secondly, we are called to work along with God in the redemption of the world. And that involves a prophetic calling, of course, proclaiming the truth, drawing people back into *shalom*."

Vocation

"The Bible presents this extraordinary vision of what it means to be a human person. As Christians, we are called to recover God's original purpose for humanity and work with God as he redeems the world, but let's face it: for many of us, the experience is a divided life. On the one hand, we have our spiritual life – church, the Bible, evangelism... And then on the other, we have everything else – our work, leisure, community... The two don't seem to relate. So, why do we have this divide between our faith and the rest of life?"²⁸

²⁷ Isaiah 11:6.

²⁸ Mark Mayhew and Erin Antosh.

“One of our problems with the gospel is the wrong starting place. I think our problem often, in the evangelical world, is we just go back to the Fall. We say, ‘we sinned, we fell, and we needed redemption...’ What we miss in that is creation, which was God’s ultimate intent.”²⁹

“One of the most important things for a contemporary Christian to realize is that because ‘the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’, is true, everywhere we step is sacred.”³⁰

“There is no basis, in any of the New Testament, in any Scripture, for saying that there are some callings in the world that are higher than others. Everybody is called to do the work of the Lord. That doesn’t mean being preachers or ministers or Bible teachers. It means changing diapers, tending gardens, doing business. There are bad ways to tend gardens, there are bad ways to change diapers, there are bad ways to do business, but, potentially, all of those are the work of the Lord.”³¹

“I think what happens is, once we push back that sacred secular divide, it opens up the opportunity for asking a really practical question, which is, ‘How does my work relate to God’s work in the world?’ So, we begin to excavate the Scriptures and we find out, well, God is active in providing for all the needs of his creatures and the needs of his creation. So, we recognize, Wow! The work I’m doing as a truck driver, as a farmer, as a pharmacist, as a scientist..., it’s about participating with God in providing the things that all of us need. And then, the Bible also tells us that God is actively working in the world to renew all things. Well, if I work for a waste management factory, and I’m basically taking trash, and I’m figuring out how to recycle it into a usable good, I’m participating in that renewal. If I’m an artist and I’m taking the raw materials of creation and I’m redesigning them and fashioning them into something for human flourishing, I’m participating in that. And so, once we realize God really does care about our work, that’s part of the ‘all things’ of his lordship, then we can begin to think very specifically about our particular callings, and how they relate to these ways that God is at work in the world.”³²

²⁹ Rod Wilson, Professor of Counseling & Psychology, President, Regent College.

³⁰ John Dickson.

³¹ Loren Wilkinson.

³² Amy Sherman.

Hugo Ciro's Story

“Back in 1990, Hugo Ciro couldn't see how his faith related to his gifting with business, his heart for the poor, and his passionate Columbian heritage. During this time, Hugo went to a seminar for Christian business people, and suddenly realized that God created him with all sorts of gifts and talents, and all of this was part of God's purposes.”³³

To me it was huge lightbulbs going on, and it was a seminal moment, it was... the fact that now I could use my gifts to serve Jesus. Number crunching, spreadsheets to serve Jesus? Absolutely. My vision of the Christian life became bigger.

“Hugo started up *Level Ground* with his two partners. *Level Ground* incorporated his vision for integrating business, social justice, and his Columbian roots.”³⁴

At *Level Ground Trading*, we import coffee directly from coffee farmers, bring the green beans here in a shipping container across the sea, in our plant we roast the coffee, we package it, and we ship it to customers across Canada and the US. The mission is to trade fairly and directly with small scale farmers, producers, in developing countries. The vision is, by doing trade, we hope to alleviate poverty.

“We're about trading fairly, doing it directly, working with marginalized producers. Lots of our staff aren't Christians. We've got people with many different faith and belief spectrums on staff, and I think it makes us a richer culture as a company, but those of us who started the company are fairly overt in our faith and our desire to follow Christ in our day-to-day.”³⁵

And so, what that means is that the stakeholder that we add value to are everyone in the supply chain, everyone in our sphere of influence. That means that it starts from the farmers who get paid the best possible price we can pay for their commodity – coffee, dried fruit... The trading partners who have to get that coffee out of Africa and shipped to us, we don't shaft them. They need to be paid fairly for what they do, because it's valuable to us. Our employees: we really care for our people, and we pay them well and we treat them well and we do other things to make sure their quality of life is good. The other thing that *Level Ground* does that's amazing is this environmental stewardship that goes way beyond recycling. We have no dumpster

³³ Mark Mayhew.

³⁴ Mark Mayhew.

³⁵ Stacey Allan Towes, Co-founder of Level Ground Trading, Victoria, BC.

at *Level Gound*. We don't even have garbage that goes to the dump. And then, of course, there's customers. They need to feel that they have value – they have to have value – otherwise our business doesn't exist. I feel that the whole of my life – my relationship with friends, family, church, work, workmates – it's all one. There is no compartmentalization in my life anymore, like there once was. It brings tremendous freedom and joy.

Conclusion

“Genesis tells us that God created a good world, in which he created humanity in his image to be kings and priests, to be culture makers, and care for creation. For me, this is one of the most exciting things about the Bible. The world is not an accident. It may be fallen, but that's why God is working to redeem it. Being a Christian is about recovering God's sense of identity and purpose for us, and working with God as he restores creation. So, whoever we are, and whatever we're doing, God invites us to be restored as his image-bearers, sharing his life, creativity, and peace in a broken world.”³⁶

³⁶ Mark Mayhew and Erin Antosh.