

He saw it was
GOOD

AN MAF BIBLE STUDY

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK



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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.

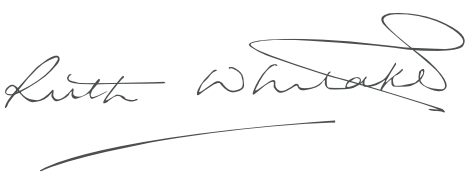
The United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development is the world's response to rectifying what humanity has forgotten. It is a framework that can help us all to consider and redress all the imbalances that have occurred. It gives us a framework for considering how, as Christians, we can start to restore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

Your group leader will guide you through the study.

Designed to be used in conjunction with the *He saw it was good* PowerPoint presentations and *Leader's Guide*, throughout this *Participant's Workbook* we have allowed 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

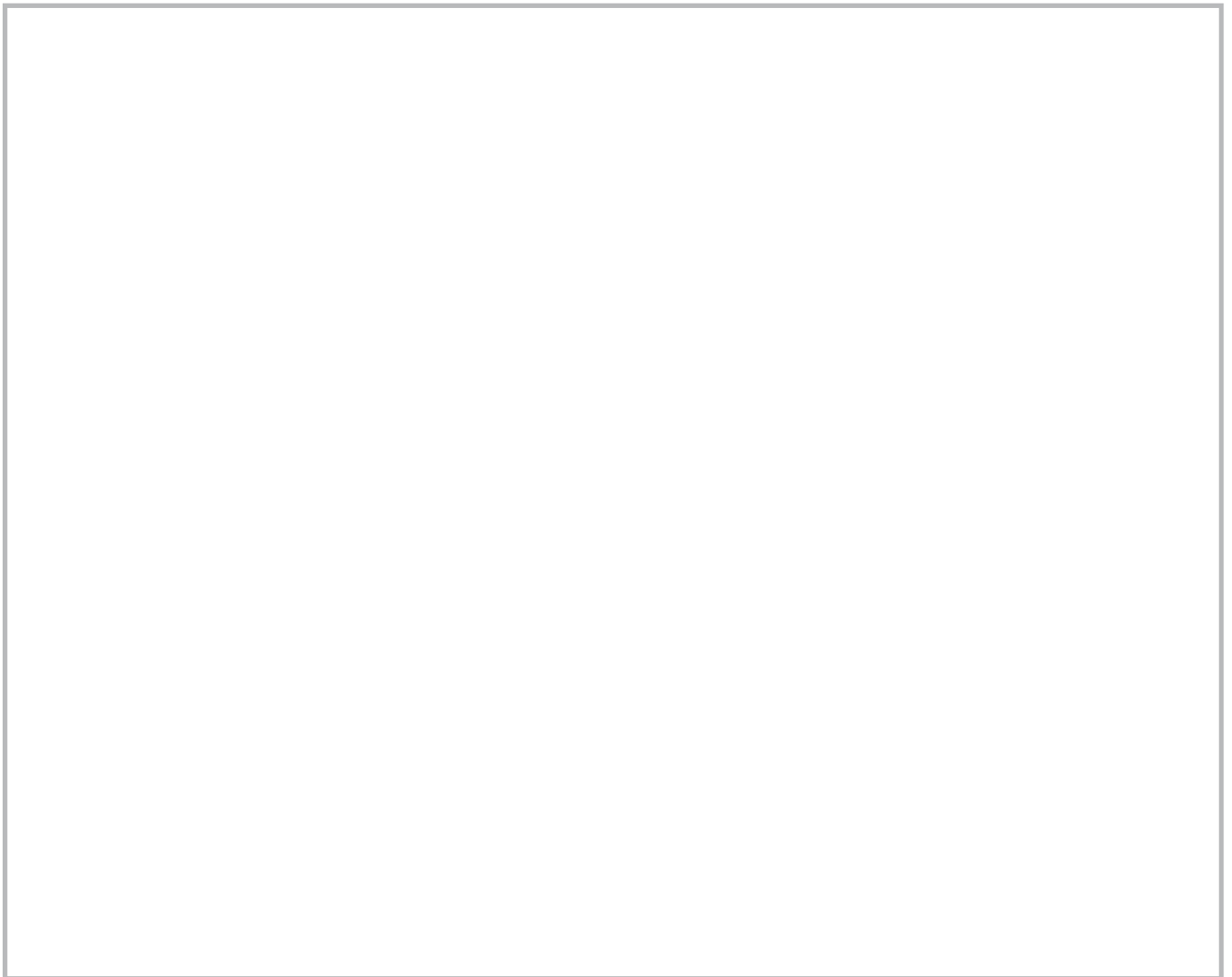
ordinary people and their everyday lives. They include experiences of drought and hunger, sufferings due to war and violence, and a constant fear of being struck by illness or misfortune.

'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?

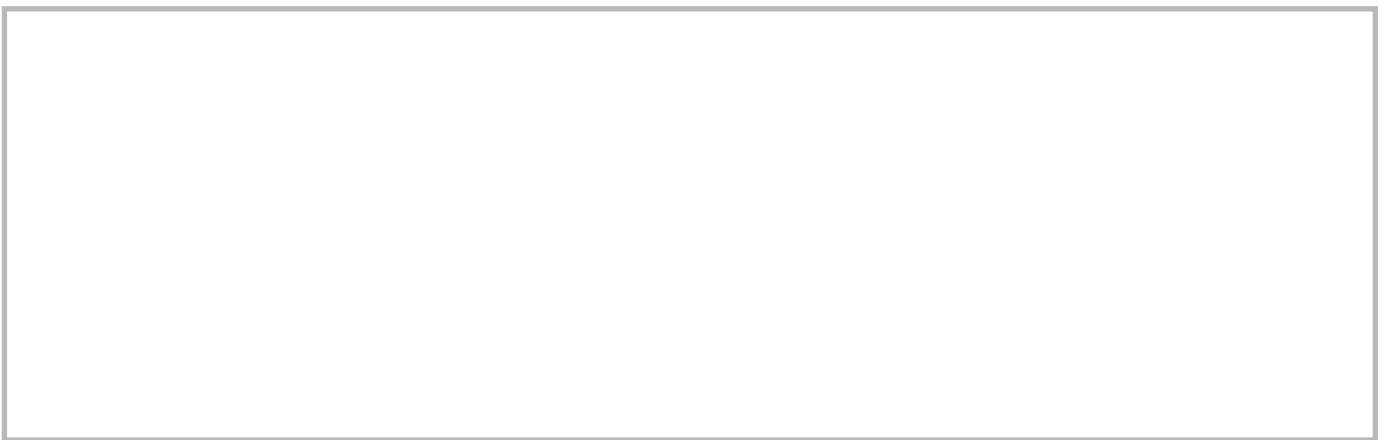
In what ways does Jesus' commands in **Matthew 22:37-40** enable us to understand our role as Christians in relation to sustainable development? Reflect on the ways that the command to love our neighbour can influence how we think about the drive to ensure a sustainable future for the planet and everything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

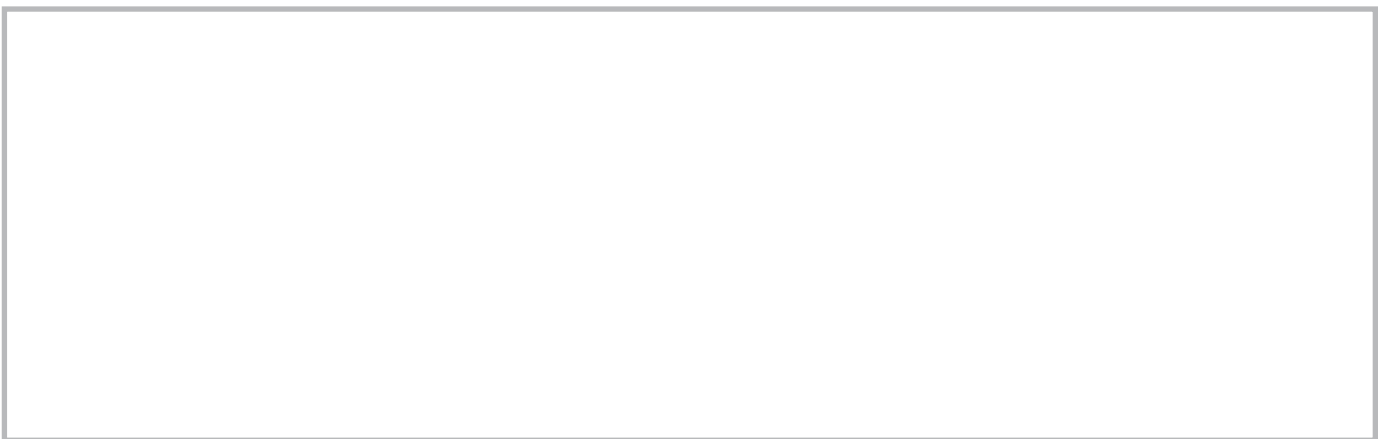
Repentance

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

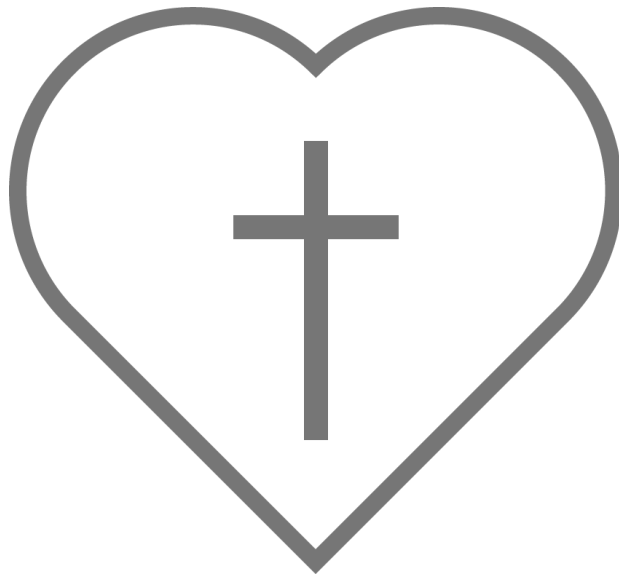
MAF Discovery Air Pass

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

SESSION 2

Loving God's Way



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of 'People' and how MAF's Disaster Response team provides support for people in a tangible way. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

Luke 12:32-34 (ESV)

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

The SDGs and People

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping 'People' — our first 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.

Devotion

Written by Heather Malloch



A connection is a relationship between two things, people or groups. It's a union. Today, thanks to technological advances and modern media, we are more connected than ever before. Despite this, social isolation, loneliness and suicide have sadly peaked over recent times.

Few of us need to be told that we are less socially engaged than in previous times. Paradoxically, although people are connecting more, they relate to each other less. Cultivating authentic relationships and connections comes from accepting, valuing and respecting each other.

Brené Brown, an American lecturer, author and research professor, writes, 'We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honour the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection.'

The writer and poet Elizabeth Bibesco, daughter of British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, wrote, 'Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.'

Showing kindness, listening to others when they are in need and helping them *with* that need, all aid in building healthy and intimate connections.

Authentic relationships lay at the heart of Jesus' ministry, with the New Testament providing many examples. Zacchaeus the tax collector (**Luke 19:1-10**) and the woman at the well (**John 4:7-30**) are just two instances of Jesus' non-judgemental love for us.

Sometimes, people's needs were physical, like the time Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead (**Luke 7:11-15**). At other times, they were spiritual. **Matthew 9:35-36** says, 'When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd' (ESV).

All, however, show how Jesus formed connections with people from different walks of life – showing empathy, kindness and a deep love for them. Jesus loves sinners and never turns anyone away!

The Bible has much to say about our responsibility to connect and love others. It's so important that only God's first commandment, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind' (**Matthew 22:37**), overshadows the value God places on those He loves, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (**Matthew 22:39**).

Through us, the Lord takes care of those who have little. We *have* to look after the poor and needy. **Deuteronomy 15:11** tells us, 'For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land"' (ESV).

When it comes to those who are undervalued and marginalised in our society, God's Word instructs us to speak up for those that can't. 'Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy' (**Proverbs 31:8-9**, ESV).

The Bible is clear about what we are required to do. 'You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and ignore them. You shall help him to lift them up again' (**Deuteronomy 22:4**, ESV).

Corrie ten Boom once wrote, 'The amount of God's love is unlimited, but we only receive as much as we use.' Because it's unlimited, God's love can *never* run out. His love is always there for us, and there is immeasurably more than we will ever need. Because the various media channels enable us to witness human suffering on a daily basis, feelings of being overwhelmed and having compassion fatigue can creep in. This often results in an impasse, as we cease to take any action whatsoever.

At times like these, pray to the One whose love and compassion *never* run dry. He will restore and refill us anew and allow us to invest our time in others so we can continue to love, care and cherish them. Mother Teresa famously said, 'Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.'

One very tangible way that MAF reaches out to those who are poor, vulnerable, destitute or in need is through our Disaster Response Team. You'll see and hear more about this later in this study.

Review

What is **Luke 12:33** talking about when it refers to 'a treasure in heaven that will never fail'?

Luke 12:34 tells us, 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' What difference could godly treasures make in the world today?

Compassion fatigue is common. How do you think the words of Corrie ten Boom, 'If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God, you'll be at rest,' can help you overcome this?

MAF Story

Your group leader will show you the next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheonagh, which sums up the work of the MAF Disaster Response team.

Reflection

When you think about poverty and injustice in the world today, what emotions do they conjure up within you?

Think about how you reacted when you saw someone that you considered poor, desperate or in need. Maybe it was on television or in your own town. What did you think and what did you do? What prejudices do you think you hold, and about whom? Now, shut your eyes and imagine you are in the same situation. What could you do differently this time?

'We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honour the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection' (Brené Brown). What part of your relationships do you hide from others? And what aspects do you hold back from God? What do you think would happen if you lowered your guard a little? Take your fears and insecurities and hand them over to your heavenly Father.

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.

- “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (1 John 3:17, ESV). Take time to repent of the times when you have ‘turned a blind eye’ to poverty. Ask the Holy Spirit to let you see people the way Jesus sees them.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin grey border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for a person to write their reflections or answers to the questions provided above.

Prayer

- Take a few minutes to remember those who have been caught up in natural disasters and conflict around the world. Pray for their physical, psychological and spiritual restoration. Pray for help and support to come through aid organisations like MAF, praying that MAF and its many humanitarian partners will help provide healing and be a light in the people's darkness.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to be more real, more authentic in your relationships with others and with your heavenly Father. Write down any thoughts you have so you can reflect on them in the days and weeks to come. Pray for opportunities to demonstrate this.
- Consider the world as it is today and how we can connect with each other. What can we do as Christians to reach out to those who need physical, emotional or spiritual healing? How can we best show them the love of Jesus?

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 second 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.

What one action can you pledge to do in the next week to help change the lives of those who needs are greatest? Write this down and keep it with you to remind you of your pledge. Tell one of your friends or someone in your church so they can help keep you accountable.

Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

If you would like to continue your journey in this session of the Bible Study and find out more, please visit www.maf-uk.org/findoutmore and we'll introduce you to some more stories from where MAF serves around the world.

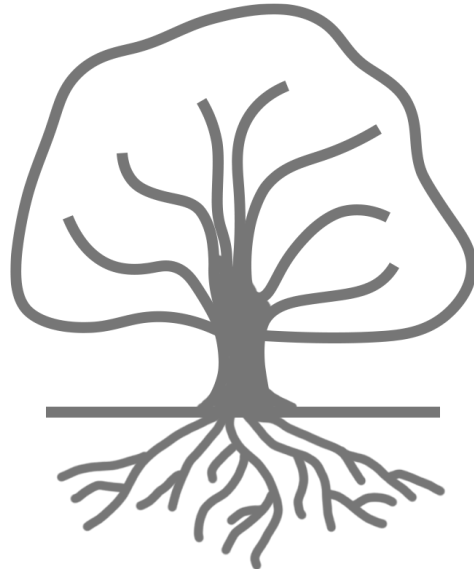
MAF Discovery Air Pass

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'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

SESSION 3

Thriving In God's World



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of 'Planet' and how MAF Technologies PNG is taking steps to ensure sustainable power for remote villages. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of Your hands; You put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!'

Psalm 8:3-9 (NIV)

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

The SDGs and Planet

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping the 'Planet' — our next 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.



Devotion

Written by Adam Pope

We read in the Bible's account of creation that God set man above all the creatures of the earth. On day six, God made humans in His image and gave them authority to 'Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground' (**Genesis 1:28**). That's a huge responsibility!

Over the centuries, many have used this command to legitimise the control and suppression of the planet. Many have sought to dominate and use God's creation for their own ends.

In the process of social 'progress' and economic growth, we have over-consumed the resources placed in our hands, industrialised the farming of livestock for food, destroyed habitats, and poisoned the environment we all share.

The terms 'rule' and 'subdue' have been translated as 'dominate' and 'conquer'. Today, we live with the consequences of this behaviour.

So, what should our attitude be to the role God has given us regarding His creation? If we want to know God's perspective on what it means to rule, what better place to start than the kings He chose to rule His people? His directions to them should provide an insight into our own responsibilities.

Let's take King Solomon as an example. In **Psalm 72:8-11**, the Psalmist says, 'May he rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust.

'May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him.'

He is clearly the boss!

Why are the kings bowing down to him? Where does his authority come from? Is it hard discipline, strict control and might? No. In **Psalm 72:12-14** we read, 'For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.'

Here is a ruler whose authority comes from his care and compassion, and who seeks to nourish and tend. It is this that gives him the authority to rule.

God calls us to 'act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God' (**Micah 6:8**). But I wonder if this is really humankind's attitude to God's creation?

Look at Jesus. He declared that, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me' (**Matthew 28:18**). Did He use that to bring about His Kingdom by force? Did He seek to use others and control people to push His agenda?

No. He tended His flock, healed and fed them, taught and encouraged them. His rule was gentle, kind and compassionate.

As our planet groans under the weight of our excess, we are being challenged to rethink our shared life on the planet. Studies have revealed the interconnectedness of all living things, from fungi to trees, mammals to insects, reefs to humans. We need one another.

We have been given the gift of ruling over all living things, but in a way that protects, cares and nourishes *all* forms of life. By doing so, it enables us to thrive.

But if we destroy other parts of God's creation, then not only are we neglecting His provision and handiwork, but we're also damaging ourselves in the process.

I found this biblical paraphrase helpful for understanding our God-given role to tend to the needs of creation. It was written by Christopher Brown:

'Rule with care and fairness over the natural world, over the myriads of My beautiful creatures — from tropical fish to soaring eagles to dogs and cats — every creature that is a part of this living world.'

Review

When you hear God's command to rule over creation, how does that make you feel?

Consider **Matthew 28:18** and Jesus' statement that all authority has been given to Him. From what you know about Jesus' character, in what ways does the example of how Jesus exercised *His* authority differ from those who are in positions of authority in the world today?

Is there anything you can learn from this which will impact your role as ruler over the part of God's creation in which He has placed you?

MAF Story

Your group leader will show you the next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheongh, which will show you a recent solar installation from MAF Technologies PNG.

Reflection

Think of people you've known who have had authority over you. This could be at work, in church, at school or in your family. How did they express that authority? What positive influences did that expression of authority have on you? What negative influences did these expressions of authority have on you?

Consider the statistics below which relate to sustainable consumption. When we read these figures about 'waste', what do they tell us about how our lifestyles, demands and 'needs' regarding food and consumables aren't necessarily aligned in ways that promote sustainability? What can we learn from this?

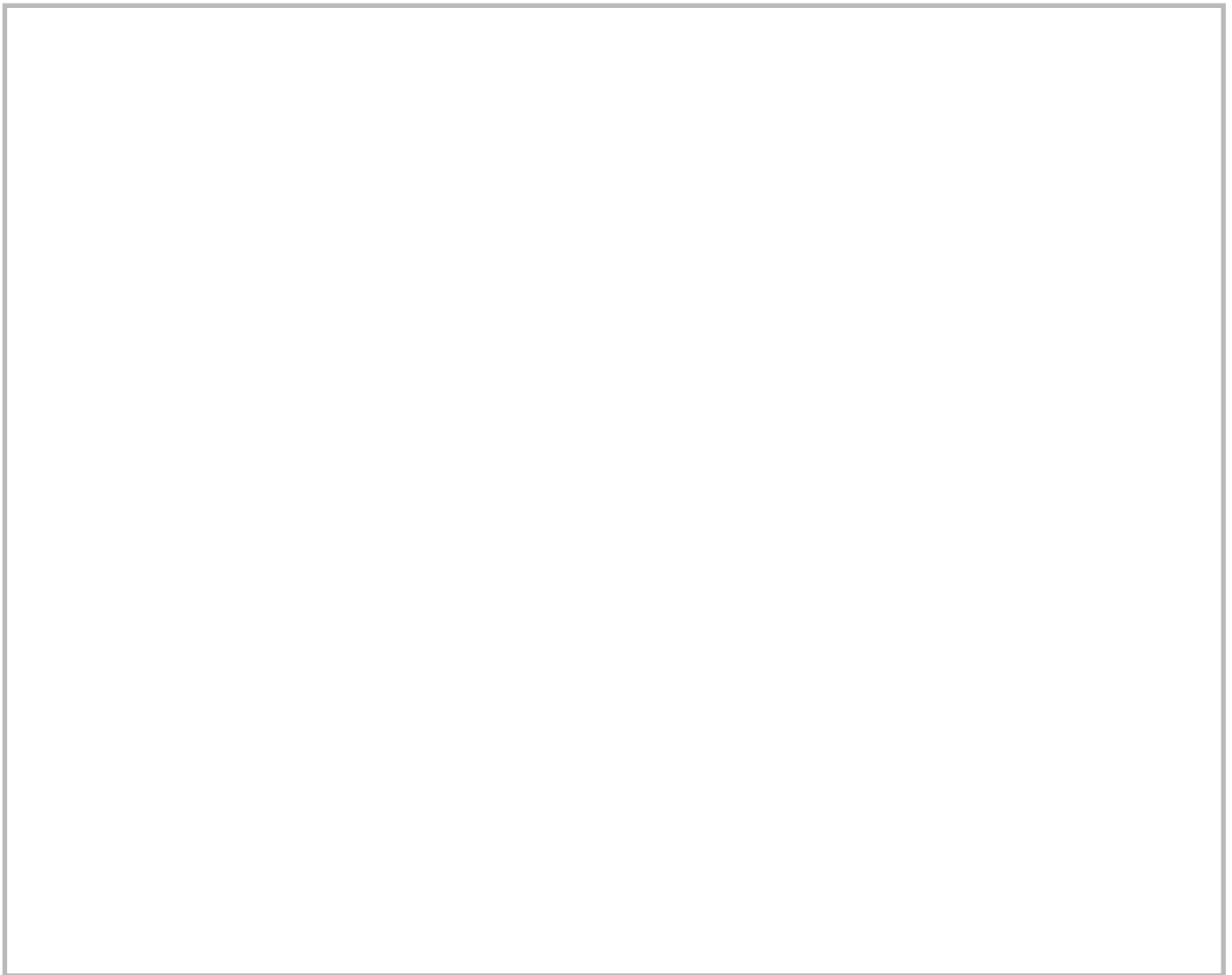
- » Between the year 2000 and 2017, the global material footprint per capita rose by almost 40% – from 8.8 metric tons to 12.2 metric tons.
- » As of 2016, almost 14% of food produced globally was lost before reaching the retail sector.
- » In 2019, the amount of electronic waste (e-waste) generated was 7.3kg per capita, of which less than 20% was said to be managed in an environmentally sustainable manner. The annual rate of growth in e-waste recycling over the past decade was 0.05kg per capita, which will need to increase more than tenfold if all e-waste is to be recycled by 2030.

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.

Re-read **Psalm 8:3-9** (Scripture section of this workbook)

- Are there times when you haven't lived up to the responsibility God has given you to be a steward of His creation? We all are guilty in some part of mistreating the planet, whether knowingly or unintentionally, through the way in which society expects us to consume goods and materials.
- Take time to reflect on this, then spend time with God in prayer, asking Him to make you aware of your behaviour and actions. Then consider some different choices you could make.



Prayer

- Pray that God will grant us the grace to grow deeper in our respect and care for His creation. Pray too that we will take more time to reflect on our responsibility as stewards of planet earth.
- Pray for an end to the unsustainable use of the planet's resources. May the fruits of creation be shared equally among all people, wherever they live, and no matter how isolated or remote they may be.
- Pray for the leaders and decision makers in governments around the world. May they uphold the commitments made in the 2015 Paris Agreement and the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact regarding climate action.
- Pray that, through the continued smart use of technology, MAF Technologies PNG will continue to find sustainable solutions for the energy needs of those we serve in Papua New Guinea. Pray too that, through MAF's flights around the world, we will continue to enable other organisations to deliver their own vital work in helping to promote sustainable production and consumption, along with effective climate action.

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 third 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.

- Think about your impact on God's creation. What you eat or wear, how you travel or where you purchase goods. What changes can you make to better protect and care for the planet and the creatures inhabiting it?
- How can you share with other Christians our calling to be 'creation caretakers'?

Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

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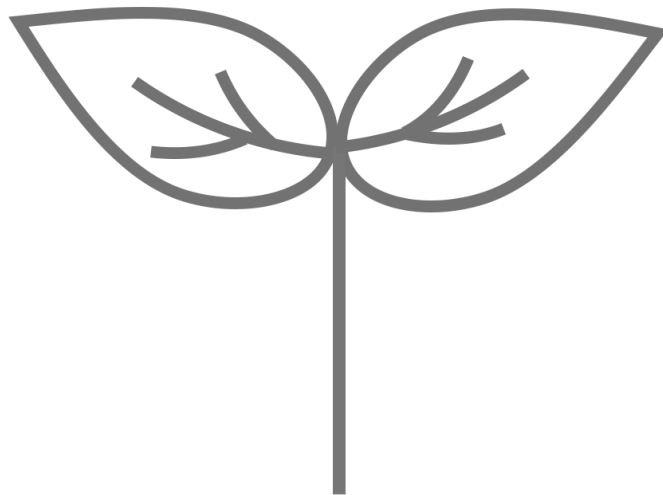
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SESSION 4

From Seeds To Saplings



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of Prosperity and how MAF Uganda flights enable organisations to rebuild the lives of those affected by displacement in South Sudan due to conflict. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.'

3 John 1:2-4 (NKJV)

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

The SDGs and Prosperity

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping 'Prosperity' — our next 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.



Devotion

Written by Simon Dunsmore

Prosperity, like love, is a relative term. Its meaning shifts across contexts. Here in our western, materialistic and predominantly secular culture we tend to associate prosperity with financial success and a lavish lifestyle.

However, for the majority world, economic insecurity and limited access to the fundamental necessities of life often result in lives lived out in desperate poverty. For these nations, the definition of prosperity can take on a new and entirely different meaning.

In this context, prosperity can simply mean surviving.

In 1954, American psychologist Abraham Maslow published his theory of the hierarchy of needs. His famous pyramid prioritises the elements that people require to thrive or prosper.

With the base of the pyramid describing basic physiological needs such as food, water and sleep, Maslow theorised that before anyone can progress to the higher steps of safety, love, esteem and — ultimately — self-realisation, the conditions of the level below must first be met.

There's no doubt that, regardless of our culture, social status or economic situation, there are physical elements that human beings need to survive — with sustenance and shelter ranking high on the list. However, from a biblical standpoint, Maslow's theory could be seen as sadly lacking.

Jesus, quoting from **Deuteronomy 8:3**, says, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God' (**Matthew 4:4**). His words introduce an aspect that Maslow never considered.

As believers, it's unlikely that we would disagree about the importance of spiritual sustenance, but how does this help the African farmer whose crops have failed and who is unable to feed his family, or the refugee who's been driven from the security of her home due to conflict?

Surely, no matter how eloquently the Gospel message is delivered, the immediate concern for physical succour would appear to outweigh those of someone's eternal soul.

So how should the missionary labouring overseas — or those at home providing support — present a God of love and compassion?

It is noteworthy that Jesus didn't say that man doesn't need bread to live, He simply stated that people have other needs that also require sustenance.

Regardless of our physical condition, geographical location or financial status, to truly prosper, people also need psychological and spiritual nourishment.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 shows that man is a tripartite being. We are more than flesh and blood. In fact, the Scriptures order our spirit and soul over that of our body or physical being. This is where Maslow's secular theory begins to fail, having predominantly focused on the physical needs of human beings.

As Christians, however, we may be equally guilty in our approach. In our passion to see God's Word preached to those who haven't heard its life-transforming message, we can sometimes neglect the equally important element of practical support.

It is one thing for the seed of the Gospel to be sown. However, for it to grow and bear fruit, the whole person must be nourished, fed and cared for. If we are to truly see our neighbour prosper and thrive, mission must be holistic.

Holistic or 'integral' mission is a term indicating that, when it comes to Christian mission, God is concerned with the whole person, and the whole community. His care encompasses body, soul *and* spirit.

If Christians are to reveal God's heart for the nations, then we cannot just concentrate on one aspect.

Review

What does it mean to prosper?

How might the interpretation of prosperity differ within a developing world context?

What should mission look like within the context of prosperity?

What is the difference between a prosperous and a fulfilling life?

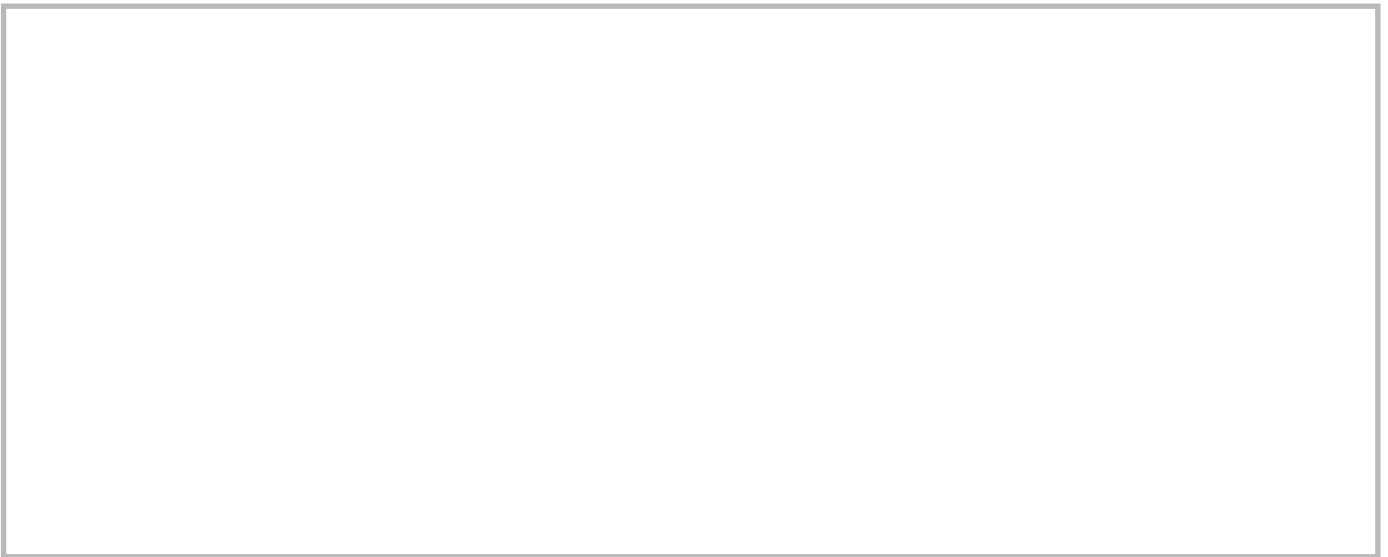
MAF Story

This next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheonagh, will give you an insight into the work MAF helps facilitate for three different organisations in the refugee camps in Uganda.

Reflection

The World Bank states that *'For almost 25 years, extreme poverty was steadily declining. However, global extreme poverty rose in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years as the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the forces of conflict and climate change, which were already slowing poverty reduction progress.'*

- When you read statements like those above, what effect does this have on your view of the Church's responsibility to bring positive change?
- What is God's heart for the nations when it comes to the concept of prosperity?



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.

'The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.'

John 10:10 (NKJV)

'I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

Matthew 25:36-40 (NKJV)

- Consider how these two portions of Scripture relate to each other and our role in partnering with God to see others enter into an abundant life.
- Take some time to seek God about what prosperity means for you personally.

Prayer

- Pray that the United Nations' aim for the world, that 'all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives', is something that can be achieved in our lifetime.
- Pray that, as Christians, we can bear witness to what it means for our souls to 'prosper' through a relationship with Jesus. Pray too that, when showing people the love of Christ, 'prosperity' isn't just something that considers physical needs, but includes the spiritual as well.
- Pray for the work going on throughout the developing world which MAF assists and enables. Work that strives to see remote and isolated people prosper where they are — giving them access to life's essentials.
- Pray for those who have lost everything through conflict or natural disaster and have been displaced. May they receive access to the resources needed to rebuild their lives in safety and harmony.

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 fourth 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.

- Think about the people you know personally – or those within your local community – who are struggling to prosper or are living with the effects of physical or spiritual poverty. How can you help improve your neighbours' lives and circumstances? Is there something practical you can do? Can you intercede for them by bringing their needs before God?

Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

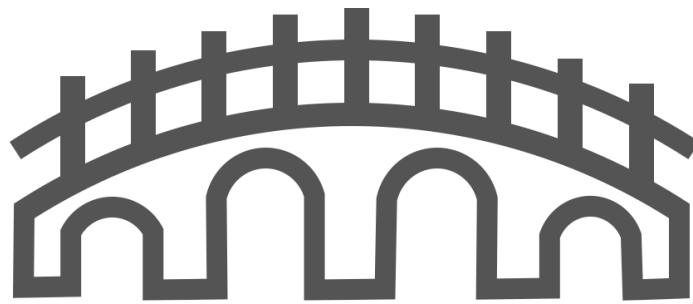
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SESSION 5
Building Bridges



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of Peace and how MAF helps facilitate reconciliation in Kenya. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So, we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.'

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NLT)

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

The SDGs and Peace

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping 'Peace' — our fifth 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.

Devotion

Written by Chris Macrae



'Peace' is a term that can conjure up many meanings, depending on the context in which the term is used, or the experience of the person using the term. In its simplest form, 'peace' can mean 'the absence of war'. In other words, the two concepts of 'peace' and 'war' are so far apart from each other that they are merely viewed as opposites.

However, in most situations it isn't as easy as that to define what peace means or what it represents for different people groups or cultures.

Indeed, the United Nations emphasised the need to adopt a wide definition of 'peace' when it introduced a resolution on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999.

In 2014, Ban Ki-Moon, the United Nations' eighth Secretary General, said, 'We know that peace cannot be decreed solely through treaties — it must be nurtured through the dignity, rights and capacities of every man and woman.' He went on to say that peace means access to education, health and essential services — especially for girls and women.

This desire for peace to prevail throughout the world is being played out against a backdrop of war, conflict, violent extremism, hatred and terrorism.

It's disturbing when you scroll through the latest news on your tablet or phone, or switch on the TV only to hear about the latest conflict or act of violence. It threatens people's desire to see peace prevail or — to put it another way from a Christian perspective — to see good overcome evil.

In 2014, Ban Ki-Moon also said, 'But I am convinced that our strongest arsenal in the face of these threats is not weapons or missiles or guns... It is our shared values... our common vision for peace, development and human rights... our universal aspiration for a meaningful culture of peace.'

As Christians, we can understand what a 'culture of peace' could look like from our understanding of the Bible. In Genesis, we see God create a perfect world, only for that perfection and peace to be marred and broken by sin.

We can also see from the example of Jesus what a culture of peace could mean as His words and actions show what the Kingdom of God looks like.

We learn too about the importance of reconciliation between brother and sister and between human beings and God when we read the New Testament epistles. It is this ministry of reconciliation, outlined in **2 Corinthians 5:17-25**, that gives us the true pathway to the peace God intends for us as believers.

The message contained in this biblical culture of peace is one of a restored relationship with God through Jesus. As followers of Him, it is our God-given role to reconcile others to our Lord and Saviour.

We do this through the proclamation of the Gospel — assuring others of the forgiveness of sin that's available through Christ. It is only through a restored relationship with God that true peace can be experienced.

Jesus' words in the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:18-20**), to 'go and make disciples of all nations', shows how we can achieve this aim.

The Bible shows that peace is more than simply the absence of war. Indeed, the Hebrew term '*shalom*', which is mainly translated as meaning 'peace', can also mean 'harmony', 'wholeness', 'completeness', 'prosperity' and 'welfare'.

In **Romans 14:17**, Paul says, 'For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (NLT).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, 'God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God' (**Matthew 5:9**, NLT). These peacemakers are those who promote God's peace or '*shalom*'. What Jesus is saying is that those who put their faith and trust in Him, and pursue peace, will be rewarded eternally by being called children of God. People who are peacemakers reflect God the Father's character of peace and joy.

Review

Thinking about peace in the context of '*shalom*', what is a 'peacemaker'?

What does it mean to be reconciled to God? Why do we need this reconciliation to occur?

In order to find peace or to make peace with someone else, what steps need to occur for an earthly relationship to be restored? In what ways does this restoration compare to being reconciled to God?

MAF Story

Your group leader will show you the next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheonagh, which will tell the story of the Widows of Peace in Marsabit, Kenya.

Reflection

Your group leader will show the statistics from the 'The SDGs and Peace' section again — when you hear the statistics and think about people around the world living in conflict, or fleeing conflict or violence, what emotions does it conjure up within you?

Think about the Hebrew word '*shalom*' and its many meanings — 'harmony', 'wholeness', 'completeness', 'prosperity' and 'welfare'. What steps could you take in your own walk with God to help you employ these ideals in your life?

When you are in conflict with someone or have a disagreement with them, what's your natural reaction? Is it to deal with the situation head-on to try and resolve it, or to run away from it? (There are no right or wrong answers here!) Where do you think that tendency comes from?

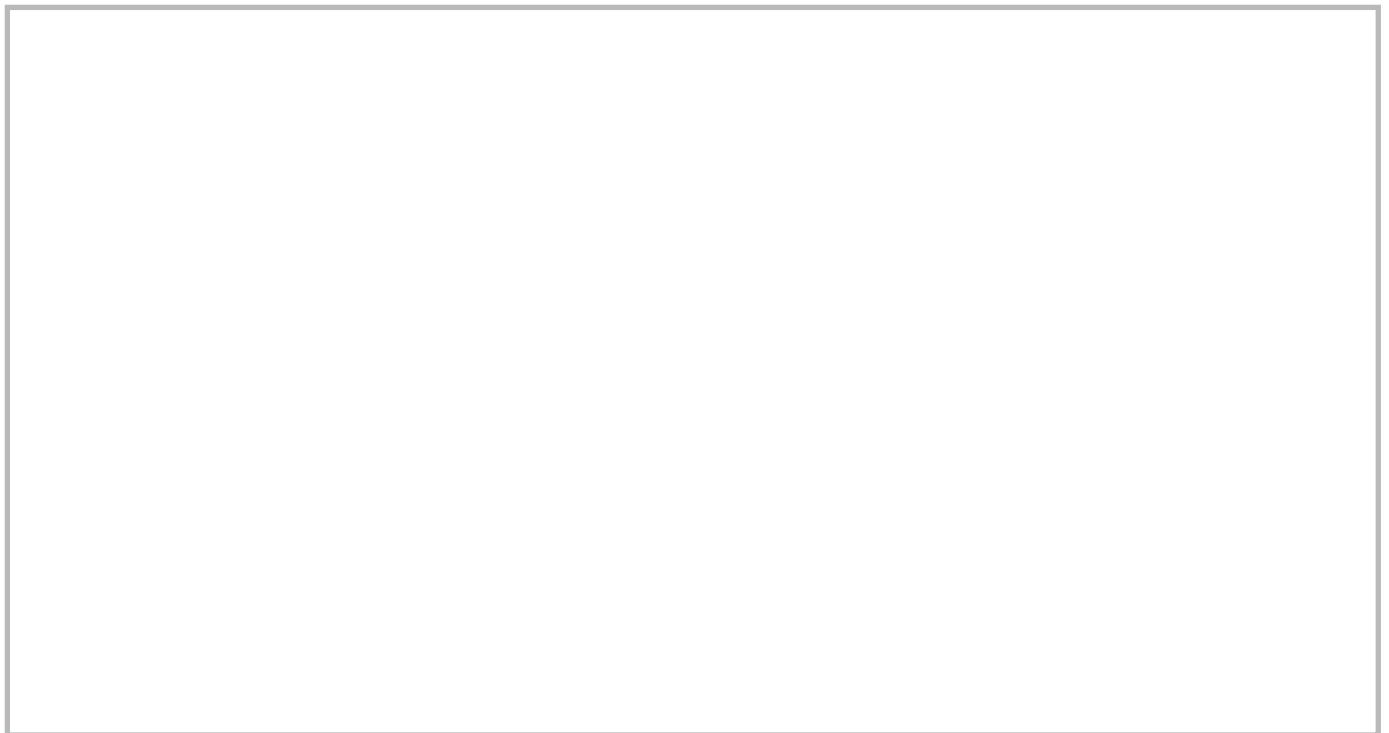
Repentance

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.

'For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.'

Romans 14:17 (NLT)

- Take time to think about what Paul says about peace and joy in **Romans 14:17**. Consider too what God is revealing to you about the culture of peace that exists when we are reconciled to Him through Jesus' death on the cross.
- Think about someone in your life with whom you are not at peace. Maybe it's someone with whom you have a disagreement or a difference of opinion. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find ways to reconcile and to be a witness of God's '*shalom*'.



Prayer

- Pray for those forced to flee from their homes and communities due to conflict and violence. Pray they will find a safe place to settle and that they will be welcomed when they get there. Pray too that they can return home once peace reigns there.
- Pray for families that have been torn apart by war. May those who are involved in conflict embrace a culture of peace and let go of their disagreements and grudges. Pray for an end to violent extremism and terrorism.
- Pray for the peacemakers, whoever they may be and wherever they seek to reconcile those engaged in conflict. May they know the peace of God's 'shalom' in all they do.
- Uphold those involved in the Sauti Moja project in Kenya. Pray that, through its work, the initiative will continue to bring warring communities together in peace. Pray too for the women who are leading by example in their communities and showing how lives and communities can be transformed through reconciliation.
- Pray for MAF as it provides flights that enable peace and reconciliation to reach some of the world's remotest regions.

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.



If you would like to find out ways of continuing to pray for the world and organisations working together to achieve global change, please visit <http://forthesakeoftheworld.com>

Response

To close this fifth 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.

- What action can you pledge to take to help raise awareness of those living in other parts of the world — some of whom we've highlighted in this study — people who live with conflict or in the wake of violence?
- Now think about your own country or community. What can you do to help people experiencing violence in *their* community, or who need to hear about the peace offered by God through the Gospel?

Write these actions down and keep them with you to remind you of your pledges today. Tell those in your group to help them keep you accountable.

Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

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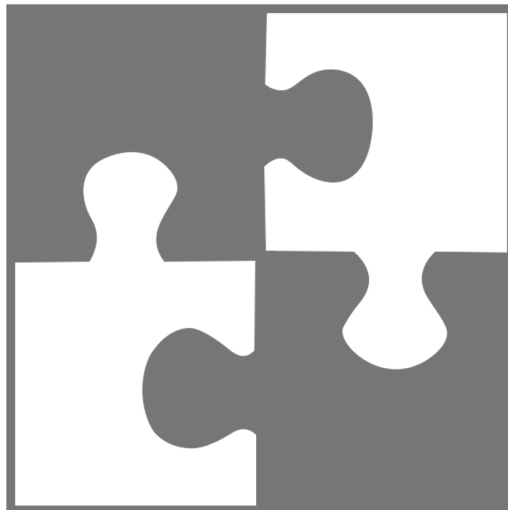
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SESSION 6

Stronger Together



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of Partnership and how MAF works closely with The HALO Trust in Angola to make Angola a safer place for it's population. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.'

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)

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

The SDGs and Partnership

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping 'Partnership' — our final 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.

Devotion

Written by Victoria Fagg



In 1966, Peter Scholtes, a young priest from Chicago's South Side, penned a song that would later become known as the anthem of the Jesus Movement.

Based on **John 13:35**, the song 'They Will Know We are Christians by Our Love' was charged with connecting young people who were disillusioned with the culture around them with their responsibility to participate in God's Kingdom work together. Partnership is powerful.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a partner as ‘someone who participates in an activity or game with another person.’ Partnership therefore occurs when two or more people come together in order to achieve something that they cannot achieve alone. Farmers know that teaming horses results in an ability to pull more weight than the same number of animals can pull individually.

Ecclesiastes 4.9-12 tells us that two are better than one and, in **Luke 10**, we see Jesus send His disciples out in groups of two. In **Exodus 17:8-13**, Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands as he prayed, which in turn enabled Joshua and the Israelites to overcome their enemies.

As believers, we are called to partner with Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:9**) and one another (**1 John 1:3**) to see His Kingdom come. Everyone brings their own individual skills and gifts to the mix.

The apostle Paul illustrates this in **Romans 12:4-5**, ‘A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That’s how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another’ (CEV).

If we are thinking about the body, perhaps a more connective word for partnership is ‘collaboration’. When we collaborate, we are purposely co-operating with others.

MAF’s integrated ministry is a collaboration with some 2,000 partner organisations to help bring help, hope and healing to remote and isolated communities across the world.

It is through these collaborations that those who are in need can experience what’s known as the ‘Five Marks of Mission’ — marks which were first developed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1984.

I’ve paraphrased them below:

- To hear the Good News of the Kingdom (evangelism).
- To be taught, baptised and nurtured as new believers (teaching/discipleship).
- To have your human needs met by loving service (compassion)
- To have advocates seeking transformation of unjust structures of society and challenge violence of every kind — pursuing peace and reconciliation (justice)
- To experience support in safeguarding the integrity of creation and the sustainment of all life on earth’ (care for creation)

Based on the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:19-20**), these five marks of mission reveal God’s love and missionary heart for all of His creation. The Scripture passage shows that partnership goes beyond ‘us and Him’, or indeed ‘you and me’.

According to Christian author Vinoth Ramachandra, the verses also highlight the ‘being’ and ‘doing’, the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘physical’, the ‘individual’ and the ‘social’, ‘justice’ and ‘mercy’, ‘preaching truth’ and ‘practising the truth’.

Jesus made a way for us to be reconciled to Him (**John 3:16**), and He invites us to partner with Him — and others — to share that redemption through our evangelism and social involvement.

This invite extends beyond organisations such as MAF — it is for you, too!

As you embrace the call to ‘love your neighbour’ in a time where polarisation seems at

an all-time high, be mindful of the marks of mission mentioned above and do all you can to collaborate with other believers.

Play your part while celebrating what others can contribute. Remember, we are better together.

And let's pray that, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we will be as one, as Jesus and the Father are one. By doing so, we'll bring glory to the Father and be a witness to others.

They will know we are Christians by our love!

Review

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 illustrates the strength and benefit of partnering with others.

What does partnership look like in your life? Would anyone observing you know that you're a Christian by your love?

What steps can you take to intentionally collaborate with others to see God's Kingdom break forth here on earth?

MAF Story

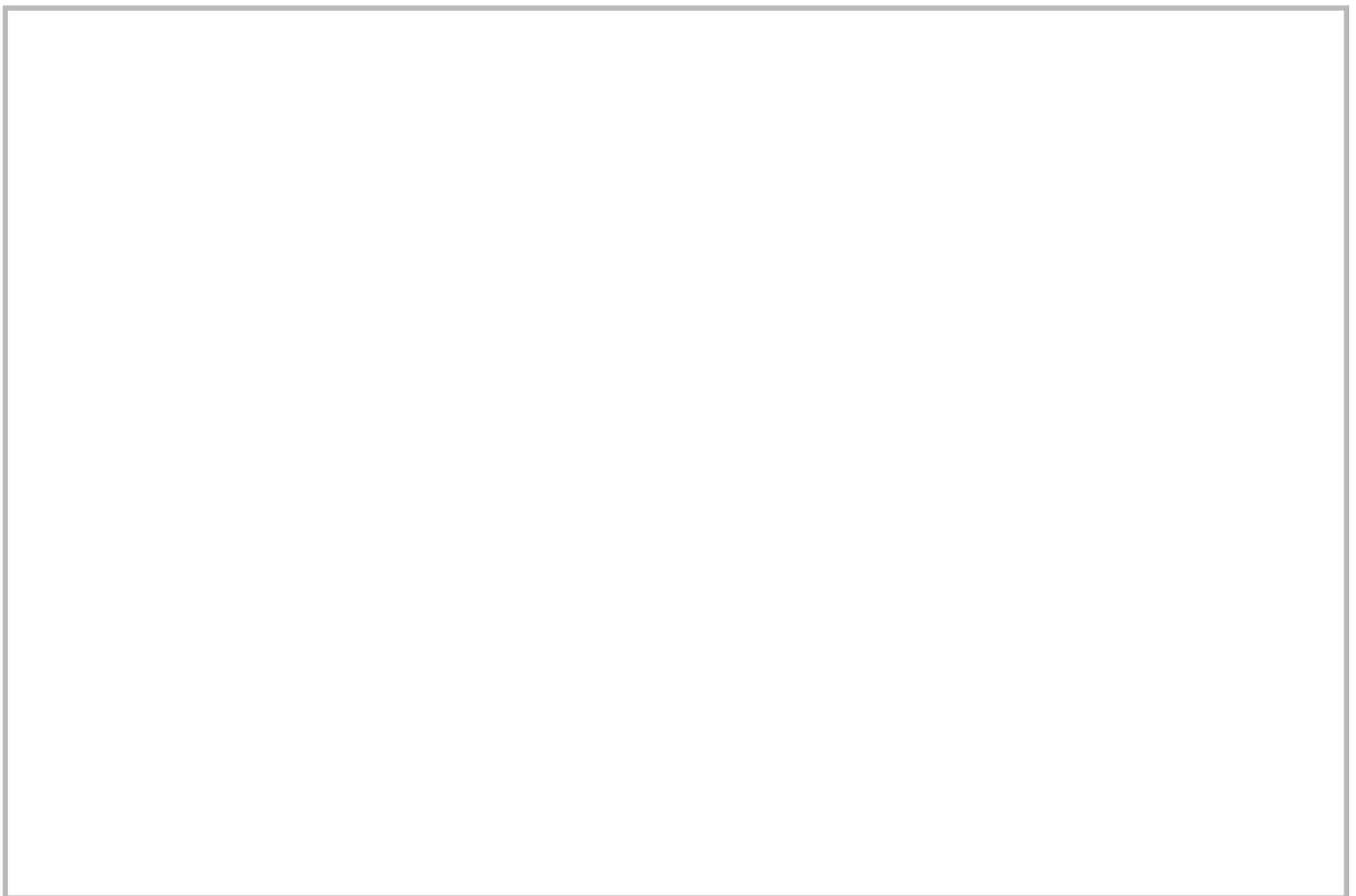
Your group leader will show you the next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheongh, which will introduce you to the work of de-mining organisation The HALO Trust in Angola.

Reflection

Unity within the body is often contested and isn't easy. Too often, there seems to be a 'scarcity mindset', with people and organisations afraid that, in partnering with others, they might lose out.

Differences around theology and expressions of worship can also prevent us from stepping over the denominational line to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Take a moment to reflect on any barriers you might be experiencing that are hindering any partnerships for God's Kingdom.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin grey border, intended for participants to write their reflections on the video and the text provided above.

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.

'...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.'

1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

- Mediate on this verse, recognising that God refers to His people in the plural. Ask God to show you His bigger picture at work within your local setting and neighbourhood.
- Consider writing a letter of apology to Jesus for any way you might have avoided partnering with other believers because of cultural or theological differences, or the fear of losing out. Keep the letter as a reminder to think more collaboratively.

Prayer

- Pray that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic won't slow down the ability and desire for countries to work together to advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda. Pray for the leaders of governments to continue to prioritise this goal as they draft policy.
- Pray that the inequalities around the world between the rich and poor won't increase further. Pray too that the work of organisations like MAF and other non-governmental organisations, aid agencies and Christian missions will help close this gap.
- Pray for The HALO Trust as its de-mining personnel continue making areas of land safe for people to enjoy, live and work on once more. Pray for continued safety in the vital work they do, aided by MAF aircraft.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will open doors for each of us to partner with others in our networks, churches or communities so we can share the Gospel where we are.
- As we come to the end of this Bible study, pray that the topics covered and the insights gained will help us to reflect on the future of the planet, the needs of those living in its remotest areas, and the need for Christians to feed into and influence the Sustainable Development Agenda.

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 sixth and final study: please consider becoming part of, or setting up your own, 'For the Sake of the World' prayer group — to find out more please see <http://forthesakeoftheworld.com>

Response

To close this final study, you will hear one last time 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.

- Reflecting again on the passage from **1 Peter**, ask the Holy Spirit to open a door of opportunity for you to partner with others in prayer and service — extending your reach and effectiveness as you show others the goodness of God.

Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

If you would like to continue your journey in this session of the Bible Study and find out more, please visit www.maf-uk.org/findoutmore and we'll introduce you to some more stories from where MAF serves around the world.

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We would love to hear what you thought of our Bible Study! If you could spare few minutes to complete our survey we would be very grateful. The survey can be found here:
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MAFGBS22

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