**Lesson Plan 1: Is Christianity to Blame?**

This short lesson is intended to act as an introduction to the unit. It could also be re-visited at the end of the unit, when students could discuss whether what they have learned has influenced their reactions to White and their views about Christianity’s role in the environmental crisis.

**Lesson aims**

* To introduce critical questions about Christianity's influence on attitudes to the environment
* To provide a brief overview of Lynn White's influential critique
* To indicate the importance of biblical texts in shaping Christian views of the environment

**Resources**

* PowerPoint presentation

**Starter Activity**

Show the introductory video from the ‘Is Christianity to Blame?’ section of the Beyond Stewardship website (find a link on Slide 2 of the PowerPoint or see **[http://ex.ac.uk/beyondstewardship](http://ex.ac.uk/beyondstewardship" \t "_blank)**). Invite the students to respond to the key question posed at the end of the video.

**Whole class work**

As a class, work through the PowerPoint presentation. Explain to the students about Lynn White’s article (further details can be found on the relevant section of the website), using the quotes displayed on the slides to highlight key points.

Look at the biblical text from Genesis, and discuss how Lynn White has used this text to reach his conclusions about the role of Christianity in the environmental crisis. Explain how biblical texts and their interpretations play a key role in Christian approaches to environmental ethics, and that this will be studied in depth in the following lessons.

**Group work**

In small groups or pairs, the students are to discuss the two questions on the final slide.

**Plenary**

Choose a selection of students to feedback on their discussions to the rest of the class. Explain that the questions might be re-visited at the end of the unit and re-evaluated in light of what the students have learned.

**Possible Follow-up Task**

Read Lynn White’s article (OR an extended extract of the article chosen by the teacher) and put together a written response (approx. 250 words). Use the ‘Points for Discussion’ to help you think through the issues:

* What are your reactions to White’s argument?
* To what extent, if at all, do you think Christianity is to blame for our environmental crisis?
* What particular Christian ideas may have contributed to such views of humanity’s domination of nature?
* From which biblical texts might these ideas especially come?