



into the Melting Pot

the question is more important than the answer

Sunday 14 February 2021

Climate Change & Extinction Rebellion (by Zoom)

We watched the Progressive Christian Network Britain commissioned short film 'Holly's story' (it can be found at <https://madeofstories.uk/holly/>).

Holly tells of her commitment, as a Christian climate activist, to "change the society that we live in so that it's easier for everyone to be able to live a lower carbon footprint". She joins with others from Extinction Rebellion and speaks of non-violent direct action.

The following comments were noted as a summary of our discussion:

Initial Reactions

- I felt so sad for the people of low-lying lands (eg Bangladesh) who will be flooded due to the Climate Crisis, as a result of those in the industrialised West.
- Glad that there are some young people who feel so strongly to be doing this.
- Always pleased when clergy/ministers are involved.
- Sad to see the disparaging looks of some of those walking by.
- It has to be done – why aren't we doing this? It is brave of those in Extinction Rebellion.
- Most people watching the demonstration are not engaged; the signage used words that would not resonate with those not in the know (eg ecocide, take action now), although leaflets were being distributed.
- Might it be easier to focus on local or immediate issues that would engage, such as the 'Climate and Ecological' bill going through Parliament at the moment, or the Cumbrian coal mine, or Leeds Bradford Airport expansion?
- Having been on marches it is always better to engage and to talk to those in power.
- We should be lobbying MPs prior to COP26 (annual United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP is 'Conference Of Parties') meeting this year in Glasgow.
- The focus here was on humanity, but for many it is the destruction of the natural world that resonates (although linked).
- David Attenborough has an effective voice through TV, relating both the natural world and human activity.
- Perhaps having a petition to sign gives a focus to talk and has a useful end product.
- The passion of youth is good to see. Sadly, some older folk have little idea that anything is wrong.
- The workshops educate, but probably only reach those 'converted' to the message.
- I respect Holly's 'Why Not Me' approach.
- I can't but admire what Holly and others are doing, but feel it is misplaced; young people going into politics would have more impact.

Personal Response and Action

- So many commented on the reduced air pollution during Lockdown 1, yet now all the talk is getting away for a summer holiday!
- We all can be aware of our personal impact and what lifestyle decisions we make as a result.
- The Soroptimists were involved in an investigation of the carbon footprint of fruit and veg in terms of food miles (eg beans from Kenya) and the impact of out-of-season salad stuff grown in hothouses.
- However, countries like Kenya have been encouraged to grow peas, beans and roses as a way of improving their living standards – this is inevitably intertwined with social justice issues.
- Often these products are transported in passenger planes rather than dedicated freight transport, reducing the impact of food miles.

- Climate Action Ilkley (CAI) did a similar survey (eg finding asparagus from Peru) highlighting the inequalities between nations, which drives immigration issues.
- Buying cheap clothes, and buying too many clothes, is another decision to consider.
- The BBC Future web page gave the following list to be considered for personal action:
 - Move away from fossil fuels in the home (energy supply to renewables), car (consider electric or hybrid), travel (public transport and reduce flying)
 - Divest funding from Fossil Fuels (Pensions and Savings/Investments)
 - Diet – reduce meat consumption
 - Shopping – eg making clothes last, food miles
 - The impact of having children – balanced by the next point
 - Ripple effect – pass on your passion for change
 - At least offset your carbon footprint
- The Climate Crisis is way BIGGER than us – although individuals should be engaged and making lifestyle decisions, it is TOO LATE for just that: we need Government and Corporate Big Business to act NOW. We need BIG CHANGES in the next TEN YEARS.
- We must be politically active, taking every opportunity to lobby and seek to influence, recognising conflicting arguments that need to be balanced (eg the Cumbrian coal mine is for coking coal to be used in steel production – if not from Cumbria, then probably purchased from America, China or Australia!).

The Church and Climate Action

- The Church has history in leading action (eg 'Drop The Debt' and 'Make Poverty History', as well as the campaign against Apartheid).
- The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church produce monthly newsletters which regularly highlight Climate.
- It's a shame that there is no formal representation of Churches within CAI – perhaps this could be considered?
- Should we (are we?) carbon neutral at Christchurch? We are certainly working toward it (eg solar panels on the roof).
- The Divesting from Fossil Fuels campaign is being progressed with the Methodist Church (URC already done so) – recognising the balance of responsibility the Church has to its members' funds!
- Congregations need teaching about the Environment, The Bible has a major emphasis on the Environment. The Eastern Orthodox tradition reflects this sanctity for the Natural World, but the Western Church, especially the more fundamental, is more human centred and sees the purpose of Christianity as 'saving' others, getting souls into heaven, with far less emphasis on their environmental responsibility.
- How can we mobilise our congregation; how serious are we about this issue, which is inevitably linked to social justice?
- St Chad's in Headingley became an eco-church many years ago, and some effort was made at Christchurch some years ago, but where are we and what now?

Connecting

Suggestions to pass on the message

- Reinstate the Green Spot in Wider Horizons
- Request Climate is a weekly inclusion for intercessory prayer
- Move a resolution through Leadership Team to formally get involved with Climate Action Ilkley
- Encourage book reviews in Wider Horizons (see below)
- Encourage folk to sign up to JPIT and CAI

Resources

- Climate Action Ilkley - <https://climateactionilkley.org.uk/>
- JPIT - <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/>
- St Chad's eco-church - <https://stchads.co.uk/the-green-team/>
- How Bad Are Bananas (The Carbon Footprint of Everything) – Mike Berners Lee
- There Is No Planet B – Mike Berners Lee
- Draw Down (Proposals to Reverse Global Warming) – ed Paul Hawken