

Christian Ethics and Social Action Department - Values Day 2022

The date allocated is Sunday 6th February, but this resource can be used at any time.

It would be really helpful if you would give feedback with any comments, details of how you have used this material, was it helpful etc. to the address at the end of the notes.

Climate change: does it matter to me?

Introduction

A Church in a town in Leicestershire displayed a poster in September 2021 which read, "Earth does not have to BURN or DROWN; It's up to us ALL". Not your usual type of wayside pulpit, but perhaps something eye-catching for the passing townsfolk to read?

Climate Change seems to feature in the news on a daily basis, but what is Climate Change? One definition is that it "includes both global warming driven by human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases and the resulting large-scale shifts in weather patterns".

Cop26 has taken place and seems to be hailed as a success in one way, but implicitly accepts that Cop26 has failed to deliver the pledges needed to limit global warming to 1.5C, which all countries agreed to try to do in the 2015 Paris agreement.

Evidence of climate change (in 2021)

*Floods in Europe

*Record temperatures

*Forest fires in Greece and Canada and other countries

* Famine in Southern Madagascar

*Storm Ida in the USA

* Reports that many species of trees, sharks and other creatures are under threat

The warnings are stark. As Christians, how do we respond?

Our response

Parts of the Church, particularly some elements of the Evangelical branch are sceptical about Climate change, since much of it falls within our own lifetime, or at least in the last two hundred years since the Industrial Revolution. They see these catastrophes as signs of the times before the Lord returns, when there will be a new Heaven and a new earth.

As Christians, we believe in God as Creator. He has made this vast universe. The heavens are the work of His fingers, as the Psalmist David beautifully describes in Psalm 8. Amazingly He takes care of the individual humans that are the pinnacle of His creative work on this tiny planet; creatures made in His own image. We are not accidents of time and chance, but each of us is a special part of God's creative work.

God has mandated us to take care of His creation, but many have exploited creation being led by selfishness and greed.

To go back to a basic starting point, as Jesus said “The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.....and the second is to love your neighbour as yourself”(Matthew 22 v34-40) In the context of Climate Change, we should have a deep concern for the impact that our neighbours are facing.

The suggested measures in Cop26 have been studied and the minister for climate resilience in Grenada said “If the text that’s now on the table withstands the battering that it may get, we are holding on by our fingernails to 1.5C”

What can we do?

Eat to live, not live to eat. Choose locally produced food.

Live simply so that others may simply live.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle more. Travel less. Turn off lights and devices on standby.

Choose things that are more environmentally friendly -possibly at a higher cost.

Consider what we can give to support those affected by various disasters.

Why do you think tackling Climate Change is not a priority for many Christians and can you do more to change that?

Finally

Let us not be deflected from our commission to spread the Gospel. WE are part of the Church’s commission from our Lord Jesus to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have taught you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age”,(Matthew 28 v 19-20)

Resources

We recommend a film series for small groups produced by TEARFUND featuring climate change scientist Katharine Hayhoe and called “Christianity and climate change”. The films can be found on YouTube and are ideal for a Bible Study group.

We also recommend a thought provoking book by Ruth Valerio “L is for Lifestyle” produced by IVP.

There are Christian organisations working in conservation and responding to Climate Change, such as A Rocha (www.arocha.org) and Operation Noah (www.operationnoah.org)

Using some of the things mentioned above, here’s a suggested sermon outline which you may like to use yourself or pass on to be used.

Climate Change – does it matter to me?

1 . Our Mandate

The Great Commission - Matthew 28 v 19, 20

We should not be deflected from this!

Genesis 2 v 15

Adam was mandated to care for God's creation – who should be taking the lead in that now?

2 . Our Motivation

Caring for God's creation

Genesis 1 v 26 and 31

We are made in God's image, and because He said that all that He had made was very good, that should motivate us to care for it.

Psalm 8, Psalm 19 v 1 – 6

Caring for our neighbours

Matthew 22 v 34 – 40

3 . Our Methods

There are some suggestions above

Also, share with others and raise the profile from a Christian viewpoint

PRAY!

Heavenly Father, we are amazed by the wonders of Your creation, the work of Your fingers in the night sky and the beauty of the earth around us. We thank you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made in Your own image, and that You have given us the privilege and responsibility of caring for Your creation around us.

We are sorry that so often we have taken the earth and its bounty for granted and have exploited and spoilt Your creation instead of caring and conserving.

We pray that You will give us wisdom to do what we can as individuals and as Your people to play our part in countering Climate Change, while not losing sight of the great commission of our Lord and Saviour to spread the good news of salvation in His Name. We ask this in His precious Name, Amen.

Wesleyan Reform Union CESA Department

Secretary: Mrs D. Hodkinson, 30 Beaumont Avenue, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicester LE65 2NF

01530 416521, Email: daphton@sky.com