

Prayer

Issue #49

Sep/Oct 2021

magazine.com



CLIMATE CONCERN...
OUR MORAL IMPERATIVE

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CLIMATE CONCERN -



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OUR MORAL IMPERATIVE



Climate change is one of those topics which we are all aware of, but it seems we don't fully know what we could do to help. Of course, we might be avid recyclers, but the topic is so big and so complicated that recycling a plastic milk carton seems to be a drop in the ocean compared to an attempt to solving the whole problem.

To understand the origin of this gigantic problem, we must go back to the Industrial Revolution between 1760 and 1840. As humanity started to engineer its future, through smelting metals, mining, shipping, weaving and railways. we created factories to reduce the labour component of producing an item, while at the same time increasing the production volume.

There was little thought given to the

long-term impact of burning fossil fuels like coal and oil to power these factories. Industrialists and factory owners were far more interested in expanding their production to other countries. They located vast sources of natural mineral and turned the refining those items into hugely profitable empires which spanned touched the world.

By 1800 there were tens of thousands of small mines, smelters, and factories churning out all kinds of goods and the appetite of gadgets and services from the western world was huge. Railways crossed America, Ships were bringing cargo from one side of the planet to the other, sadly slavery was at its height as the labour demand in the 'New World' was enormous.





Then we get into the early 1900's when cars became a fashionable necessity and planes took to the skies, all of which produced greenhouse gas emissions which have continued to build up from then on.

It's in the last 30 or so years that we've seen first-hand the impact of the last 200 years. It's indisputable now that humankind's effect on the planet has raised earth's temperature a little. Yet that has had a knock-on effect. The planet is losing its glaciers, there is much more severe and odd weather patterns happening, the water level of the sea is slowly rising and the temperatures of northern countries like the UK now more resemble the Mediterranean through the summer months, recording the highest summer temperatures ever in recent months.

One of the huge problems in tackling global climate change is the clear

volume of things that need to be done and the sheer number of people, business and organisations which need to participate. Government in all Nations will ultimately need to deliberately legislate for a greener future for all of us.

In the UK there are already firm plans to move cars over to running on electricity and also make sure new homes are built more green friendly way. The UK also leads Europe in it's drive for renewable energy like wind, wave, and solar power. However, the biggest contributor to global warming is us, collectively. We have gotten used to some pretty bad habits for the environment and we need to change those habits collectively while at the same time tipping the carbon emission balance so that we become less than carbon neutral. We need to live our lives contributing to Earth health.

Imagine some of these scenarios, this will help you understand the problem a little more.

The single biggest motivator for global warming is profit. If you just take supermarkets who will go overseas to bring us cheaper pricing on something because the labour cost is cheaper there. The goods we buy often create more carbon than is necessary. For years we as consumers have always tended to look for lower cost items, driving the price of goods down, which in turn has encouraged supermarkets to buy those good overseas.

NEW ZEALAND LAMB – The farms are huge and specialised and the government provides farming export subsidies so the cost of goods is lower than lamb can be produced in the

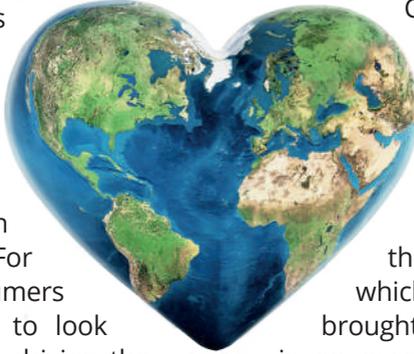
UK. In 2019, 50,912 metric tonnes of New Zealand Lamb were imported into the UK. That is 452 Jumbo jets packed full of meat, travelling more than 11,600 miles to get here. That equates to 4,961,000 KGs of

Carbon emitted into the atmosphere per year just for us to eat New Zealand Lamb.

BASMATI RICE – We all love curries, but the recipes we use to make them require ingredients which again need to be brought in from overseas, rice is no exception. Because rice is non-perishable it can be transported by ship rather than flown in by plane. The biggest rice producing countries are India and China, so again you can see the huge environmental cost in transporting something heavy like this to our UK shores.

BANANAS – They are grown in 135 countries, typically where there is a tropical climate. They are grown green, cut, and sent by ship, so the ripening process happens on route. Most of the cost of a banana in the UK is the cost of shipping. The producers get little, the supermarkets get the most profit and the customer mainly pays the price of moving the banana thousands of miles from its place of growth to our fruit bowl.

AUSTRALIAN WINE – When the vineyards of Australia were planted those grapes needed an avenue to market called wine. It's been fashionable in the last 20 years to see





shelves filled in the supermarket with wines from across the world. The more variety we had the more we felt in some way sophisticated and privileged to feel that we had the life choice to taste wine from thousands of miles away. A privilege never afforded to our previous generations! Imagine drinking a bottle of Chenin Blanc from France at a cost of £8 or a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand which cost £10. It's amazing to think our culture now favours a wine which must be flown 11,600 miles even to be on the store shelves and which we tell ourselves we like more than a bottle originating from

the Loire Valley in France less than 300 miles from the UK.

GREEN BEANS FROM KENYA – Green beans from Kenya are grown and harvested cheaply, the labour is cheap and the soil fertile. Yet the beans are then flown by cargo plane and then shipped by truck to supermarkets across the country.

ADVOCADOS AND BLUEBERRYS FROM SPAIN – Sold to us as superfoods, which if eaten will fight off disease and difficult health issues, these two products are still flown in daily from Spain. The UK's consumption of both

fills over 300 large planes per year. They can however compromise our health through the planes carbon emission more than it benefits our health through their antioxidant value. Yet we still buy them because we are sold the benefit through media which never considers and rarely reports the ecological impact of the west making these items a part of our diet. Both items are not grown in the UK and would not be in our local

food consumption diet.

In all these situations we have a choice. That might involve us cutting back on our far-flung geographical tastes, we might need to find new recipes and food experiences much closer to home. It's a hard reality to know that cooking a leg of New Zealand Lamb, is the carbon equivalent of driving the average car here for three months, such was the carbon cost of getting it

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1. That governments would take a much tougher approach to Climate Action

2. That we would be able to adapt our eating habits to choose foods which are grown more locally, so less food is transported from around the world to satisfy our taste.

3. That we would move away from using anything which uses pesticide or any chemical which is harmful to the environment.

4. That we would sign up to www.christianclimatesolutions.com and start off setting our Carbon Footprint through a membership which includes tree planting on our behalf.

5. That we would talk to a friend about the issues and promote their own need to get to Carbon Neutral.

6. That we would create a small group to support one another's ideas and share information about local food, recipes, and things we should avoid.

7. That your local shop would carry more of your fruit and veg essentials.

It's expensive for them if they waste food because they haven't been sold, so pray there would be enough uptake that they sell through all the fruit and veg each week.

8. That people would decide to shop much more locally. Every decision to drive away from where we are to buy food that we like but don't need adds to carbon emissions. Let's pray for wisdom.

9. That we research. That we take time to find out what locally grown fruit and vegetables are in season, preferably organically grown that we could eat. Don't opt for the superfood just because it fashionable.

10. That we understand the balance between what we want that needs to be flown across the globe to satisfy us and yet causes long term harm to the planet. This versus what we need. IE eating exotic fruit, which makes us feel good, even though to provide us with it causes climate harm or long-term climate effect.

here by plane in the first place. Our future is to consider the impact on planet Earth for anything that we do, I just pray we make the right decisions for us, our children's generation, and their children beyond that.

What can we do to address the issue?

I don't think any Christian alive would try and shirk our responsibility to protect our planet. The biggest problem of course has been wrong information or projects created that we couldn't easily relate to.

Of course, we've all now got recycling, separating out paper and cardboard from plastics and food waste, it's an inconvenience we have now accepted. The step beyond recycling is the major topic for the future – shopping habits and food consumption.

We may feel expert in our recycling, yet we ignore the question of why we need to in the first place.



What can we do day to day?

Usually, we are more accepting of smaller things we can do versus big things we are forced to do. The Climate Change conundrum needs to enable people to feel good about their contribution to help, rather than slap people across the face and force them to do it.

Below is a list of simple practical suggestions of what you could do, which would make a big impact on your carbon contribution. Trying to reduce your carbon footprint would collectively make the change that is needed.

Here are some suggestions...

- ✔ Buy fruit and vegetables as locally as possible.
- ✔ Work out some cooking recipes which you can cook from local produce.
- ✔ Try and eat meat that is from the UK and organic if possible.
- ✔ Try to buy five items per week from your corner shop.
- ✔ Many communities have Farm shops, to walking, cycling to that shop each week, means you cut out the transport and retail cost of buying carrots, potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli etc. buying from a Farm shop positively impacts your carbon footprint.
- ✔ Grow your own food. If you have your own garden space, get a greenhouse to grow tomatoes, herbs or outside potatoes, runner beans, marrows etc.
- ✔ Don't waste. If you have made a meal that you have leftovers, offer them to a neighbour.

✔ Think about setting up a street or community group on Facebook or WhatsApp, where you could share what you have left over. I.E. Got some veg but going on holiday, can anyone use it? Or mega harvest of potatoes or apples, too many to use, can you pick them up.

Harvesting fruit and vegetables which could bless someone is such a win, win. Your neighbour doesn't need to buy them, you bless them out and they become a local source of food for your neighbour.

Of course, these are all local ideas as part of the UN's Solution 17 – goals

which make a better world.

Thinking Wider about the 17 Sustainable Goals from the UN...

The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) to transform our world by 2030. Obviously, this goes beyond this article in the sense that the goals are wider ranging than just Climate Action. However, to give you a sense of what everyone believes would be an ideal scenario for each Nation on the planet, these 17 goals, *below*, have been developed.

As Christians we might not want to engage in all of them but remember this filtering down to become the law

GOAL 1: *No Poverty*

GOAL 2: *Zero Hunger*

GOAL 3: *Good Health and Well-being*

GOAL 4: *Quality Education*

GOAL 5: *Gender Equality*

GOAL 6: *Clean Water and Sanitation*

GOAL 7: *Affordable and Clean Energy*

GOAL 8: *Decent Work and Economic Growth*

GOAL 9: *Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure*

GOAL 10: *Reduced Inequality*

GOAL 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities*

GOAL 12: *Responsible Consumption and Production*

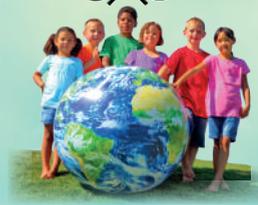
GOAL 13: *Climate Action*

GOAL 14: *Life Below Water*

GOAL 15: *Life on Land*

GOAL 16: *Peace and Justice Strong Institutions*

GOAL 17: *Partnerships to achieve the Goal*





in countries all over the world.

When we think about the list and each of its own points, we must ask a simple question. Is each point better for the people involved or better for the planet?

It might be that you could persuade your Church to be involved in:

www.ukclimatenow.com or
www.christianclimatesolutions.com

Either way, you or your Church could make an impact.

Climate change and climate actions needs us to work out two things:

1. What can I do to cut back on buying products which have more climate impact than personal benefit? i.e. do I really need to buy green beans from Kenya just because they are on offer in Tesco, when the environmental impact is enormous.

2. After cutting back, what can you do beyond that? Could you plant a tree per month, could you install solar panels or have a water collection process and plant your own herbs or veg?

If you have read this article and do nothing would be a shock. There is always something to do. Pray, build, plant, harvest, gift, share etc.

Become a change agent in your street and encourage more people to do the same in your community.

However our world got to the place where extravagance replaced sensibility, it's now time to address that and make changes which will benefit our children, their children and the very future of our lovely space marble called Planet Earth.