

## **A word from the OMF London & SE team**

Thank you very much for taking part in the *CREATION CARE zoom event*. It's our goal to enable conversations and create a forum that will inspire and challenge us to care for God's creation and live responsibly.

We would appreciate your feedback and any ideas for the future that you might have.

We pray for you, for the Lord to bless your health and your ministries wherever you are.

*Angelo Lebrato*  
*OMF Area Representative*

*PS-1: to keep this file as "light" as possible we avoided logos and large HD pictures, but do please get in touch with the speakers and their organisations for any queries.*

*PS-2: the text below comes straight from the speakers (a/o from the organisations) and will be distributed unedited (unless previously discussed)*

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## **A Rocha International**

*"Dave's role as Director of Theology for A Rocha International has two main dimensions. He leads on working to embed creation care into global and international Christian organizations, theological institutions, and mission movements. In relation to this he serves as Lausanne Global Catalyst for Creation Care, co-leading the global Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Network. He is also on the Church of England's Environment Working Group and the global Season of Creation Steering Committee. Secondly, Dave is a member of the A Rocha International Management Team, particularly providing advice and resources for ARI's Trustees, Team and national A Rocha organizations.*

*Dave has worked with A Rocha since 1997, first as an International Trustee, then from 2001 with A Rocha UK as co-founder (with his wife Anne), National Director, and in other roles, before joining A Rocha International in 2011. Throughout this time he has been a mission partner with CMS, seconded to A Rocha.*

*Dave's passion is communicating biblical teaching to today's cultures, and he has spoken around the world to conferences, colleges and churches. He has a PhD from Cambridge University on biblical theology and biodiversity conservation, and has contributed to many books and articles. One of his books, Planetwise – Dare to Care for God's World (IVP, 2008) has been translated into Chinese, Dutch, French, German and Spanish and is used as a basic biblical guide to creation care in many contexts. Another, God Doesn't do Waste (IVP, 2010), tells the story of Dave and his family's journey into caring for creation leading to founding A Rocha UK, and was selected by Third Way magazine as one of its books of the year for 2010.*

*Born and raised in India, Dave has a love for Indian food, Indian culture and Indian Christianity. He, his wife Anne, and their family live in multi-cultural Southall, London, where Dave (an ordained Anglican minister) is part-time Vicar of a multi-racial church, St Mary's Norwood Green and where as a family they try to live as sustainably as possible. Dave is also a qualified bird-ringer and loves birding, islands, running and mountains."*

### **Taking practical action**

The gospel is about practical action as well as pious thought.

So A Rocha UK helps churches and communities deliver excellent local conservation projects.

These may range from small initiatives led by a single individual in a church, to large-scale 'Partners in Action' projects (PIAs).

A Rocha UK supports several PIAs working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. Some of the many environmental benefits being delivered include:

- land management at a Franciscan Friary in Dorset
- river valley management in Derbyshire
- eco-education on a South Wales youth camp
- management of a country park in West London

A Rocha UK also has its own projects to showcase ideas of what can be achieved by, and for, local people. In addition, we run environmental education programmes for people of all ages.

[Read more ->>>](#)

## **Equipping churches**

The gospel is good news for the whole of creation, as well as for human beings.

So A Rocha UK equips the Church to demonstrate this good news for God's earth.

We operate Eco-Church to help churches reflect the full scope of the gospel in their congregational life, and to acknowledge their achievement in that.

Through Eco-Church, A Rocha UK provides ideas, resources, speakers and support for churches who put caring for God's earth at the heart of mission. We connect churches with each other to:

- be inspired by stories of what really works
- share creative ideas
- encourage each other

The Eco-Church award recognises churches taking steps to become greener in their spiritual life, practical management and community outreach.

[Read more ->>>](#)

For more information go to <http://arocha.org.uk>

***Climate Change, Human Health,  
and Building A Sustainable Economy For All***  
The Rev. Mitchell C. Hescox

***Why should we be concerned about the environment? It isn't just because of the dangers we face from pollution, climate change, or other environmental problems—although these are serious. For Christians, the issue is much deeper: We know that God created the world, and it belongs to Him, not us. Because of this, we are only stewards or trustees of God's creation, and we aren't to abuse or neglect it. The Bible says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). The Rev. Dr. Billy Graham, April 2017***

It is difficult to imagine how the Gospel can be spread throughout the world when so much of the church, especially in the United States, continues to ignore the greatest moral challenge of our generation: climate change. Climate change already impacts all God's children worldwide. From the one person displaced every two seconds<sup>1</sup> to massive decreases in food production<sup>2</sup> to over 4000 dying each day from air pollution in China,<sup>3</sup> climate change and other fossil-fuel pollution impedes both our efforts to evangelize and our relationship with Jesus, the creator and sustainer of all things.<sup>4</sup>

When many Christians hear concerns about the environment, they automatically assume they are coming from "tree huggers or tree worshippers" whose exaggerated worries about an endangered snail blocks the efforts of job-creating industries. However, scripture makes it clear that the stakes are much higher than this. If we believe God is the Creator and that all creation belongs to Him, then we have a double responsibility as Christians to both care for the "least of these" and to care for creation. Failure to steward what belongs to God and failure to care for those who are suffering interferes with our relationship with God. It's time we realize that creation care is an act of discipleship, part of what it means to follow Jesus. Creation care is a matter of life, especially human life!

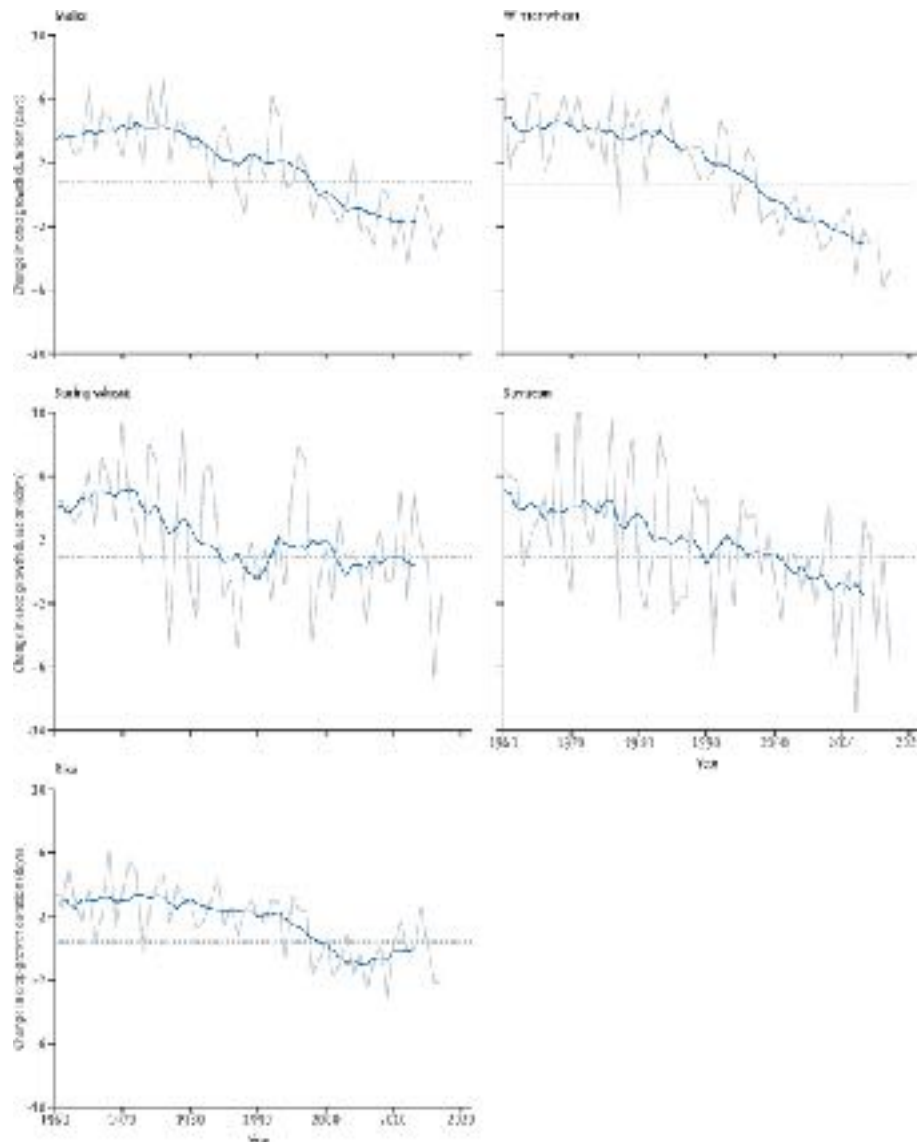
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<sup>1</sup> ***Forced from Home***. Oxfam Policy Papers. December 2, 2019. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620914/mb-climate-displacement-cop25-021219-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Nick Watts, Markus Amann, Nigel Arnell, Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson, Kristine Belesova, et.al. **The 2019 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: ensuring that the health of a child born today is not defined by a changing climate**. Lancet 2019; 394: 1836-78. Published Online November 13, 2019 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32596-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32596-6).

<sup>3</sup> Robert A. Rohde, Richard A. Muller. **Air Pollution in China: Mapping of Concentrations and Sources**. 20 Aug 2015 PLOS ONE. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0135749>

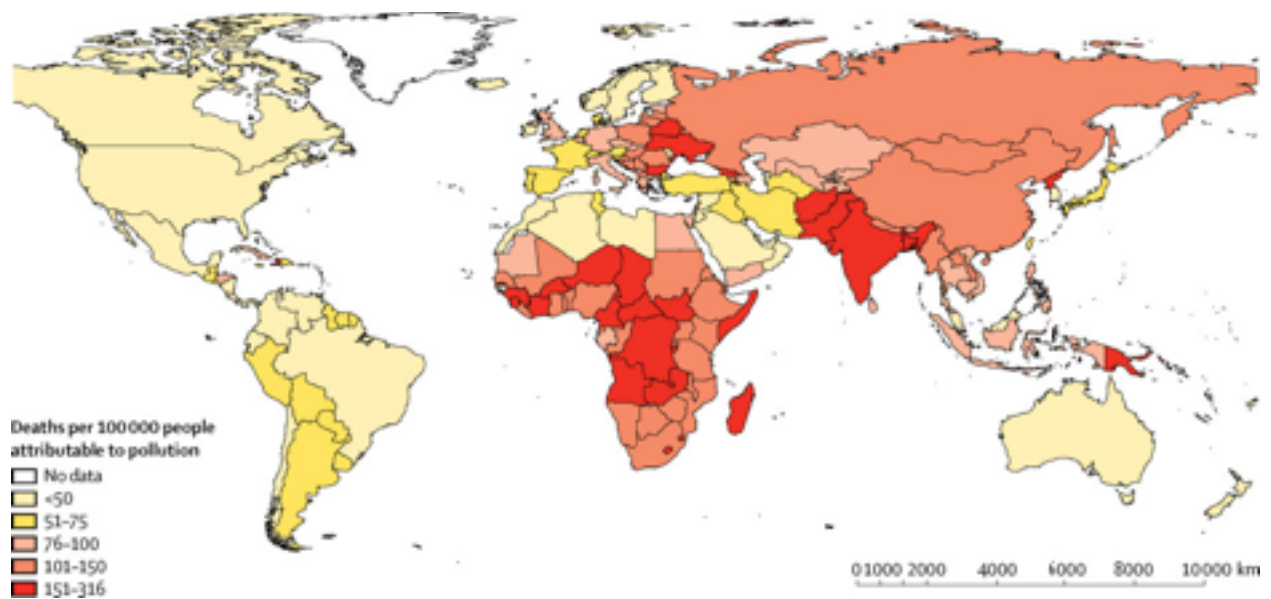
<sup>4</sup> Col. 1:16-17.



According to the 2017 *Lancet Commission* report, over 9 million people around the world die prematurely each year from pollution.<sup>5</sup> While this number is most likely an underestimation, the untimely deaths caused by pollution each year are three times more than the deaths from AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. They are fifteen times more fatalities than those caused by all acts of violence.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Prof Philip J Landrigan, MD, Richard Fuller, Nereus J R Acosta, PhD, Olusoji Adeyi, Robert Arnold, PhD, Prof Niladri (Nil) Basu, PhD, et al. The *Lancet* Commission on pollution and health. October 19, 2017 DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)32345-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)32345-0)

<sup>6</sup> GBD 2015 Risk Factors Collaborators. Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 79 behavioral, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks, 1990-2015: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease. *Lancet* 2016; 388: 1659-724.



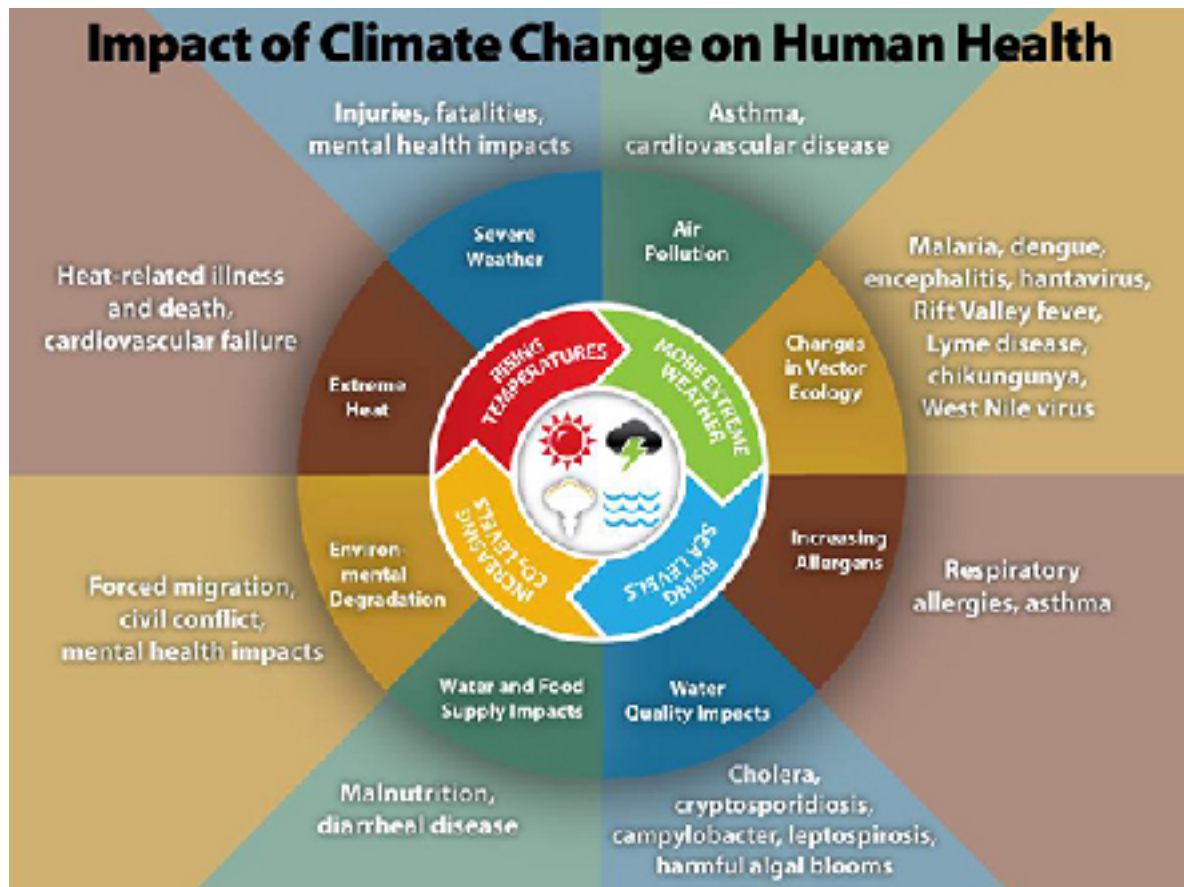
The Majority World suffers pollution’s highest fatality rate, but even developed nations such as the United States are not immune. More than 108,000 U.S. residents die from air pollution annually, with at least 5,000 newborns dying from soot (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) pollution alone.<sup>7</sup> According to the American Lung Association’s [State of the Air 2019](#), 43% of Americans live in an area of unhealthy air pollution. Climate change-induced temperature rises have exacerbated the problem generating more ground-level ozone (smog) in many North American cities, resulting in severe health consequences for those already suffering asthma, lung, and heart diseases.

In addition to pollution-related deaths, climate change poses its own unique threats to human life: temperature escalations; more extreme weather; rainfall pattern changes; increased spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, Zika, and Lyme. All fearsome and deadly, all with a common source: fossil fuel use.

Fossil fuel combustion emits over 100 toxic chemicals that directly damage human health. These include PAHs (polyaromatic hydrocarbons); metals like arsenic, lead, and mercury; carcinogens like benzene; and fine particles (soot) that are all inhaled and that harm vital organs including the heart, lungs, and brain. Not to mention carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases which are driving our climate crisis.

Unfortunately, we have not internalized the message. While dissolved carbon dioxide in oceans is turning the water to acid, destroying a major food source for billions, and threatening the generation of as much as 70% of Earth’s oxygen, we continue to increase the carbon dioxide spewed into the atmosphere at alarming rates. During 2014 and 2015, we saw

<sup>7</sup> Christopher W. Tessum, Joshua S. Apte, Andrew L. Goodkind, Nicholas Z. Muller, Kimberley A. Mullins, David A. Paolella, Stephen Polasky, Nathaniel P. Springer, Sumil K. Thakrar, Julian D. Marshall, and Jason D. Hill. Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial-ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure. PNAS March 26, 2019 116 (13) 6001-6006; first published March 11, 2019 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1818859116>



a marked decline in carbon dioxide output even while the world’s economy continued to grow. Since then, however, carbon dioxide has soared to levels never seen in biblical history.

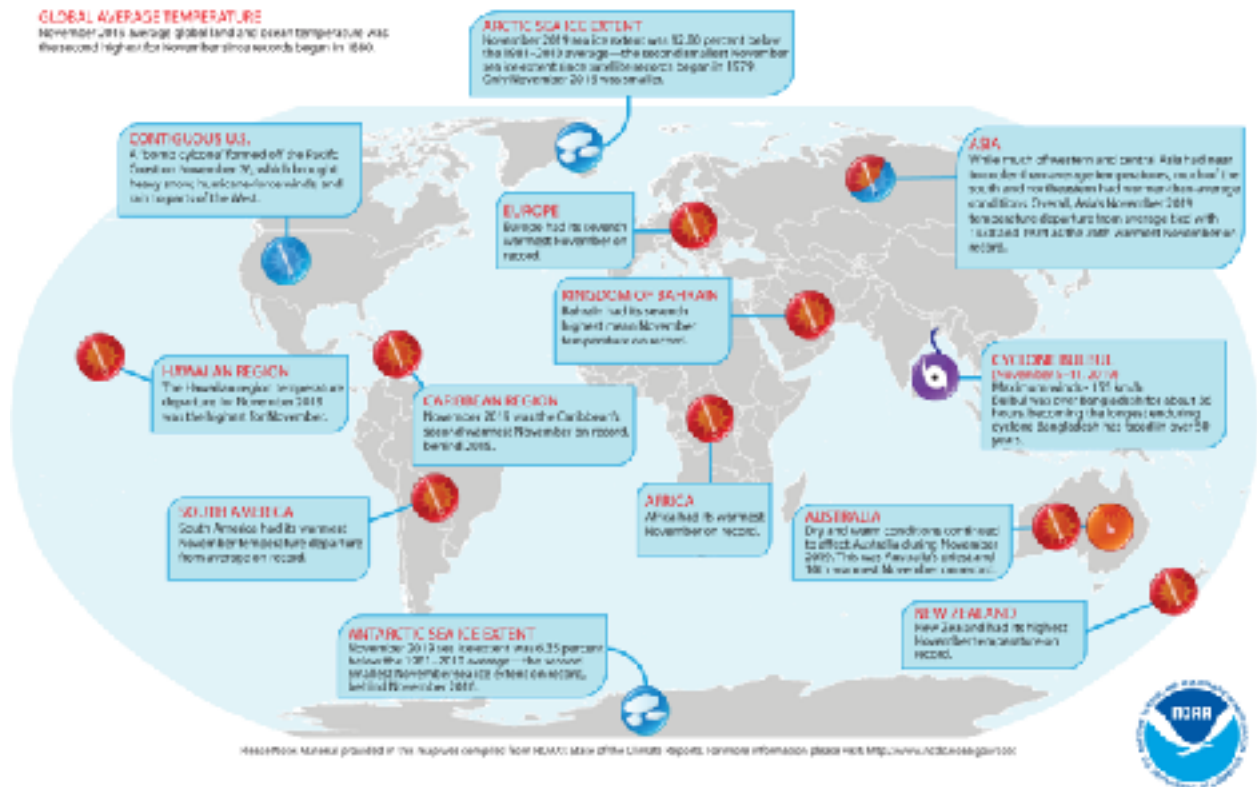
God created the world with a finely calibrated blanket of greenhouse gases. This blanket includes a level of carbon dioxide that hovers at approximately 270 parts per million (ppm). This blanket keeps the world 60-70°F warmer than it would be without it. It is not an exaggeration to say that this blanket is what allows human life to flourish on Earth. Today, carbon dioxide levels in this atmospheric blanket are dangerously out of whack, soaring over 415 ppm and continuing to climb. In effect, we added an extra blanket to our atmosphere, making the coverage 53% thicker (and getting thicker)—trapping in heat, changing God’s design for creation, and threatening life as we know it. We are fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy:

**Isaiah 24:4-5 (NIV)**  
***4 The earth dries up and withers,  
the world languishes and withers,  
the heavens languish with the earth.***  
***5 The earth is defiled by its people;  
they have disobeyed the laws,  
violated the statutes  
and broken the everlasting covenant.***

# Selected Significant Climate Anomalies and Events November 2019

## GLOBAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

November 2019 average global land and ocean temperature was the second highest for November since records began in 1880.



Visualization courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) State of the Climate reports. For more information please visit <http://www.noaa.gov/stateofclimate>



The last five years—from 2014 to 2018—represents the warmest 5-year stretch ever recorded in the 139 years that the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has tracked global heat. It is likely 2015-2019 will beat it once the data is compiled in 2020. We are at a critical time in caring for God’s creation. It’s time to act. Thanks be to God; we are neither helpless nor hopeless.

Thanks to leadership from the Lausanne Movement and their [Cape Town Commitment](#) issued in 2010, the evangelical tradition has a sound theological statement and call to action for addressing the climate crisis:

*The earth is created, sustained and redeemed by Christ. We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. We care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world, but for the Lord’s sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says ‘Jesus is Lord’ is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ’s Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.*

...  
*We lament over the widespread abuse and destruction of the earth’s resources, including its bio-diversity. Probably the most serious and urgent challenge faced by the physical world now is the threat of climate change. This will disproportionately affect those in poorer countries, for it is there that climate extremes will be most severe and where there is little capability to*



***adapt to them. World poverty and climate change need to be addressed together and with equal urgency.***

In 2015, the National Association of Evangelicals (US) adopted the Cape Town Commitment's wording on climate change and in their 2018 [\*For The Health of the Nation\*](#) stated:

***Climate change is a threat multiplier. It increases the harm from desertification, pollution and other damage to creation. It especially impacts the poorest of God's children in the world. Food and water insecurity and vector-borne diseases force migrations increase conflicts and make daily life more challenging in the developing world. In the United States, it increases disease spread and asthma attacks, causes sea level rise and flooding, melts permafrost, lowers air quality, increases drought and fires, and adds severe weather threats.***

These statements do more than live on a page. They have inspired faithful and hope-filled action from evangelical groups the world over. Thanks to the leadership of the Lausanne Movement, the World Evangelical Alliance, the National Association of Evangelicals; Christian development ministries like Tearfund, World Vision, World Hope, Convoy of Hope, Plant with Purpose, World Renew; education and advocacy groups like Climate Caretakers, the Climate Witness Project, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, the Evangelical Environmental Network and others, the evangelical church action has begun to act. Yet there much more work to be done.

Being serious in announcing the good news of Jesus demands creditable action on the greatest threat to each of God's children worldwide. If absent, our message of God's love fails to meet the daily challenges faced by those we try to reach. In short, it lacks creditability. However, if we live Jesus' love in action, the worst of the climate crisis can still be averted. Yet to do so, it will require that we truly live as stewards of Christ's wondrous creation.

The developed world must reduce carbon pollution now and turn to new forms of energy generation while becoming more energy efficient. We have undergone these energy transitions before. For example, in the United States as in much of Europe, energy generation started with wood, transitioned to coal, then oil, and has since become dominated by natural gas. Today, wind and solar generation are often the least expensive forms of electricity production, outbidding the aging fossil fuel technologies of the past.

However, switching to renewable energy does not apply just to the developed world but the Majority World as well. With renewable energy's plummeting cost and the ability for local generation without the need for massive transmission infrastructure, every child of God could have cheap, clean electricity. Energy that would empower refrigeration for food and medicine storage; switch on lights, charge computers, and enable internet access for education; power water pumps that provide water and food security—all while keeping air and water pure and free of life-threatening toxins.

Reaching all the world for Jesus requires caring for God’s magnificent creation. If we continue to destroy creation, we eliminate perhaps the greatest witness of all to God’s glory and our most powerful partner in winning people for Christ:

***Romans 1:20 (NIV)***

***For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.***

Climate change is the greatest moral challenge of our time. If addressed with courage and faithfulness, it can turn out to be the greatest hope yet for providing a flourishing life for all God’s children. That’s the Kingdom message we need to bring to the mission field. It is good news not only for the people we are trying to reach, but for all God’s creation.

1 ***Forced from Home***. Oxfam Policy Papers. December 2, 2019. <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620914/mb-climate-displacement-cop25-021219-en.pdf>

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7 Christopher W. Tessum, Joshua S. Apte, Andrew L. Goodkind, Nicholas Z. Muller, Kimberley A. Mullins, David A. Paolella, Stephen Polasky, Nathaniel P. Springer, Sumil K. Thakrar, Julian D. Marshall, and Jason D. Hill. Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial–ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure. PNAS March 26, 2019 116 (13) 6001–6006; first published March 11, 2019 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1818859116>

**‘Creation Care: how do we CARE for Gods creation  
as we proclaim his message of Salvation’**

What can we DO about the climate crisis?’

Some basic notes to prompt next steps.

Five key areas

1. **TELL THE TRUTH to ourselves first:**

- Recall the flooding in various parts of the UK, Indonesia, France, Italy? Hear the water rushing, feel the pounding rain.
- Recall the fires of Australia, California, the Amazon? which incidentally is at tipping point as we speak, between forest and Savannah. These are the lungs of the world. Smell the smoke, feel the heat.
- 

Knowing the truth, we must make the very basic and obvious personal changes such as eco loo roll, green energy at home, recycling, using public transport, keeping heating low, water butts, solar panels, quit using plastic cups at church lunches. etc etc etc.

2. **FACE THE ANXIETY**

The brain is hard wired to be afraid. Climate fear kicks in NATURALLY. We can’t afford to do any of these:

- a. DON’T read the articles
- b. deny the truth
- c. water them down
- d. be overly optimistic about techno fixes and quick fixes (eg carbon capturing and carbon offsetting, which often just give us permission to carry on business as usual. We have No viable large scale carbon capturing ability at the moment, and offsetting carbon is often greenwash eg. trees take years to grow and the carbon is still released immediately)
- e. or finally become immobilised by fear.

Extinction Rebellion and Christian Climate Action act as Guides, using meaningful Non Violent Direct Action, which also relieves anxiety.

### **3. Know ENOUGH, KNOW your audience AND choose your FRAME when trying to influence others**

\* use clear language when trying to communicate to others about this global crisis: what does 2 degrees mean? Let's stop saying 'what brilliant summers we are having' and talk about what is **actually happening**. If you don't know what 2 degrees of warming will *look* like, look it up.

a) **know your audience:** obvious really!

b) **Choose your frame:**

- What do your audience in wealthy countries need to **KNOW** in order to **ACT** in this emergency?

- eg for doctors frame the climate crisis as a public health crisis, which it is.

The frame for talking with people who have lost everything, who are suffering already, those on the front line of climate change, your beneficiaries, is earnest and humble **apology**. As Christians we should have been lifting up the poor constantly but we are part of a system that caused their poverty and keeps them poor. We are saturated in the system. We need to ask the hard questions: why are they poor? What keeps them poor? What can we do to challenge this system? These questions need to be grappled with robustly.

### **4. We need a SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION:**

\* we need a revolution in how we see ourselves in the creation narrative.

\* do we have **thin** theology around creation, Genesis and our place in the evolutionary line?

\* the world and universe is the first scripture given to us by God, do we believe this? Romans 1 v 20.

### **5. We need to Build resilient communities:**

We need to urgently build resilient communities and be guides within them. *We need to plant seeds under the snow so when the snow melts the plant is established.*

In the OT Joseph stored up crops for the future generations; we need to store up skills for future generations and new communities that will be forced to grow. Eg learn how to grow food and forage, learn to preserve, ferment and pickle, weave and sew, learn folk songs, etc **What skills do you already have that you could use? What levers do you already have that you could use?**

Are **we the church** resilient communities on the ground where everyone is genuinely welcome?

RESOURCES:

- Google: Project Draw Down : top 50 things:
- Read: Shane Claibourne, The Irrestible Revolution
- Google: Red letter Christian
- Check out: Christian Climate Action.org
- Check out: Operation Noah website
- Read: Naked Spirituality by Brian Maclaren
- Read: Soulful Nature by Brian Draper.
- Check out: Transition Towns and Rob Hopkins
- If you like into narrative theology, check out me on youtube talking about the biblical mandate for Non Violent Direct Action <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7N11-fclTE&t=341s>
- Check out: The Guardian articles on climate
- Read: The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and support it
- Read: Kate Raworths 'Donut Economics. Permanent growth is not possible nor right.

Rachie Ross abridged notes

For more information go to <https://operationnoah.org/>

## **Creation Care in the mission of CIM and OMF: People and Places**

David Gould

In OMF we define creation care as “the responsible stewardship by humankind of the earth and its life forms, for the Lord’s sake.” We believe that “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1); that we are called to work the earth and take care of it (Genesis 2:15); that the church, as God’s redeemed community, has a responsibility to care for creation as an expression of His Kingdom; and that we cannot truly love our neighbors without caring for the land and ecology on which they (and we) depend. We need to care for both people and places.

### **What is new about creation care in the mission of OMF?**

Is creation care just a new term for a well-established form of integral mission? CIM/ OMF have been engaged in various forms of integral mission since the 1870s. In response to the severe famine in Shanxi province in 1877, Hudson Taylor wrote an article in *China’s Millions* in which, quoting from Psalm 41.1 “blessed is he who has regard for the weak,” he commented: “Do not let us spiritualise the text so as to lose its obvious meaning (of not merely sympathy but action). How much of the precious time and strength of our Lord was spent on conferring temporal blessings on the poor, the afflicted and the needy.”<sup>i</sup>

Since the 1950s OMF’s pioneering work among the tribal peoples of the Philippines and Thailand has integrated evangelism with teaching sustainable agriculture and other kinds of practical service. In his book *Keeping Body and Soul Together*, published by OMF in 1982, Denis Lane gave an overview of integral mission approaches in OMF. He described, among other things, the integration of spiritual and farming instruction in north Thailand: “Because the Gospel had removed the binding fear of the spirits, one Pwo Karen Christian dared to plant a field regarded by his unbelieving neighbours as spirit- haunted. They would not dare to touch it, but he reaped a rich harvest that year. Yet here too there was no separation between the spiritual and the practical. The missionaries stood with this man in a prayer battle against what he and they knew to be real spiritual forces. So one missionary prayed and taught the spiritual warfare, and another worked and taught soils and seeds, and both contributed to a harvest where before there was nothing but weeds.”<sup>ii</sup>

These are two examples of the involvement of CIM/OMF in integral mission that have included elements of what we now call “creation care”. But what is new is the scale and range of the ecological challenges that confront the peoples of East Asia, and that make it imperative for us to integrate creation care ministry within the mission of OMF. These challenges include increasingly severe storms, floods and droughts, and widespread degradation of the oceans, rivers, soils, forests and atmosphere. These have led to food and

water shortages, destruction of homes and means of livelihood, involuntary migration, disease and death. With growing population pressures many people have no choice but to live in marginal lands that are particularly vulnerable to these impacts, and to natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. We are also seeing large-scale loss of biodiversity in land and marine eco-systems; and the earth's resources are being consumed at unsustainable levels.

So OMF welcomes and has signed the Lausanne statement on creation care and the Gospel. This includes the following: "We participate in Lausanne's historic call to world evangelization, and believe that environmental issues represent one of the greatest opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ and plant churches among unreached and unengaged people groups in our generation (*CTC II.D.1.B*). We encourage the church to promote 'environmental missions' as a new category within mission work (akin in function to medical missions)."iii

### **Where have we got to in integrating creation care into the mission of OMF?**

As part of OMF's review of creation care challenges and opportunities, we have prepared a statement on "The Theological Basis for Creation Care" (see pages 4-5 of this edition) and we have formulated three aspirations for our ministry:

- *As part of being disciples we should practice Creation Care*

We recognise that as with all forms of Christian witness, our actions should be consistent with our words. We want to be good stewards of all the resources entrusted to us to further our work of mission, by, for instance:

living incarnationally and sustainably;

developing simple, low-energy responses to our building needs;

reducing our air travel by seeking viable alternatives; recycling; and carbon off-setting.

- *As part of our disciple-making we should teach Creation Care*

- Creation care is included in our orientation course for new members of OMF, and in our research and e-Learning programs; we aim to extend this to our other training programs;

- We hope to take part in the exploration of creation care themes in churches, theological seminaries, mission agencies and student ministry.

- *As part of mission strategy we should consider Creation Care*  
One of OMF's core values is that we lead from the ministry context. This means that the ways in which our shared vision, mission and values are worked out is determined by the OMF leaders and their teams in the different contexts in which we work. So the need for some aspects of creation care ministry as integral parts of our mission will vary widely between different contexts. They may include some of the following:

*Ecological surveys* that contribute to developing focussed, missional responses to the ecological challenges being faced by the peoples of East Asia;

*Sustainable forestry, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries; Water and waste management: collection, storage, recycling, filtration, sanitation; Flood control: restoring mangroves, developing flood defences etc; Alternative technology;*

- *Conservation and restoration of eco-systems, and eco-tourism;*
- *Creation care education* in subjects such as those included in this list.

Some of these initiatives may be suitable as a basis for missional business. They will require the mobilisation and training of people with types of expertise that may not previously have been recognised as having 'missional potential'. Equally it will be essential that their work is undertaken in dependence on God, recognising the spiritual battles involved, and with a clear call to share in the urgent evangelization of East Asia's peoples.

Integrated approaches to mission have usually been applied at a local level, such as community health evangelism (CHE) and the agricultural ministry described by Jocelyn Dino in this MRT. Now, in addition, there may be opportunities to apply them within urban and other contexts, such as office and university 'communities' and in working with government and other agencies.

There is the ever-present challenge of balancing the ministry of word and deed, and avoiding the approach to mission that sees acts of service simply as 'platforms' for the real work of mission. Denis Lane explained why this is self-defeating (in the context of medical mission):

"As with all evangelism, the vital point is the attitude in which it is done. If patients are seen as nothing but potential converts, then any response is likely to be artificial and sometimes comes from a desire to please. If however, patients sense a real concern for them as people, and if that comes across in care for their complaint and a desire to share something precious because they count to us, evangelism does not have to be cold proselytism. Jesus managed to combine healing and teaching with no sense of conflict."<sup>iv</sup>

This applies equally to our response to the ecological challenges in East Asia. If we seek to address these simply as a basis for evangelism, our work will lack effectiveness and



conviction, and we will not win a hearing for the gospel; on the other hand if we become too engrossed in addressing ecological challenges, we will miss the opportunities to include evangelism in our mission.

So where should mission begin, and what should be its scope? CJH Wright writes:

“Almost any *starting* point can be appropriate, depending possibly on what is the most pressing, or obvious need. We can *enter* the circle of missional response at any point on the circle of human need. *But ultimately* we must not rest content until we have included within our own missional response the wholeness of *God’s* missional response to the human predicament- and that of course includes the good news of Christ, the cross and resurrection, the forgiveness of sin, the gift of eternal life that is offered to men and women through our witness to the gospel and the hope of God’s new creation.... Mission that does not ultimately *include* declaring the Word and the name of Christ, the call to repentance, and faith and obedience has not completed its task. It is defective mission, not holistic mission.”<sup>v</sup>

But equally, we can add: mission that does not include discipling and practical demonstrations of godly living (including loving service, seeking justice and caring for creation)<sup>vi</sup> is also incomplete. And church movements will be less than biblical if they do not embrace such practical demonstrations of godly living. “We are called to share the love of God in word and to show the love of God in deed. We cannot separate proclamation from practice. Our responsibility as ambassadors of Christ is to teach the whole counsel of God, not simply the bare bones of the Gospel.”<sup>vii</sup>

In his address to the Areopagus in Athens, Paul made a direct connection between people and places: “He (God) determined the times set for them (the nations) and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out to him and find him, though he is not far from each of us” (Acts 17:26-27). This passage echoes the connection Isaiah made between the fruitfulness of the land and the people coming to know God (Isaiah 29:17-19; 41:17-20). When I visited a slum in one of East Asia’s rapidly growing megacities, I asked a man what had brought him there. He told me that there was no future for his family on the land, yet his heart was still there. So we need to consider how we are to respond to the many ways in which land is being degraded, and people are being displaced. How can we say we care for the peoples of East Asia, if we do not care about the places they call ‘home’?

For each of these three aspirations we recognise that we have much to learn, and that we are not meant to attempt these things on our own. In the spirit of another of our core values, we welcome opportunities to partner with others.

We also recognise that to the extent that the ecological challenges being faced by the peoples of East Asia are new, so it will need pioneer missionaries to come and offer hopeful, Kingdom-based responses, as part of integral mission initiatives among these peoples. God is

at work: it is particularly heartening that He is calling a new generation into mission with OMF with skills in such areas as animal husbandry, marine biology, forestry, electrical engineering and waste management. We want to welcome others who are called to share the love and the gospel of Christ with the peoples of East Asia.

<sup>i</sup> Quoted in A.J. Broomhall: Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century, Book 6, p. 167 <sup>ii</sup> Denis Lane: Keeping Body and Soul Together, OMF Books 1982, pp.24-25

<sup>iii</sup> Lausanne Global Consultation on Creation Care and the Gospel, "Call to Action" (St. Ann, Jamaica: Lausanne Movement, 2012), <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/all/2012-creation-care/1881-call-to-action.html>. accessed November 20, 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> Denis Lane: *ibid.*, pp.51-52

<sup>v</sup> CJH Wright, *The Mission of God*, p.318-9, original italics.

<sup>vi</sup> These "marks of mission" are discussed in the article by Lowell Bliss in this MRT.

<sup>vii</sup> David Harley, *Proclamation and the Mission of God*. Mission Round Table (MRT) Vol. 4 No1.