

The Future We Choose ISBN 978-1-83877-082-2

Last newsletter mentioned this book by Figueres and Rivett-Carnac, and the 10 actions necessary to avoid the worst of climate change. This month we are going to start looking at each of those actions in more detail, beginning with **Let go of the Old World**. Below is a brief summary of the chapter.

To meet the challenge of the climate crisis and to preserve all that we hold dear (democracy, social justice, human rights etc.) we must part ways with the things that threaten to destroy them. We need to honour the past and then let it go. We are heading for a time of change, and nostalgia won't help us. (Onshore wind farms may not look good in our countryside, but they are a cheap and efficient way of producing renewable energy). Fossil fuels, some of our transportation systems and agriculture systems, have all played their part but must be let go. But change makes us vulnerable to tribalism. We must beware of politicians from either end of the political spectrum that offer easy promises. Change can also trigger blame, which must be vigorously resisted. Blame is already a powerful current in our relationship with climate change – directed towards the developed world, the oil industry, capitalism and corporations, particular countries and the older generation. Outrage is understandable, but blame does not serve us; it creates a sense of needed change but does not actually deliver it. Blame can consume us and cause us to lose years of constructive action.

Here's what we can do to let go of the old world and keep the worst of our impulses in check:-

- 1) **Focus on where you are going, not on where you've been.** Cultivate your constructive vision of the future. When you see where you're going, you won't be so afraid of losing your grip on the past.
- 2) **Build resilience to nostalgia.** Our nostalgia can be used against us, detracting us from the urgent work ahead.
- 3) **Burst out of your bubble.** We will not be able to make big changes without understanding one another's values and viewpoints. We all tend to listen to media input that suits our views. We need to really talk with other people that hold different views. We need to challenge our own assumptions, and be mindful of misinformation and disinformation.

With the lockdown and subsequent changes imposed by Covid-19 we have shown that we can do this; we can adapt to new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things. So let's try to get back to a new normal not the old normal. All the above is a quick summary, for fuller information with illustrations from history, you need to read the book!

We Must Also Target Plastic Pollution



Foraging in the swamps of Lake Victoria in East Africa this man makes his living by selling old plastic bags to recyclers. Plastic pollution is disturbing the balance of the lake that provides for the needs of the countries around it. Over 30 million people are dependent on the lake's fishing and other resources, but plastic, overfishing and climate change are seriously threatening the lake.

New Scientist 4 July.

So What for the Earth? Chris Sunderland in "The Bible in Transmission", www.biblesociety.org.uk

At St Nics we have recently been studying the book of Exodus in the evening service. In this powerful article Chris uses illustrations from Exodus, particularly the plague and the sense of dread that the Israelites felt, to argue that we need to recapture a sense of awe and dread towards the earth and **all** its organisms. We need to realise that we are enslaving and exploiting the earth in a similar way to the way Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites. We need the humility to hear God's Word and repent. In this way there is hope.

Zero carbon; February 2020 General Synod voted for zero carbon church by 2030

The Church of England is expected to take steps to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 including making radical changes to the way it heats its 40,000 buildings, among them vast medieval cathedrals.

There could be heated cushions in pews aimed at warming individuals rather than heating the air in churches and cathedrals, and bishops may be discouraged from international air travel. The church is launching an energy ratings system similar to those used for household appliances to monitor the carbon footprint of its buildings, which also include schools, halls and vicarages. "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it," said Nicholas Holtam, the Bishop of Salisbury and the church's lead on environmental affairs. "We would need to think about our international travel, recognising that there are very strong connections with the rest of the world but also developing ways of nurturing those relationships which are more sustainable, and offsetting flights when necessary," it says. "Christians are called to safeguard God's creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth. Faced with the reality of catastrophic climate change, which will affect the world's most vulnerable people the soonest, radical and immediate action, is our only option. It gives examples such as switching to LED lighting, moving away from gas and oil to green electricity as the source of heat, using electric rather than petrol or diesel vehicles, and encouraging biodiversity in churchyards and glebe land.

"On matters of morality and injustice, the church should be at the forefront, modelling a prophetic vision that gives hope to the poor and voiceless," said Patrick Watt, Christian Aid director of policy and public affairs. "People suffering at the hands of the climate crisis in the global south, including millions of Christian sisters and brothers, need institutions in the rich world to move rapidly to cut emissions."

Quoted by Harriet Sherwood in The Guardian 24 Jan 2020:

"The moral crisis of climate change is an opportunity to find purpose and joy, and to respond to our creator's charge. Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation." Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Local to Durham

Climate Action Durham are actively engaging with Durham County Council to suggest ways to implement the Government's requirements to introduce cycling and walking friendly routes in the light of post Covid-19 social distancing rules, and using promised government grant money

This is the first and initial stage to promote sustainable transport in Co Durham.

The second is to call for a sustainable Transport Master Plan for Durham which will be long lasting and aims to reclaim the streets and reverse the primacy of the motor car. This follows what many cities are doing and will be essential if we are to reduce our carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change.

We are wanting to gather a groundswell of support for this and are asking for any and everyone to sign the petition which is hosted by Action Network in conjunction with Friends of the Earth to support the development of this transport masterplan; in particular this is designed to be a collaborative approach rather than a confrontational one, as we all have to own this.

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-the-development-of-a-transport-master-plan-in-durham-which-aims-to-integrate-all-aspects-of-travel-in-durham-and-reduce-reliance-on-private-car-use?source=direct_link&

I also enclose a link to a short you tube video from a professor in Oxford who is talking about decarbonising transport (which accounts for 40% of all carbon emissions according to the BBC energy briefing <https://news.files.bbc.co.uk/include/newsspec/pdfs/bbc-briefing-energy-newsspec-25305-v1.pdf>

https://youtu.be/6iD_7bL_79w

Richard Lilly