

Prayer points – February 2019



Progress at Katowice ... and the importance of national action

While Katowice didn't see radical progress made, it did see some. The main accomplishment was the adoption of the 'Paris Rule Book', which provides - in the words of the World Resources Institute's Helen Mountford; *"a foundation to implement their climate plans and common guidelines to report their progress in a more robust manner."* This was vitally important, as Professor Myles Allen recently pointed out, because the aim of the Paris Agreement is not to impose top-down targets on countries, but to *"bind countries into a process."*

The adoption of the Rule Book means that the main burden of action is now on the nations themselves. It's therefore important for us to speak with our MPs to alert them to our hopes for Britain to lead on climate action. Please pray for wisdom for our MPs, especially at a time when so many other issues are on the table. And pray for a change among politicians in those countries like the US and Brazil, where environmental pledges are under threat. Pray that God will raise up people to inspire political will for positive change.

School climate strikes

Greta Thunberg is a 16-year-old Swedish girl with huge concerns about climate change and the lack of global response. She decided to take matters into her own hands and began to strike for the climate each Friday outside Sweden's parliament building. For the first month or two, she received little attention and was often striking on her own. But her persistence paid off, other students joined her, and media interest grew - even to the extent of invitations to speak during the UN climate summit in Katowice and at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Given the opportunity to speak out about the need for urgent action, she is clear, passionate and focused. She usually speaks without notes and has the same message - whether for her friends, politicians, the United Nation's Secretary General or the world's economic leaders.

Greta says she will continue her climate strikes until Sweden is in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. "The changes required are enormous and we must all contribute.... especially in rich countries where no nation is doing nearly enough." Now other young students are joining in the Friday school climate strikes all around the world. Last week saw 22,000 in Switzerland, over 30,000 in over 50 cities in Germany, and 12,500 in Brussels. *"There is actually no point going to school if our world is going to die."* Pray that these young people's strikes over climate change will inspire the action they are seeking.

Global heating signs continue

The evidence that we need to change from business as usual continues to mount. The Met Office reports that the searing heatwave Europe experienced last summer was made 30 times more likely by human-caused climate change. A new study of Greenland, meanwhile, warns that the Greenland Ice Sheet is melting four times faster than scientists had believed - with serious implications for sea level rise. National Geographic noted: "between 2002 and 2016, Greenland lost approximately 280 billion tons of ice per year. This average annual ice melt is enough to cover the entire states of Florida and New York hip deep in meltwater." In the 20th century, Greenland's ice melt has already raised sea levels by 2.5 cm and may be contributing to the slowdown in the Gulf Stream.

Such developments have scientists deeply concerned. Johan Rockstrom of the Swedish Resilience Centre said: "Cracks in the climate system are pushing nature from being a friend that absorbs CO2 to an enemy that releases it. These concerns are fuelled by the growing intensity of forest fires, the effects of melting ice sheets on the jet stream and the rising risk of permafrost thaw, which would release trapped methane." Scientists are asking for urgent action in support of the Paris Agreement, which one called "a firewall against climate chaos."

As we contemplate the beautiful earth that God has given us, offering all that we need for life, pray that we heed the warnings about the way we are reshaping nature. Pray that we take action to limit further warming and to avoid climate 'tipping points' that would lock in further increases in temperature.

God's provision for creation Psalm 104:10-15

[God] makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains.

They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches.

He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts.

Global heating is affecting the world's wildlife

God's provision includes the splendid diversity of life on earth. But a [recent study in Puerto Rico](#) compared data from tropical rainforest in the 1970s with the present, and found that numbers of insects and invertebrates had fallen 10 to 60 times. There were similar declines noted in the lizards, frogs, and birds that eat insects. The study findings indicate that climate warming was the main factor behind this collapse. This research indicates that tropical species may be particularly vulnerable to climate change. Given the vital role of insects in the food chain, these findings are a huge concern.

A heatwave in Australia last November, saw record-breaking temperatures reach over 42C. This searing heat caused massive deaths over just two days for a bat species - the spectacled flying foxes. Unable to survive such temperatures, they died in their thousands, falling onto the ground under the trees where they roost. Researches from Sydney University [estimated that about 23,000 spectacled flying foxes died](#) – a third of the whole species. Other species are also likely to have been affected, but may not have been observed in such a shocking manner. Pray that we will take action to keep vulnerable species from suffering further losses.

Easy, fun ... and good for everyone

We're just finishing '[Veganuary](#)' as we write – and it's something to celebrate! Numerous recent reports – including one just [published in The Lancet](#) - have emphasised the need for a change in diet in order for us to live healthily, equitably and within the earth's means. However, there's often a large gap between scientific recommendations and people's practice. But in this case, the huge rise in people trying to reduce the amount of meat and dairy that they eat, has led to more retailers getting on board with vegan and vegetarian products. And because it's becoming easier, more affordable – and tastier – for people to try out non-meat alternatives, further increases are likely. True, not every vegan or vegetarian product is sustainable – but the trend is going in the right direction. Give thanks for advances that are helping to increase the sustainable, tasty food on offer, and pray that the trend towards more sustainable food continues to accelerate.

Show the Love

“From the book of Genesis to Revelation, a thread runs through the Bible, binding creation and humanity together in a relationship of love, respect and protection. We are called to care for the Earth and for one another, including for the poorest of the Earth most vulnerable to climate change, for the beauty and diversity of species created by our loving God, and for future generations.”

This quote is at the start of the [Christian resources](#) produced as part of February's 'Show the Love' campaign. The campaign asks us to make personal commitments to [new habits](#) that express our love of God and creation, and to start climate conversations with our friends, family, and the politicians who represent us. Pray that many people will take up the challenge, using part of a beautiful prayer from the resource:

“Guide us, Lord, and guide our leaders, to act as you would have us act. May our prayer and our actions flow from our love for your creation, in all its beauty and diversity, a longing for justice for the poor, and our commitment to all future generations of your children on this Earth.”