

## Prayer points – September 2021



### Unequivocal

In August the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its latest assessment of the "physical science basis" for climate change. The report is 3,000 pages long and references more than 14,000 scientific papers. The wording of its 'summary for policymakers' is signed off by almost 200 countries – which means that they have agreed with both the conclusions and the way they are phrased.

And that language is unusually blunt for a scientific paper. "It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes ... have occurred ... Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe."

The details of the paper set out the threats an ever-hotter earth poses to daily life here and elsewhere, including heat extremes, heavy precipitation, more intense droughts, more intense tropical cyclones. It's no wonder that the UN Secretary General referred to it as "Code Red for humanity."

The final headline, though, is also crucial. It says, roughly speaking, which says, roughly speaking, that if we can really cut our emissions, within the space of years, there would be a positive impact on both the concentrations of warming gases and on air quality. Within around twenty years, we would be able to see differences in the temperature trends. In other words – we, the people of the world, can, if we put our minds and wills to this, still turn things around. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses sets out a clear choice between life and death for the people he is leading, and then exhorts them: "*Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God.*" As governments prepare for the vital UN climate talks in November, we pray: Lord, help negotiators, leaders and all of us to choose life.

### Fire, storm and flood

"No one is safe;" writes Dr James Dyke in his new book *Fire, Storm and Flood*, in which he uses images to portray climate change through the millennia. He takes the previous big five mass extinction events as the clearest examples of the impact of rapid warming that we can learn from. He notes that the difference between 2 and 4 degrees C is Civilisation.....

"Where we go next as humanity is up to us and completely dependant on what we do NOW," he says. If we completely stop burning fossil fuels, global warming would end - but the inertia already built into the system would continue the warming for 10 years or so... The media tend to always focus on individuals and stories rather than the massive apocalyptic scale of what is actually happening.... Eventually we may win the argument for rapid decarbonisation but that is small compensation for being decades too late for this to make a difference. We're watching a safe climate slip out of reach." Lord, we pray again - while there is this window of time, guide our leaders to create the necessary frameworks of policy and finance for rapid decarbonisation. We pray, too, for all affected by recent fires, storms and floods, and all working to help in recovery.

### A new Season of Creation

The 1<sup>st</sup> of September is the start of the [Season of Creation](#), observed by churches around the world. The theme this year is 'A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God'. The organisers explain: "[Oikos is the Greek word for 'home,' or 'household.'](#) By rooting our theme in the concept of oikos, we celebrate the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth ... [We hope](#) that this Season of Creation renews our ecumenical unity, in our baptismal call to care and sustain an ecological turning that will ensure all creatures can find their home to flourish, and participate in renewing the oikos of God." Pray for the many events, such as the [Nations' Climate Sunday Service](#) at which Christians will gather to pray, commit to personal action, and speak to politicians about the need for government action. Pray that God uses this time to strengthen those who are already caring for creation and to inspire new people to join in the work.

## Traditional Jewish prayer

How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands! The heavens declare your glory; the arch of sky displays your handiwork. In your love you have given us the power to behold the beauty of your world robed in all its splendour.

The sun and the stars, the valleys and hills, the rivers and lakes all disclose your presence. The roaring breakers of the seas tell of your awesome might; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air speak of your wondrous will. In your goodness you have made us able to hear the music of the world. You are in our midst. A divine voice sings through all creation.

## Pilgrimage to COP 26

"In recent weeks we were once again reminded of the horrifying impact of sudden flooding: floods in Germany, Belgium, and China have claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed local communities and ecologies. As these events increase globally, fear sets in, and my own feeling of helplessness rises. A study published on Wednesday in the journal Nature indicates that, by 2030, around 50 million extra people will live at risk from flooding directly due to the impacts of climate change.

"The Young Christian Climate Network is committed to living out our faith in the pursuit of climate justice. We are making a [pilgrimage to Glasgow](#), calling on the government to meet and exceed their own climate finance commitments, and to cancel the debts of poor countries. We are accompanied by a boat whose sail bears fabrics from climate threatened places – pointing to the hundreds of millions of people whose lives are threatened by sea level rise, cyclones, and other climate related disasters.

"... I'm waiting for the pilgrimage's arrival in the north-east, where we'll tread ancient pilgrim paths. As we walk the same ground as St Bede, St Cuthbert, and St Aidan, we'll seek, like them, to witness to God's love for all his creatures.... In this pilgrimage our hope is that many will join us in our witness to climate justice, redirecting our attention to those people and places who so easily go unheard".

*Hannah Malcolm, Thought for the day, BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, 7th August 2021*

## Why climate finance matters

Charles Bakolo, Tearfund partner in Malawi says: "15 years ago my home village was food secure; now the crops wither and hunger is an everyday reality. Failure to deliver the climate finance promised by rich countries to adapt to this crisis, is to accept the suffering of the women and men I grew up with and others like us. I and thousands of Malawians are playing our part to tackle this unfolding climate disaster; we need world leaders to get the job done at the Glasgow climate talks."

Lord, we pray for all who are currently working on vital climate finance negotiations. Move the hearts of those who have power in the political and financial worlds so that they may prioritise the use of money to preserve life and put aside any selfish or short-term goals.

## Breaking the silence

It made the news when Tim Hewes, a retired vicar, sewed his lips shut and stood outside the main entrance of News Corps UK offices in early August. He commented: "I've sewn up my lips to demonstrate the terrible havoc Rupert Murdoch's actions have reaped upon the world and to make this visible: climate science and truth has been muted, those who suffer are not being heard."

We all have a role to play in ensuring that the truth about climate science is heard. Lord, thank you for people who speak out on climate issues. Help us to speak truth, to share the stories of those most affected, and to challenge misinformation.