

Prayer points – February 2022



“Time to honour our promises”

COP 26 President Alok Sharma recently [delivered a speech](#) on the ambitions for the UK’s COP Presidency. Promises agreed at COP26, he says *“at the moment ... are just words on a page. And unless we honour the promises made, to turn the commitments in the Glasgow Climate Pact into action, they will wither on the vine. We will have mitigated no risks. We will have seized no opportunities. Instead, we will have fractured the trust built between nations. And 1.5 degrees will slip from our grasp. So my absolute focus for the UK Presidency year is delivery.”*

Sharma sets our four goals: *“to ensure that countries reduce emissions, as promised, and go further, to keep 1.5 alive”; “to progress work on adaptation and loss and damage”; “to deliver finance to support these efforts”; and “to push for further action across critical sectors, such as coal, cars and ending deforestation”.* But what is striking above all, is the stark choice he offers – reasons for hope contrasted with the dangers of inaction. He closes: *“Like many others, I watched ‘Don’t Look Up’. The final line has stayed with me: ‘We really did have everything, didn’t we?’ We do have everything. And we must not throw it away. There is no more time to: ‘sit tight and assess’. We must deliver. Together. Now.”*

We give thanks for the clarity and intensity of this speech and pray for the COP teams in the UK and Egypt. We pray that God will guide both them and all world leaders, so that the nations do indeed turn words into progress – and go further and faster than has already been agreed.

Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

This coming month, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is due to discuss and adopt its [latest report on climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerability](#). A [draft of the report was leaked](#) last year and made sobering reading, speaking of *“progressively serious, centuries’ long and, in some cases, irreversible consequences”* of warming over 1.5 degrees, noting that *“even at 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming, conditions will change beyond many organisms’ ability to adapt,”* and calling for *“transformational change operating on processes and behaviours at all levels: individual, communities, business, institutions and governments”* in order to avert ever more serious outcomes. We pray for wisdom for all involved in the preparation and discussion around the report. We pray, too, that nothing will stand in the way of honest setting out of the science, and that new coverage will be clear, widely heard and motivate people at every level to undertake transformational change.

Don’t despair! A reflection from Isabel

Last November I was despairing about the situation we face as a global community. Alastair McIntosh spoke directly to me at a talk I attended as part of pilgrimage towards Glasgow; *“Don’t despair – despair is a sin for Christians! Instead sorrow and lament.”* We can let our lamentations and sorrow drive and empower our responses and action. **We can be** the people who help heal the earth and make a difference. There is a growing change in public awareness of the seriousness of the issues we face, and as the impact of Covid hopefully lessens, global weirding may begin to gain the media focus it so rightly should. Strong groupings and coalitions within and between nations may strengthen our voices. The recent film ‘Don’t look up’ has been widely watched and gained mixed reviews. However, it brings a powerful message of the blinkered and short-sighted vision of both political leaders and the media.

The Fridays for Future movement remains one of the most effective global movements - though their voice has been lessened because of the limitations of Covid . Their next global day of climate action will be on **Friday March 25th 2022** – make plans to find out what is happening near you – and if nothing – ensure something will!

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” -- Anne Frank.

Following God and finding hope (ESV)

“The Lord will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, when you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply. (Deuteronomy 30: 9b-10, 15-16a)

The immediate costs of inaction

Around the world, governments often defer climate action on the grounds that they don't want to incur costs for taxpayers now, even if the long-term benefits are clear. Recent events, however, show that inaction can actually lead taxpayers to have higher costs now, as well as later. Carbon Brief has done an [analysis of the rising price of energy for householders in the UK](#) and come to the conclusion that household energy bills are currently £2.5 billion higher than they would have been if a range of green climate policies hadn't been abandoned over the past decade. Cuts to energy-efficiency subsidies, the scrapping of the zero-carbon homes standard, and policies that reduced onshore wind, they say, have left the UK with inefficient homes that are over-reliant on gas – so that when wholesale gas prices increase, as they have recently, people are vulnerable. We pray for everyone who's facing hardship because of energy prices, in the UK and worldwide. And we pray that governments everywhere will invest in greater efficiency and increased renewable energy on a large scale.

Fair Trade and climate

Some of the most important Fairtrade crops are very vulnerable to climate change. A [study](#) produced at the end of last year highlighted the extent of the threat for different products and regions. More intense cyclones pose a threat to banana farmers; heat spikes imperil coffee and tea production; heat and drought pose a risk to sugar cane and cotton; extreme rain events threaten cocoa production.

“The report's results are extremely alarming and a clarion call for immediate and comprehensive climate action,” Dr. Nyagoy Nyong'o, Global CEO of Fairtrade International, [stated](#). *“The threat to the future of many supply chains is very real and our planet's farmers and agricultural workers are on the frontline of this global climate crisis. We must do everything to ensure they are not left behind and that they are indeed a part of the solution.”*

Fairtrade International and its member initiatives have long been helping farmers reduce their emissions, develop climate resilience and access finance from carbon markets. Fairtrade standards, in addition to protecting biodiversity, require ongoing action on emissions. Educational programmes offer ideas for adaptation, and the Fairtrade premium gives farmers the means. In addition, because extreme events can bring horrific losses, Latin American Fairtrade producers have started a special fund to help with catastrophic events. And the [Fairtrade Climate Standard programme](#) enables producers to undertake carbon sequestration projects for validated carbon credits, reducing emissions and giving communities access to funds for their development.

All of this gives a model for how to help smallholder farmers adapt – but the Fairtrade movement can't do it alone. All businesses and governments also need to take action. We give thanks for the work that the Fairtrade movement is doing worldwide and pray that governments will join them in working to protect smallholder farmers by reducing emissions globally, funding adaptation, and providing for loss and damage.

Prayer

A small bird skitters outside the window,
Its claws lightly tapping the sill
Until with a sudden, swift lifting of wings
It arcs up, down, up, and soars
Wind-borne in graceful flight.

So often our fragile steps in climate care
Feel tiny, flitting along real action's edge.
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of all that lives,
Grant us courage to risk true change,
Trusting in you to carry us by grace.

Christian Concern for One World