



Reflection of the Month: Urgent: Christians and Climate Change

At the start of *Creation Time*, John Weaver writes:

What is happening to our weather? - a question echoing around the world - it's been the hottest, driest, wettest, windiest; the worst cyclone, hurricane, tornado season since records began. In 2015 the average surface temperature reached 1.010C above pre-industrial levels, and was 0.13°C warmer than 2014. Already in 2016 each month has been warmer than the previous one and we are again heading for the warmest year on record. This will continue to enhance the extreme weather events for the UK, but even more serious is the effect on food production in the developing world with reduced yields and drought.



We know the science, the anthropogenic green house gasses: CO₂, Methane, Nitrous Oxide and CFCs are the cause of global warming. The results of global warming are seen around the world, for example in the rising sea levels for the Pacific islands, water shortages for power generation and irrigation of crops in Nepal and Malawi, drought and fire risk in California and Australia, and intense weather events in various parts of the world such as India and Louisiana.

In his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato si', mi' Signore*, Pope Francis expressed his concern about our common home and the need for global, sustainable, integral, development. He maintained that the destruction and wanton disregard for the environment is both a sin against humanity and against God, demonstrated by global inequality and injustice. He observed that world leaders fail to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

There have been high hopes expressed about the discussions in Paris, and there is no doubting the historic first step that the final agreement by 195 countries represents to stave off the worst effects of catastrophic global warming, but as the White Queen offers Alice, is the Paris agreement an offer of 'jam to-morrow'? We may observe that there is a predominance of vague words, 'resolves', 'recognises', 'urges', 'emphasises', 'affirms', 'takes account of' in the COP21 agreement, lacking a legally binding commitment. Perhaps, following Paris, the world leaders will now ensure that mitigation will begin in earnest. However the noises from the Republican camp in the US are not encouraging, and in a post-Brexit Britain Theresa May's past voting record shows that she generally voted against measures to prevent climate change.

The situation is increasingly urgent. Scientists have warned that if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, we will pass the threshold beyond which global warming becomes catastrophic and irreversible. That threshold is estimated as a temperature rise of 20C above pre-industrial levels, and on current emissions trajectories we are heading for a rise of about 50C by the end of this century.

As Christians we worship God who created the universe and pronounced that it was good (Genesis 1); God who is in a covenant relationship with the whole of creation (Genesis 9). We follow Christ, who is co-creator with God (John 1:1-4), and who came to redeem the whole cosmos (John 3:16). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, God's presence in all creation, our role is to become truly Christ-like, the first fruits of the Spirit, as creation awaits complete redemption (Romans 8:18-25). We live with broken relationships (Genesis 3) in a world fractured by human rebellion, which seeks the power, control and wealth that belongs to God (Genesis 3:5). But we also live with the ultimate hope of God's promises and purposes, God who will finally renew the whole of creation (Revelation 21:1-4) and destroy those who lust after power and wealth (Revelation 19). We are accountable to God and are called to follow Christ (Mark 8:34) in his mission in and for the world. We are called to a life of self-sacrificial concern for the world and its people, and worship God through humility, justice and merciful action (Micah 6:8).

We see a growing movement of people involved in campaigning for greater, fair and more ambitious action on climate change. Christians have a central role in many countries in these movements keeping their governments accountable and pushing for more and better action both domestically and internationally. One way in which we can act individually and as churches is to sign up to the [Big Church Switch](#), launched on Ash Wednesday this year. The Big Church Switch calls on churches and individual Christians of all denominations to switch their energy supply (electricity) from fossil fuels to renewable energy, as part of their commitment to care for our neighbours and for the earth – our common home. Very many have already done so.

There is Hope. Our hope is focused and centred in God. In Colossians 1:15-20, Christ is seen as the agent of creation, the sustainer of creation and, as redeemer, the one who holds creation together. God is deeply and passionately involved in his world; God is no absentee landlord, but indwelling, accompanying, incarnate, and present as Holy Spirit. Our ultimate hope is in God and is eternal, while human hope is temporal and uncertain. Christians are called to a hopeful discipleship in the light of our ultimate hope in God's promises and purposes.

John Weaver is a Baptist minister, chair of the John Ray Initiative, connecting Environment, Science and Christianity, and formerly principal of the South Wales Baptist College and Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Cardiff University.

Mission and Creation Care Resources of the John Ray Institute:

<http://www.jri.org.uk/resources-studies/>

[Download Word document for individual direct links to specific JRI resources](#)

Other resources for Creation Time 1st Sept - 4th Oct 2016

[Churches Together in Britain and Ireland](#)

[World Council of Churches](#)

[European Christian Environmental Network](#)

[Pope Francis: Day of Prayer for Creation](#)

[Prayer for the Care of Creation](#)

[Laudato 'si resources and links](#)

[Joint Public Issues Team Reflection](#)

[Season of Creation website](#)

Church Leaders deeply saddened

Statement in response to the killing of Fr Jacques Hamel in Rouen, France



We are deeply saddened to learn of the brutal murder of our brother, 84-year old priest, Fr Jacques Hamel in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, Rouen, France. That a man of peace who had dedicated his life to serving people could be killed during Mass is testimony to the evil that drives the actions of those who commit such a crime. We offer our deepest sympathy to his family, friends and parishioners. We pray for the wellbeing of those who were taken hostage, their families and the entire community served by Fr Jacques; indeed we pray for the peace of France, Europe, the Middle East and the world for which Jesus, the Prince of Peace, gave his own life.

We call upon all people of goodwill to pray and work for justice and peace. In particular, we implore everyone to help people everywhere to pursue the path of peace and human flourishing – which is the will of Creator God.

The [Presidents](#) of Churches Together in England

27 July 2016

Notes:

1. Churches Together in England is a visible sign of the Churches' commitment to mission and unity together. It currently has 45 national [Member Churches](#)
2. The Presidents of Churches Together in England:
 - Archbishop Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury
 - Cardinal Vincent Nichols, The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster
 - Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, The Free Churches Moderator
 - HE Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, The President for the Orthodox Churches
 - The Revd Canon Billy Kennedy, The President nominated by the New Churches, the Religious Society of Friends (ie the Quakers) and the Lutheran and German-speaking Churches
 - Bishop Dr Eric Brown, The Pentecostal President

www.cte.org.uk/presidents

For further comment contact Bishop Joe Aldred, Churches Together in England.
Tel: 07775 632288 or email joe.aldred@cte.org.uk

[Other statements from faith leaders](#)
[Church Security Police Statement](#)

Church Security Police Notice

26.7.2016

Dear Church Leader



Following the terrible murder of Father Jacques Hamel in France today, and the attack on his congregation our thoughts are with their loved ones, his congregation, community and once again the people of France. We are again reminded of the indiscriminate nature of terrorism and the brutal and senseless actions of these criminals.

Other recent attacks have focussed on innocent people enjoying their freedoms, celebrating with their loved ones, and going about their daily business side by side with other communities of every faith creed and colour.

The police have been working with church leaders here in the UK to establish a communication network through which reassurance and guidance to the Christian community can be passed. This is a terrible tragedy but we must use it to test our ability to communicate to this wider network and I want to offer the following advice.

Church leaders and their congregations here in the UK should remain alert not alarmed. There is no current intelligence to suggest any attack planning of this nature in this country. However I know these are troubling times and it makes sense for all church leaders to review their security plans and to encourage their flock to be vigilant. Any suspicious behaviour should be reported immediately through 999 or the anti-terrorist hotline 0800 789 321.

Advice and guidance on personal security and security for places of worship, as with many other locations, can be found here <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-protective-security-advice-for-places-of-worship> on the National Counter Terrorism website.

In addition to this advice, commencing today, the Home Office are running a scheme for 8 weeks offering funding for protective security measures subject to application. Detailed information on how to apply can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Can I also encourage you all to forge close links with your local police commanders who will be able to advise you further on sensible safety precautions. I know many of you will already have a strong relationship in place.

Additional advice can be found at the following;

NaCTSO website: <http://www.nactso.gov.uk> & [NaCTSO Guidance Note 2/2015](#)
Run Hide Tell: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>
Suzy Lamplugh Trust: <http://www.suzylamplugh.org/>
Protect Yourself: [A guide to personal security](#)

Thank You

Neil Basu QPM, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Specialist Operations.

UK Climate Risk Review: Christian Aid Calls for Climate COBRA Group



- **Climate change is a national security threat so complex and urgent that the Prime Minister should chair cross-government task force**
- **Christian Aid report ranks UK in top 20 most exposed future coastal populations**

Christian Aid has called for a Climate COBRA Committee to handle the risks posed by global warming revealed in a new report from the Government's official advisors on climate change.

Tuesday's report from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) shows that the UK faces major risks across the board, including flooding due to sea level rise, increasing temperatures threatening water shortages, the spread of new diseases and disruption to international food production and trade. This comes after a recent [Christian Aid report Act Now or Pay Later](#), reported that the UK ranked 18th among countries with the most exposed populations in low lying coastal areas by 2030.

Tom Viita, Christian Aid's Senior Political Advisor, said the UK could not pull up the drawbridge on climate change.

"The UK is not insulated from global shocks," he said. "The impact of climate change, both here and overseas, is coming back to bite us.

"The Climate Change Committee's analysis shows red and yellow lights flashing all over the dashboard.

"The current set up of government departments has proved inept at managing cross-cutting risks and international dimensions. Instead, the new Prime Minister must chair a Climate Cobra Committee to handle these risks more effectively and with the urgency required.

"Climate change is a major threat to national security, but there is no conventional security response to climate change. Barbed wire won't work. The only solution is global cooperation to cut emissions, a rapid U-turn away from business-as-usual investment in fossil fuels and a massive acceleration in clean energy and climate adapted infrastructure."

"Climate change is happening and the risks are all too real: the choice we face is an orderly and fair transition to a low carbon economy, or massive economic and environmental shocks that will force the change."

Mr Viita added that the UK's position gave it an important role to play in tackling the problem. He said: "The report shows serious risks to the British economy and society, but the outlook is far worse for developing countries who are already experiencing climate-related shocks to their communities, food systems, and even political stability.

Read a full version of this statement:

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/472634/Home/News/Latest_news_articles/UK_Climate_Risk.aspx

Christian Aid is an Agency of Churches Together in England

SCM Connect Service Launched



Lisa Murphy from SCM writes:

Dear friends,

We would be grateful if you could share these exciting new resources in your email bulletin, on your website, on social media or in newsletters, especially with young people, youth workers, school chaplains and church leaders.

SCM Connect Service Launched

The Student Christian Movement is excited to announce the launch of SCM Connect – a new online directory where students going to university can search for, and connect to, churches and student groups in their university city or town. Churches can sign up to become 'link churches', which will automatically list their contact details in the directory. Visit www.movement.org.uk/scmconnect to access the platform.

SCM Connect business cards are available to distribute to young people, with a scannable QR code that will direct people to the platform via mobile devices such as phones or tablets. You can order these by contacting the [office via email](#).

Free Freshers' Packs and 'Going to Uni' Guides

SCM are offering free fresher's packs, which include a copy of SCM's new '[Going to Uni' guide](#), a 42-page booklet covering all the essentials to make the most of university life, from deepening faith and finding a church, to dealing with student culture and finances. Fresher's packs can be ordered by registering via SCM Connect www.movement.org.uk/scmconnect, or you can [email the office](#) on if you'd like to order copies of the 'Going to Uni' guide for your church or youth group.

Effective Student Work training, 8-9 September, Birmingham

SCM's two-day Effective Student Work training course for church or chaplaincy based student workers will take place in Birmingham on 8-9 September. Link churches receive a £25 discount, and training will cover student engagement, social media and marketing, and interfaith work, among other topics. More information and a booking form can be found on the SCM website: www.movement.org.uk

If you have any questions or require further information about any of the above, please feel free to get in touch

Lisa

Lisa Murphy, Finance and Projects Officer, Student Christian Movement (a Body in Association with Churches Together in England)

Young people integral to the 2018 Forum



The planning group for CTE's [next Forum](#) has had its first meeting and is determined that there will be a significant presence of young people. Churches will be asked to include them in their delegations and any spare places will be offered first to people under 35.

This priority was set both by the [2015 Forum](#) and by CTE's [Directors](#) who appointed Hilary Topp (photo above) as Deputy Moderator of the 2018 Forum. Hilary has been National Co-ordinator of the [Student Christian Movement](#) since 2009. A [Quaker](#) who is passionate about education, ecumenism and peace, Hilary is also a qualified science teacher and taught in Zanzibar and Sheffield before working for Pax Christi as its Peace Education Worker. She enjoys finding creative ways to facilitate meetings and events. Nothing annoys her more than conferences where people are talked at for hours in the hope they will learn something. Hilary spends her spare time growing vegetables with her son Arthur, cycling, camping, painting, and going on holiday.

In addition to Hilary, the planning group consists of Ruth Gee, Forum Moderator and Chair of the Darlington Methodist District, [David Cornick](#), CTE's General Secretary, and [Jenny Bond](#), CTE Training Resourcing and Events.

Replacement of Trident is "unwarranted" and "unethical" say Churches



The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Quakers have said that the proposals to renew the Trident nuclear weapons system are "unwarranted" and "unethical."

This announcement comes in advance of the Parliamentary debate on Trident is to take place, where the UK Government will seek approval to spend £41 billion on building new submarines to carry nuclear weapons.

The Churches have previously expressed dismay that the UK Government is resisting discussions sponsored by the United Nations on multilateral disarmament. UK Churches have been represented at Non-Proliferation Treaty conferences in New York and have sought for many years to influence Government policy on nuclear weapons. In 2015, 26 faith leaders called on the UK Government to join with others in developing a robust plan of action to lead to a world free of nuclear weapons.

With a combined membership of over one million people in the UK alone, the leaders of the five Churches are encouraging all to pray and [write to their MPs](#).

Earlier this week, the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church reiterated its opposition to the Trident nuclear weapons system and called for the negotiation of a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Alan Yates, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church said: "We appreciate that negotiations take time, but the UK must take steps down the nuclear ladder. The threats that we face today are diverse and nuclear weapons simply cannot offer security or peace for anyone."

Rachel Lampard, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference added: "It is scandalous that the UK Government has consistently opposed opportunities for discussion on multilateral disarmament. A decision to build Trident submarines now, just as talks on disarmament are due to get underway in the United Nations General Assembly, seems ill-timed and unwarranted."

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of the Quakers in Britain said: "We see something of God in everyone and seek to love our neighbours as ourselves. A teaching which is present in many religions. This means we must not threaten others with weapons of mass destruction. We will build a more secure future by modelling in our own actions the behaviour that we ask of others."

Recalling that the Church of Scotland has spoken out against nuclear weapons for thirty years, the Rt. Rev Dr Russell Barr, Moderator of the Church of Scotland said: "Attempts to sustain peace through the threat of indiscriminate mass destruction could not be further from the peace to which Christ calls us. It is vital that the UK demonstrates the sort of change it wants to see in the world; building peace through strong and courageous leadership and not by commissioning more nuclear weapons." ?

The Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society Team Leader, the Baptist Union of Great Britain added: "We have an opportunity to give strong moral leadership and to work creatively as peacemakers. We will never achieve the peace which Scripture encourages us towards with a defence policy built on fear –peace is achieved through justice and relationship, not fear."

Notes:

- For more information on the issue and to write to your MP, please visit the [Joint Public Issues website](#).
- Policy Advisor, Steve Hucklesby, and Church and Society Secretary, Grace Pengelly, are available for interview. Please email [Toby Fairclough](mailto:Toby.Fairclough) or call on 020 7567 5208.
- Earlier this year, all 8 Catholic Bishops of Scotland signed a statement in opposition to the renewal of Trident. [Click here to read the story](#).

Prisons Week

Resources for churches:

<http://prisonweek.org/about>

[Video introduction to PW](#)



Grants for women in hardship South Yorkshire Community Foundation



Karen Alsop writes about this national charity for single women living in hardship who belong to a church which is part of a Churches Together group:

Things can happen in your life and you may need help paying for personal or household items that you can't cover

South Yorkshire's Community Foundation administer the Deakin and Withers fund and this supports single, divorced or widowed women over 40, living in hardship or facing financial difficulty. To apply you must be a member of a church which is a member of Churches Together. The grant funding can support a range of essential household items or utility bills. If you are successful the award is made by cheque, within six weeks of receiving your application.

Each grant application is assessed on its own merit and help offered depending on individual circumstances. Most of our awards are for around £500.

For more information and to access an application form from South Yorkshire's Community Foundation go to our web-site www.sycf.org.uk or ring Karen Alsop on 01142 429003, if you would like to discuss making an application.

[Revised Application Form 2016](#)

Training for the task

Bookings are open for the next annual training course for New Ecumenical Officers and facilitators. For the last two years, this has been a process, involving a visit to a local ecumenical situation.

The course is run by the [National Ecumenical Officers](#) and Jenny Bond, CTE's staff member responsible for Training, Resourcing and Events. Each year the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. It is open to Ecumenical Officers and also to others who may benefit from it.



- [More information](#)
- [Book for the course](#)
- [Want to talk to someone?](#)

Inter Faith Week 13 - 20 November 2016

Inter Faith Week



This year, Inter Faith Week runs across 8 days. It begins on Remembrance Sunday, and many will wish to hold events linked to that. The additional Sunday enables other weekend events to take place.

If you are holding an event, project or other activity for the Week, please take a few minutes to register it. The event submission form for Inter Faith Week 2016 is now live at www.interfaithweek.org/submit

Why register?

If you are planning an activity to mark Inter Faith Week 2016, we hope you will take a moment and tell us about it using our [Event Registration Form](#). Filling out this form ensures your event will be displayed on our interactive Inter Faith Week map, which showcases the geographical and content diversity of each year's Week.



Scottish Interfaith Week is taking place on the same dates and, at the request of Interfaith Scotland, we are delighted that the website will also carry information on Scottish events for the first time this year.

The more detail you are able to complete, the more helpful it is to people interested in attending events and the more effectively IFN can give events profile, tell the story of the

Week and help grow its impact for future years. The map will go live soon.

When sending out social media updates, flyers, posters, emails etc. about your Inter Faith Week activities, please do include the Inter Faith Network office in the mailing. There are many ways to contact us, all listed below.

Any group with commitment to the aims of the Week and organising activities linked to it is welcome to use the Inter Faith Week logo, which can be downloaded from www.interfaithweek.org/downloads.

Contact information

Website: www.interfaithweek.org

Email: interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7730 0410 (ask for Ashley)

Twitter: @IFWeek and using the hashtag #IFWeek

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IFWeek

Fax: 020 7730 0414

Post: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH

Rural Ministry Course 1st-3rd November 2016



Louise Davis from the Arthur Rank Centre writes:

There are still a few places left on the Rural Ministry Course run by Germinate: The Arthur Rank Centre. This course is for lay and ordained who are new to rural ministry, and explores current rural contexts, mission and ministry in multiple places, leadership and working with children and young people in the countryside. It is ecumenical and suitable for those in their first appointment or wanting a refresher.

It will be held 1-3 November, at Kings Park, Northampton. Cost £245

More details and booking form: www.germinate.net/go/rmcourses

Saturday 15th October 10-4pm Coventry

For all concerned with rural ministry and mission

Arthur Rank Centre and the Churches Rural Group:Germinate

The complex block contains a promotional graphic for a Saturday event. It features the Germinate! logo with a plant sprout and the tagline "growing + equipping rural mission". To the right is the "Making it happen" logo in a handwritten style. A grey banner at the bottom contains the text "Arthur Rank Centre and the Churches Rural Group:Germinate".

And Finally ... Oxford or Trondheim?

Donald Norwood has been reporting on meetings of the World Council of Churches for many years and is currently engaged in ecumenical research in Oxford as a retired United Reformed Church minister.



In an article for the CTE website, Donald writes a personal reflection called, 'Why I missed attending the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in June'.

[Read Donald's article](#)

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