

From Crisis to Hope: What can Christian do?



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Images of the World in Crisis



Aerial view of the flooded village of Schuld, near Adenau, western Germany
[Christoph Reichwein/DPA/ AFP – *Al Jazeera* 15 Jul 2021]



The map and pictures show the extent of the damage caused by severe flooding in western Germany
[Getty Images – *The Scotsman* 22 July 2021]



Attempts to extinguish a fire in the village of Glatsona on Evia island
[Angelos Tzortzinis/AFT/Getty Images- *CNN* 10 Aug 2021]



A statue of goddess Athena is seen as wildfire burns at Varympompi, a north-eastern suburb of Athens. [Giorgos Moutafis/Reuters – *Al Jazeera* 4 Aug 2021]

God's call to stewardship

Genesis 1:27-29

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and **fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit.

... then Genesis 3:6-7a & 22-23 – eating from the tree of knowledge

Leaning on human knowledge vs. Godly wisdom

- Not against Science, as a lot of good has come from human knowledge...
... but the development of modern western scientific knowledge has managed to set up **artificial boundaries** through humanly-constructed classifications
 - **Fractured the unity and harmony of humans within creation**
- Need to turn back to trust on Godly wisdom and God's Word

Two terms that we have been 'conditioned' to think of in terms of nature and 'green' are:

- **Ecology**
- **Environment** – move to an understanding of 'environment' as inclusive of all the intertwined natural atmospheric, geophysical, hydrological and biological elements, along with the human economic, social, cultural and political aspects that surround us?

‘What is the crisis’ ... is it simply a climate crisis?

Everything is connected in creation

- Yes, there is a climate crisis... but it should not be seen in isolation.
- Rather, it should be considered in context with the two other interconnected and interrelated aspects of:
 - Loss of biodiversity, with extinctions of species
 - Impacts on society, especially people and communities in the developing world
- Having had the privilege of working with indigenous communities in various contexts, I am very aware that they have a far better understanding of integrated sustainability

Global UN responses to the crisis

- **COP26** Conference of the Parties in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – 31 October-12 November 2021 in Glasgow
- **COP15** Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – 11-15 October 2001 & 25 April-8 May 2002 in Kunming, Yunnan Province, PRC

- The United Nations SDG's



Christians' hope for the world in Christ

John 3:16-17 ESV

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him”. [Jesus’s response to the Pharisee Nicodemus]

Christians' hope for the world in Christ

Romans 8:18-23 ESV

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **For creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that now creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Colossians 1: 19-20

For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him **God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.**

A Rocha UK & COP26



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Eco Church



Wild Christian



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Christians, churches and COP26

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COP26 News



Towards COP26:
being

August 5, 2021



Finding your voice

August 5, 2021



Christians, churches
and COP26

August 5, 2021



<https://arocha.org.uk/christians-churches-and-cop26/>

A Rocha UK's Key Messages around COP26

- 1. COP 26 is the chance to push state parties to work towards keeping rising temperatures below 1.5 degrees**
- 2. No matter what the outcome of COP26, Churches and individuals will need to step up their own action on climate change**
- 3. At COP26, A Rocha UK is calling for:**
 - Ambitious targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions cuts
 - Climate finance promises fulfilled
 - Working with nature

4. Key actions for people to focus on can be summarised as:

- **Shout** for the government to deliver on current medium term UK emissions targets
- **Stop** doing anything that causes fossil fuel emissions, or harms the carbon sinks
- **Start** doing more/anything you can to convert more to renewable energy and restore carbon sinks
- **Sustain yourself** for the long term, by joining others - as church or individuals - to keep up your motivation and ideas for the long haul. **Consider joining A Rocha UK's *Wild Christians***, as a sustaining community for individuals and families, and start campaigning through it.
- **Scale up:** look for ways of widening the number of people taking action
- **Sow:** get the next generation involved

5. Join/advance through Eco Church faster, as a sustaining community for your church, and join up with churches or other groups to influence local climate plans and council policies which could affect local emissions and carbon sinks

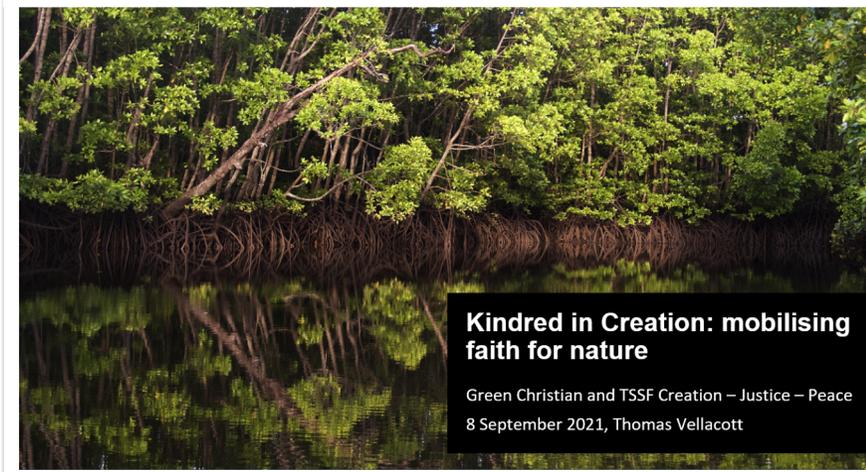
6. Christians have a double biblical mandate to work in eco-stewardship

- We should desire to care for God's creation because he made it and loves it, and a stable climate system is part of God's creation, vital to the existence of nature and people
- In Matthew 22: 37-39 we are commanded to love God and our neighbour - the poor and vulnerable among us - and climate change is harming them now and jeopardizing the future of younger generations

7. We need to take both practical action and campaign

Personal Action for Christians

(from a workshop presentation by Thomas Vellacott, CEO of WWF Switzerland)



Levers of action

	Food	Housing	Transport	Investing	Rewilding
Lifestyle choices					
Community action					
Holding decision- makers to account					

Our relationship with our environments

Personal Action for Christians

1. Combine action at different levels, from personal lifestyle choices to community action to holding decision-makers to account
2. Pick a small number of relevant actions to focus on
3. Don't try to get all your personal lifestyle choices right
4. Don't despair. Don't carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. Societal change is the sum of many small changes. It's rarely linear.

'The Time Is Now' Declaration

<https://thetimeisnow.uk/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'The Time Is Now' website. At the top left is the logo 'THE TIME IS NOW' with 'NOW' in green. At the top right is a 'Menu' button with a hamburger icon. The main heading is 'THE TIME IS NOW' in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below it is a sub-heading: 'Use your voice to tell politicians that you want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans to rebuild a strong economy.' In the center, a dark blue speech bubble contains the number '152,826' and the text 'SIGNATURES SO FAR'. Below this is a red button with white text: 'READ & SIGN OUR DECLARATION NOW →'. The background is a light blue sky with white clouds and birds. The bottom of the page features a green landscape with stylized houses, trees, people celebrating, a person on a bicycle, and wind turbines.

THE TIME IS
NOW

Menu

THE TIME IS NOW

Use your voice to tell politicians that you want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans to rebuild a strong economy.

152,826
SIGNATURES SO FAR

READ & SIGN OUR DECLARATION NOW →

Concluding comments

- Let us make sure that we understand and are informed
- Let us keep up the calls on government and decision-makers
- Let us take action – individually and in community
- Let us share the hope in Christ
- Let us pray

Thank you!