

who suffer. This means that all suffering must be of concern to Christians. If we think of nature as abused and oppressed, Christ becomes recognised in polluted waters and animals becoming extinct from the destruction of their habitats by rising temperatures.

When we identify ourselves as belonging to Christ and incarnating Christ in our lives, then we are wounding and crucifying our own bodies whenever our actions damage others, human or non-human. On the other hand, we are being restored to health and life when we take the time and make the effort to work with nature for its healing.

Brett, Mark G. (2008). *Decolonizing God: The Bible in the tides of the Empire*. Sheffield, Sheffield Phoenix Press.

Flannery, Tim. (2008). Now or never: A sustainable future for Australia? *Quarterly Essay*, 31, 1-66.

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(29.11.15)

A Christian Response to Climate Change



Death and life, fear and love, difference and similarity are all present when considering the issue of climate change. It is a problem particular to our own time and context; a global problem with an Australian face. Today humans have the power to destroy much life on planet earth. It can be through the use of nuclear energy in warfare or accidents, or by allowing global warming to take the world to a place de-

scribed by Tim Flannery as “between a tipping point and a point of no return”, (Flannery, 2008, p.25). Such a place will engender wars with desperate people fighting for food, water and land. Future life in Australia will need to adapt to a harsh climate and probably an increase in refugees.

It is tempting for ordinary Australians to consider the problem of climate change as too large and complex to address, and better left to scientists to solve and politicians to make the necessary decisions on our behalf. In this situation nature can become a political tool, an object that is used. Instead, I suggest, that nature, a creation of God like us, should be treated as a respected and valued subject that is necessary for maintaining our life.

Many farmers and others recognise how the climate has changed rapidly in recent years, and that a different relationship to our environment is required. We need to understand nature better, appreciate something of its mystery and work *with* it rather than against it.

Mark G. Brett from a postcolonial perspective, suggests that, “Rather than subduing the earth, we need to cultivate new habits of *making space* for the natural order” (Brett, 2008, p.183). Nature has rights which can conflict with human and economic rights. Each new permit granted for mining exploration can threaten nature’s place.

Recent studies of the coral reefs has shown that curtailing over-fishing, water pollution and habitat destruction is enabling some reef species to recover. Farmers who work with nature to increase the yield of their land are at the same time able to remove carbon from the atmosphere (Flannery, 2008, p.48).

Christians can identify earth as not only a co-creator with God as in Genesis 1:25, but as a co-redeemer with humans and a Christ embodied in all creation. All humans need to make sacrifices to allow nature the room and strength to heal if we are all to live.

Basic to Christianity is the command to love God and neighbour. The story in Luke 10:29-36, told by Jesus to illustrate loving our neighbour, describes the Good Samaritan, an out-cast, being a ‘neighbour’ to a suffering victim who has been robbed and left to die. The success of the caring action of the Good Samaritan depended on oil, wine, a cooperative donkey and a willing inn-keeper. Humans and nature working together.

Alternatively, the ‘victim’, seen as nature, can be considered the ‘neighbour’ damaged by the actions of humans and relying on other humans for assistance.

In Matthew 25:35-36, Jesus identifies himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, strangers and prisoners, in fact all