



**South Lanarkshire Network**  
**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at 7:30 pm**  
**Burnside Blairbeth Church – Main Hall, Burnside Building**

**Note of meeting**

**1. Welcome & opening prayer**

- Everyone was welcomed to Burnside Blairbeth Church.
- The meeting was opened in prayer.

**2. Theological foundation**

- Gordon Hudson presented a short talk that illustrated/emphasised the Christian mandate for creation care and environmental stewardship.

**3. Christian Aid work**

- Christian Aid showed a short film and described the situation and suffering that people are experiencing in various parts of the world as a consequence of climate change: e.g. more frequent droughts in Kenya; loss of glaciers and reduced water yields for crops in Peru; glacier melt leading to flooding and soil erosion in Bangladesh.
- Christian Aid campaigns for social and environmental justice and this extends to climate change. Because of climate change, weather is becoming more erratic and there are more storms, droughts, typhoons etc. The lifestyles of people in the developed world are often unsustainable and have greatest impact on the poorer people on the planet.
- There is hope, viz: (1) Christian Aid is working more closely and directly with people affected by climate change or at risk of being so affected (e.g. reinforcing houses affected by flooding; supporting construction of cyclone shelters; solar energy schemes). Need to help poorer countries develop in cleaner and more sustainable ways.

**4. Eco-congregations**

- Gordon Hudson of ECS presented a talk on the role and work of eco-congregations.
- Climate change, *inter alia*, is increasing water stress, creating problems for fuel security, and leading to higher prices for commodities.
- 20% of Scotland's C emissions come from Grangemouth oil refinery, 20% from road traffic, and 20% from Longannet power station in Fife.
- Climate Change Act GHG (greenhouse gas) emission targets (ref. 1990 baseline): 42% reduction by 2020; 80% by 2050. Current projections indicate

we are on course to reduce emissions by 35%. Targets are achievable and we all need to play a part. CC is a fundamental justice issue; hence churches and government are so involved.

- ECS is involved in Scottish Government's public engagement strategy because faiths influence behaviour. 284 eco-congregations, 95 award winning churches, will rise to 100 very soon. ECS is also working with the Roman Catholic Church and up to 100 R.C. congregations could be added to the list of Eco-Congregations in Scotland in due course.
- Practical response to climate change: (1) campaigning coordinated through others (e.g. Christian Aid); (2) measure church carbon footprint and encourage church members to do same; then strive to reduce this (e.g. reduced travel to and from church; heat and lighting; energy conservation; use halls appropriately); (3) promote sustainable transport and food production.
- ECS is working with Church of Scotland to produce ecumenical material for worship (e.g. for creation time).
- From October 2012, ECS will be assigning a mentor to help churches that have just registered for ECS. "If 10-11% people change their behaviour towards the environment then the rest will follow". Church attendance in Scotland is circa 11% and many folk are loosely connected with churches: e.g. fair-trade coffee; in 1980s, churches were the only place where could get this, yet through this foundation, fair-trade coffee and sustainable living have increased considerably. Diane Greene referred to the book "Nudge" as one which considers how we can influence others. Diane mentioned a recent requirement for FTSE 100 companies to disclose their GHG emissions; we can then exercise green consumerism. John Weir said that if a company doesn't demonstrate social responsibility through its annual report then we can opt not to use them.

## 5. Q&A Session: What can we do?

- Gordon Hudson (GH) encouraged churches to recognise, do, and respond to *Creation Time* see <http://www.operationnoah.org/creationtime>
- GH also said that ECS is getting involved in training of ministers so that creation care is a more prominent part of training. Getting through to ministers on this topic is a challenge.
- Comment: The green flag has reached 90% of all schools (it is mandatory) so we could build on this foundation (common ground) in spreading our Christian message to schools.
- Comment: The school *Curriculum for Excellence* was mentioned and the recognition of need to progress environmental projects in the community. The value of working with children was highlighted.
- Comment: A lot of churches are already doing good eco-practices but haven't made the 'jump' to registering with ECS – need catalyst.

- GH highlighted the influence of faith (c.f. cost-savings) as a means through which public behaviour to climate change and sustainable living can be affected. *Common Cause* pioneered by World Wildlife Fund. GH also referred to the Scottish Government's *My Green Plan* see <http://www.greenerscotland.org>
- Comment: UN [Millennium Development goals](#) run out in 2015 so Christian aid is looking to progress climate change action and sustainable living through the justice agenda.
- Comment: Churches are worrying too much about their own survival in terms of numbers and finance and need to think and work beyond this and help to realise the bigger picture.
- Comment: Christians should be encouraged to see creation care and sustainable living as a biblical injunction, one at the core of scripture.

## 6. Reflections

- “If we don’t do something about climate change then we will make poverty permanent”.
- “We need to learn to live simply so that others can simply live”.
- “Think globally, act locally”.

## 7. The meeting ended with The Grace.

*15 July 2012*

*Please note that names have been removed for data protection purposes*