

Care of Creation Blog – January 2019

My contacts in Auckland groups in A Rocha, Climate Action Network and NZ Christians in Science are not telling me of any group action, it being holiday time, but the world has not stopped and neither have the news media ceased telling us of greater things than Santa parades and what you got for Christmas. My concern is how we in NZ can avoid the sort of thing that has upset France.

We are indeed receiving more detailed news of what can be done about Climate Change, but one has to look it up. Our daily TV news carries a lot of advertisements and most of them are for conventional petrol and diesel vehicles. This is what people are seeing, not much on electric cars or the plans for hydrogen powered buses and trucks. Dealers regularly selling EVs see no need for a lot of expensive advertising. We need more or we could find the ordinary person driving a gasoline powered vehicle protesting that driving has become too expensive for them to get to work. The French story is a warning to all.

Fortunately, we now see action from businesses issuing shopping bags to customers instead of single use plastic bags, and groups of cities in USA and elsewhere going “green” and CEO’s in Australia and New Zealand meeting to discuss what they can do in their businesses. It is not all a matter left to politicians.

Religions naturally go first to their holy books and have problems with the work of scientists many of whom have no religious faith, but in some cases traditional readings have missed interpretations that support what the scientists are saying. For instance, Jesus upset people tied to the idea that one should not eat certain foods. His parables are full of stories drawn from the natural surroundings, and He told Pilate that truth is what is important.

It takes time and investment for discoveries of new microbes or chemical catalysts which we can use in our work, and it is taking time and persuasion to get through to those whose aeroplanes, ships and cars are powered by fossil fuels. Chemists are finding new ways to capture CO₂ and plant breeders, discovering how plants use CO₂, have tried changing their DNA so that crops can do it more efficiently and produce 40% more. They are thinking of how to feed the growing population. On the other hand, a writer for the Herald, considering his baby daughter’s future, says there are 100 companies world wide who are still selling us fossil fuels. I wonder how accurate he is and who is listening.

Some strange things are reported. It is claimed that if solar panels and wind farms were used around the Sahara to generate electricity for Europe the disturbance of air at different levels would enable growth of plants in what was once fertile land. Work goes on in the scientific world exploring lately the temperature of water deep down in the oceans where warming of upper layers has not penetrated. There is so much we do not know. On the other hand, reporters are not slow to tell of teenagers and people from low lying islands who complain that there is a lot of talk about climate change but little action.

Jim Hunt - njimihunt@outlook.com