Module 4: Globalisation and Faith Work Diary

1. Introduction

a. What is Globalisation?

Read Globalization (Steger, 2003) as recommended by Martin Hodson.

Questions:

What impacts of globalisation can you identify in your own life and in your immediate locality? Have these led to improvements in your life? If so, has this been at the cost of others elsewhere?

Globalisation is evident all around me in my home. The clothes I am wearing are produced by multinational companies, likely with materials from a variety of countries and in factories in the far east. The food we ate for breakfast was grown in one country, processed in another and sold in the UK, but a multinational company. The technology in our house comes from a complex supply chain from many nations, companies and transport routes. And the ability for me to study this course is a result of globalisation, with reliance on the internet to carry out research and reading, and dependence on email to stay in touch with my tutor. Our local area is impacted by globalisation, despite the apparent rural idyll of the English countryside on display. The prime agricultural land is producing crops destined for other countries as well as domestic consumption[1], the farmers are currently receiving grants from the EU to manage their land sensitively. The nearby port used to be a thriving fishing town but this decade has seen the last fishermen leave the industry[2]. There are many reasons for this, but they include tighter regulations by the EU, declining fish stocks due to the 'tragedy of the commons' and cheaper imports from other countries – these all have connections to globalisation. Looking around at the cars on the roads the majority are produced in different countries, again with complex global supply and production chains. The fuel these cars consume is has become reliant on imported petroleum in this decade[3] as consumption increases and production decreases. The emissions these cars produce have global impacts, contributing to global warming and anthropocentric climate change.

The impact of globalisation in my rural area is profound. Has it brought improvements to my life? Yes, many. I have more choice over what to buy, eat, wear, drive, watch, listen and read. I can also access many of these things at affordable prices, because the pounds I earn have strong buying power in a global

[1] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-41412717
[2] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/earthnews/6796366/Towns-last-fisherman-driven-out-of-business-by-EU-rules.html
[3] https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=16971

marketplace. I have also been fortunate to travel to many different parts of the world and explore new cultures and environments to widen my understanding and enjoyment of life.

I am certainly aware that this lifestyle we benefit from in the UK comes at a cost to other people in other places. The work I do assesses whether environmental impacts are spread justly between different countries and communities[4]. The research demonstrates that growing vast palm oil plantations in Indonesia to satisfy the UK's demand for processed foods comes at great cost to the local communities and their local environments. We also assess the impact of carbon trading schemes that western nations have designed to mitigate their production of carbon dioxide on developing countries, and see that even schemes that mean well can have unintended consequences. Our researchers also assess the impact of mining and dams on indigenous communities who aren't literate in western law and struggle to defend themselves against multinational companies intent on extracting resources for global consumption. The costs and benefits of globalisation are not equally shared, and the playing field of trade is not even.

How are faith groups reacting to these influences?

Faith groups are concerned with justice and poverty, because these are major themes in the Bible: "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8. As a result, Christians have long been passionate about ending unjust global impacts, from the days of the slave trade, to the Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel third world debt. In present times, the church is starting to speak out on climate change (e.g. The Pope's Laudato Si[5], Christian Aid's Big Shift campaign[6]) and promoting better ways of doing globalisation (e.g. Traidcraft fair trading[7]) or advocating simple living initiatives to reduce our personal consumption footprints (e.g. plastic-less Lent[8], A Rocha's Living Lightly[9]). These are positive examples, but they do pose the risk of appearing judgemental to non-Christians.

b) Two contrasting views

Is globalisation a real phenomenon or a myth? This issue was explored in Steger (2003) in a similar vein. In reality I think both views have some truth in them.

c) Cosmic economics and UK farming

This is an issue I am all to aware of, working in catchment management for some years. An awareness amongst farmers that they had a duty to grow as much food as possible so the UK could be more self-sufficient in food production, whilst knowing the pressures that the environment is under as a result. The

[4] http://www.uea.ac.uk/global-environmental-justice
[5] https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf
[6] https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change-campaign
[7] http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/about-traidcraft
[8] https://ruthvalerio.net/green-living-2/plastic-less-lent-2018/
[9] http://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/living-lightly-take-action/

answer seems to be reducing demand, through reducing food waste (at all parts of the production and consumption process), reducing consumption by well off sections of society who don't need to consume as much as they are, and also changing our eating habits to ones which are more sustainable, for example, vegetarian and vegan diets which require less resources than a meat and dairy based diet. The problem of food poverty in developing countries, particularly African nations struggling with drought and desertification, are much more profound than the UK struggles. There isn't an easy answer to these problems, as researchers I work with know all too well. The drive for agricultural intensification in African nations to assist subsistence farmers to have a hand up and out of poverty means well, but often results in unintended negative consequences. For example, forest edge habitat gets converted into farmed land, and the communities who depended on the forest for their livelihoods lose out; it can lead to dependence on expensive fertilisers and pesticides, which have environmental consequences (as well as often enabling multinational corporations to gain control e.g. Monsanto); it can reduce local knowledge of plant varieties as farmers are persuaded to use certain types of seed to gain bigger yields.

d) The tsunami of 2004

Although some time ago, I remember this well. My husband and I had returned from our 6 month back-packing honeymoon around Asia and Australasia earlier that year, and knowing it could so easily have been us caught in it was very scary. Of course, our horror was deeper than that, we were thinking of the people whose lives were devastated, human beings just like us, so frail and feeble against the force of nature. Thinking of the application of this case study to the concept of globalisation is interesting. Often, as an environmentalist and a Christian with compassion for communities in developing countries, I think globalisation is generally bad. Capitalism is often synonymous with greed, which leads to inequality and injustice, which leads to oppression and poverty. The environment isn't valued and is therefore plundered. But considering the tsunami example, the globalised nature of human relations enabled the kind and generous nature of people to act fast and effectively, thus globalisation was working for good. This has prompted me to think of other examples related to my work. I am involved in a research project called the Environmental Justice Atlas[10]. *The EJ Atlas is a teaching, networking and advocacy resource. Strategists, activist organizers, scholars, and teachers will find many uses for the database, as well as citizens wanting to learn more about the often invisible conflicts taking place.* This surely is another example of using global technology, to connect groups and individuals from around the world to link up and testify against environmental injustices in their localities. People can therefore see they are not alone, and connect with other groups struggling against injustice in other places. Such a tool could be influential in holding multi-national corporations to account for their activities. I have also been part of a group which has created an Environmental Justice MOOC[11] (Massive Open Online Course) which is available for free to anyone around

[10] https://ejatlas.org/
[11] https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/environmental-justice

the world with an internet connection. Globalisation is therefore enabling people from all over the world to access top quality learning resources from leading researchers, all for free, and it has also been an excellent way for people interested in this subject to link up with each other.

What are the ethical foundations for strategies to meet the challenges of increasing limited resources for a growing global population?

The Bible calls us to 'Act justly and love mercy' Micah 6:8, and I think these should be the ethical foundations for this issue. A growing global population in a planet with finite resources will ultimately result in scarcity of those resources. Scarcity will equal price rises, poverty and lack. We need to have compassion for the poor (mercy), to be motivated to fix the injustice. We need to seek justice for people with less power and money, by understanding how global trade and tariffs affect them, and lobbying for change when the rules are unfair. We need to value the environment properly by recognising the services it provides and accounting for the negative environmental impacts of consumption into the cost of goods and services. We need to rethink where we are exporting the impacts of our excessive lifestyles onto poorer people (e.g. climate change affecting poorer nations, waste being exported overseas, dirty industries being located in poor neighbourhoods). In a global economy, these foundations need to be set at a global level, as well as being modelled in nation states and individuals' lifestyles.

What are the important connections between global economics, climate change and recent exceptional catastrophes?

Globalisation = capitalism = more carbon released (e.g. transport, growth, consumption) = more climate change = more extreme weather more often = more deaths, casualties and destruction.

2. Globalisation or cosmopolitanism?

a) The process of cosmopolitanism

b) The Indian Cuisine

This is a really useful example of how globalisation affects what we believe to be true, how cultures overlap and boundaries become blurred in the modern connected world.

3. Global covenant and global governance

a) The 'Washington Consensus'

This is a term used to describe the current prevailing economic conditions of capitalist, market driven forces, based on models put forward by the USA. David Held puts forward an alternative to this, the Global Covenant, which includes global structures which ensure the market forces do not go unchecked. His standpoint is to create a structure of global governance which can make a positive change against the negative aspects of globalisation, through economics, politics and law.

b) Cosmopolitan principles

He sets out cosmopolitan principles which will form the foundation of these changes, including affirming terminology such as dignity, agency, accountability, consent, voting, inclusion, sustainability. The essence of Held's approach is for humans to sort out the mess we have got ourselves in. As Christians, do we support this anthropocentric approach, as our responsible part to play in the world's affairs?

c) Is there a global civil society?

How does the concept of civil society illuminate your own thinking on the subject of globalisation?

I think civil society is certainly becoming globalised. Awareness is growing amongst the general public that environmental challenges are happening on a global scale, through significant media coverage (for example, melting ice caps and stranded polar bears), through popular TV programmes (for example, BBCs Blue Planet II with plastic in the oceans), and from scientists and NGOs communicating results of empirical research and citizen science respectively (for example, decline of insect numbers and bees specifically). Worldwide movements are being organised by civil society on a global scale, for example the climate coalition[12] and the plastic pollution coalition[13]. In the age of social media and internet connectivity, it is very easy for civil society to mobilise, connect and communicate their messages.

Do you see signs of the church or other organisations becoming more active in international networks and relationships in ways which reflect a growing global civil society?

Yes, the church is certainly becoming more active in international networks. The Climate Coalition, an grouping of 130 civil society organisations has 26 faith members[14], many of whom are Christian organisations. By joining forces with like-minded organisations, the church's voice is heard and is strengthened. I am encouraged by these coalitions. They seem to have a culture of honour and respect for the uniqueness of each individual organisations purpose and calling, whilst recognising that by working together to achieve a common goal their shared purpose outweighs their differences. I'm not sure of the evidence, but I expect governments and companies are more likely to listen to a large coalition of organisations with a common message, than many smaller organisations lobbying with slightly different messages.

What global reach activities is a Christian NGO implementing and why?

I looked at Tearfund's website and this is what they care about:

- Poor communities
- Marginalised groups

[12] https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/
[13] http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org
[14] https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/faith-members/

- Vulnerable adults
- Children
- The local church
- Gender and relationships
- Education
- Conflict
- Disasters
- Climate change
- Hunger
- Clean water and toilets

Nearly all of Tearfund's work is based in developing countries, and much of their work is related to globalisation. Climate change is an obvious global effect of industrialisation on a global scale, but less obvious perhaps is disasters, often exacerbated by climate change, e.g. severe flooding and storms. Hunger is also exacerbated by climate change, and often perpetuated by global trade rules and land grabs by global companies.

4. The Faith Perspective

a) Blurring and sharpening

This refers to the change in perspective of matters of faith as a result of globalisation.

Blurring occurs as a result of the increased interaction between different faiths and/ or spiritualities, and a freedom within society to pick and choose elements from these to create one's own spiritual identity.

Sharpening is the polar opposite, where faith groups respond to the pressures of blurring by affirming clear boundaries to doctrine, practice and traditions in order to retain purity and identity.

b) The social construction of identity

In response to pressures of globalisation, faith groups tend to adopt one of three strategies, outlined by Castells (2001):

1. Legitimising identity – dominant institutions follow this path, extending and rationalising their power, keeping people within safe boundaries and traditions
2. Resistance identity – institutions who feel under pressure or outside dominant discourse follow this path, attempt to stay the same, being a safe-haven in a hostile world
3. Project identity – actors attempt to construct new identities to redefine their relationship with those in power and seek to change social structures that oppress them

Different faith groups fall into different categories. Those interested in social change to combat injustice are working in the 'Project identity' strand, this would include Christian NGOs. Larger faith institutions which hold government power in Islamic countries would be an example of the 'Legitimising identity' category. Institutions like the Church of England and the Baptist Union are probably within the 'Resistance identity' category and society becomes less interested in what the church has to say, they are trying to retain their followers and their beliefs nonetheless.

c) The local and the global

The globalised world we live in now provides us with a huge range of information, which is often too much for us to process individually, and at a local church level. There are significant challenges affecting our local areas, and we are also aware of all the challenges affecting other areas. As Jesus calls us to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, visit the prisoners, speak for those who have no voice, how do we decide what to do? The need is so great, and globalisation has made us all aware of how great the need is worldwide. This brings tension between people of faith who feel called to fight injustice on a global level, and for those who feel called to affect change in their own communities. It brings conflict within individuals, as I myself struggle to work out which organisations I should support financially, where should I invest my time and talents, and which issues should I call out for change on.

How does blurring and sharpening occur in a rural church congregation?

In many contexts in the UK, the rural church is trying hard to survive in the face of dwindling attendance and aging congregations. In different churches this can have different results. Some are likely sharpening their traditions, so those attending feel amongst the familiar. I would suspect many small Anglican churches are part of this group. Others realise they need to reinvent themselves, by blurring their activities, not usually with other religions, but perhaps with other spiritualities or outlooks. Some churches are returning to Celtic roots, others are (re)discovering the discipline of pilgrimage (apparently more Spaniards participate in the Camino Del Santiago than attend church now), others are adopting youth culture by embracing Christian rap, rock and pop music and attending festivals (e.g. Big Church Day Out). Some (most?) churches are in tension between both polarities. For example, our church for some years has changed one Sunday a month to café church, where we have no sermon or songs, but sit together sharing food and drink and discussing topical issues and enjoy games together. We welcome some people on these days who don't attend any other services, but equally some of the congregation come every other week apart from café church because it is not 'proper church'.

How would you describe the evolution of sense of identity in yourself or someone you know well in recent years, and how does this impact upon social and community relationships?

I have gone to church all my life and it has always been a central part of my life. I am continuously baffled by some of the traditions churches have, which seem so far away from secular society, and not really

evident in my reading of the Bible. I have probably always been a bit of a rebel, questioning why things are done the way they are done, and looking for better ways of serving and reaching people for Jesus. I think that puts me in the 'Project identity' category. I seek to think radically and not just fit in the mould of a 'normal' church for the sake of tradition. I am blessed to be part of a church that has dynamism in its DNA. We adopt new models of employing 'ministers', encouraging 'membership' and managing leadership which are seeking to fit better within the society we operate in, as opposed to traditional methods. We seek to be in the world, but retain the core tenets of our faith. We work with schools, colleges, social services and philanthropic trusts to serve our community, rather than standing in isolation like a 'resistance identity' church would. We run a community café to love and serve our village, and welcome hundreds of people into our 'place of worship/ community café' every week. We employ talented and wonderful staff who are non-Christians, and pray God would touch them as they work in the blessed building alongside the church volunteers. I very much believe we are called to be salt and light in our communities, working alongside the secular organisations and our local community, whilst having integrity and generosity in our activities and lifestyles to 'be Jesus' day in, day out.

Assess what sort of a local you are in practical terms

I think I am probably an affirmative local most of the time, sometimes a resistant local. I realise globalisation is here to stay, and I recognise the benefits that brings to my life. I enjoy being part of a small village community, with its school and facilities, and seek to use the services within the local area to keep them going. I value the local church we are part of and the mission we do in our local area. The majority of my friends and a good number of my family live locally as well. I have travelled the world in my teens and twenties, but now we have children we seek to save our money and reduce our carbon footprint by holidaying in the UK. We split our giving between our local church and charities which work on a global scale, almost 50:50. In many ways my life is split between the local and the global. I never consider myself an insular local for this reason. I am also not an exclusionary local, as I believe countries should work together, people should be free to live where they choose, and that change to local areas is inevitable and often positive. On occasion I am a resistant local, if there is something important to fight against, for example development of wildlife rich land, or cuts to school grants or pollution of local water sources.

5. Globalisation and power

a) 'Empire' in today's world

Hardt and Negri talk about how western global capitalism is the empire taking over the world now, with no effective alternatives to hold back its spread. Western capitalism is slowly absorbing all nation states into itself, and requiring those nation states to comply with its ways of working. Instead of significant large alternatives that existed previously, like communism, there may be resistance from other ways. One

example that comes to mind is the organisation Local Futures[15] founded by Helena Norbert Hodge. Their mission is to '*protect and renew ecological and social well being by promoting a systemic shift away from economic globalization towards localization'*.

b) 'Enclosures' and 'Thresholds'

Hardt and Negri assert that everyone is within the capitalism system, this is what they mean by capitalism being an enclosure. Therefore any resistance must be birthed from inside the system. A threshold is when someone or some group of people get frustrated at being trapped within the system and desire to break out of it.

What evidence do you see that there be either incremental or revolutionary changes or will the system self-destruct in any case as we reach the environmental limits of growth?

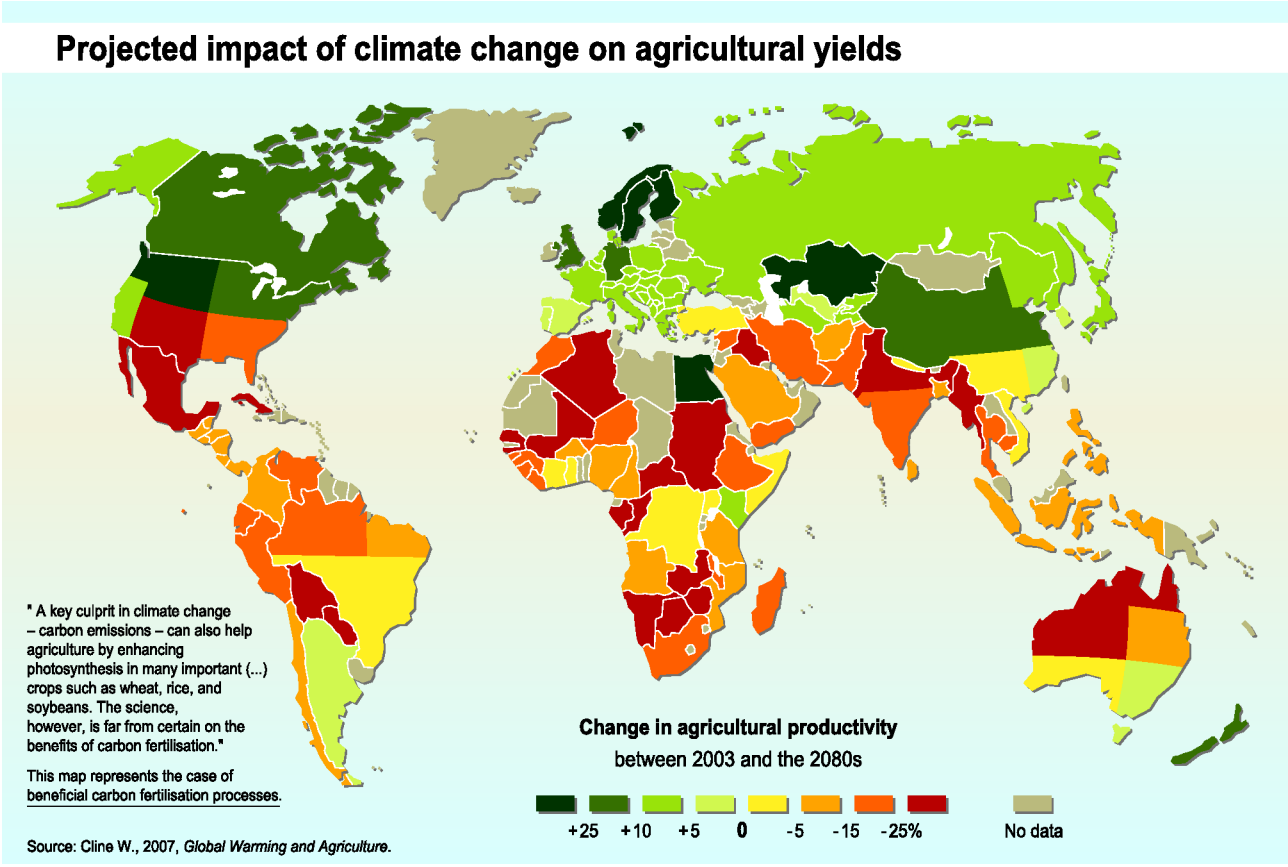
I think there will mainly be incremental changes as awareness is raised about the damage our consumption patterns are having on the planet and its inhabitants. Little by little people will make better choices as they learn more. For revolutionary changes to come in, political will is needed (often reached by incremental pressures of lobbying by NGOs). For example, in the UK Friends of the Earth were instrumental in achieving the 2003 Household Waste Recycling Act which enabled all UK citizens to have a doorstep recycling collection[16]. This enabled every person to easily adapt their lifestyle in order to reduce the impact on the environment. Recently, the momentum around plastic has reached a tipping point. Ruth Valerio discusses how this revolution in awareness and behaviour came about[17]. It is wonderful to see that resistance to single use plastic, both because it is a colossal waste of resources and has a massive polluting impact in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, has suddenly got the capitalist businesses tripping over themselves to be moving away from it. Praise God that change can happen! Praise God for David Attenborough and the BBC, and the many unsung heroes who have been campaigning on this issue for many years!

I can't yet conceive of self-destruction of western global capitalism. I think greed and ignorance are powerful forces, and we are already pillaging the earth and leaving millions destitute without the system breaking. It could be sometime before the countries in the temperate 'west' feel the impacts of our consumption, which are currently being felt in the poorer global south. The map below from the European Environment Agency[18] shows that the richer nations, predominantly in the northern hemisphere (but also parts of Australia and New Zealand), are likely to see an increase in agricultural yields (of up to 25%) as climate change extends the growing season in these temperate zones. The injustice is evident. The countries who are poorer, who have smaller carbon footprints (both presently and historically) are located in the tropics where climate change will reduce agricultural yields by up to 25%. The countries holding the

[15] https://www.localfutures.org/about/
[16] https://friendsoftheearth.uk/about-us/recycling-bill-success-how-we-got-uk-recycling
[17] https://ruthvalerio.net/environment/five-ingredients-reach-tipping-point/
[18] https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/projected-impact-of-climate-change

power of the western global capitalist system are unlikely to check their behaviour in the near future if they do not feel the pain of their excesses. The nation state democracies still need to show they are bringing benefits back to their voters from their involvement in globalised governance. Therefore, in the foreseeable future I cannot conceive of a self-destruction of global capitalism, only a continuation of absorb and manage, with some occasional checks and balances hard won by NGOs.

The increase in western globalised capitalism continues unabated, with many developing countries aggressively pursuing an economic growth trajectory similar to the Global North. Recent research[19] carried out by the School of International Development at UEA has found that growth in trade between developing countries has tripled between 2005 and 2015. Countries like India and China are following the Global north countries model of re-locating their production industries to less developed nations like Indonesia and Vietnam, thus cascading the globalisation effect further, and increasing its momentum.



How do our theological resources help Christians to make sense of these matters and how do we respond given the complexities of our own communities and beliefs?

Reading the Bible gives us a pattern for managing society and looking after the earth. It is very different to the global capitalist system we live within today. Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). As a Christian, my value system is rooted in Scripture, and in my own personal experience of the character

[19] http://www.uea.ac.uk/about/-/new-phase-of-globalisation-could-undermine-efforts-to-reduce-co2-emissions

of God. It helps to have an anchor point with which to stand firm when the tide around is strong and changeable. Christians can have a vision of what a just and loving society might look like, which is always a good place from which to call for change. We can also take strength from standing in partnership with God and our fellow believers as we live different lives, being salt and light in a very dark world, we aren't seeking alternatives alone. We also don't need to despair, because "we have a hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11) and God will renew the earth: "Behold! I am making everything new" (Revelation 21:5). This hope sets us apart from other campaigners, who often speak doom and gloom.

Read relevant chapters (5 and 11) of *Creation in Crisis* (White, 2009) and the excellent book *Globalisation and the New Discontents* (Stiglitz, 2017).

6. Global Spirituality

a) Going green

The critique of Christian organisations 'jumping on the bandwagon' of the green movement because it is trendy does resonate with me in part, though I would still say that in my experience of church the environment is on the fringe. I have been part of the Baptist family my whole life and last month was the first time in my awareness that the Baptist Union magazine had a focus on the environment / God's creation. Of course, as a supporter of charities like Tearfund and Christian Aid, I know these organisations have been campaigning for God' earth and the injustices related to environmental harm for many years. Perhaps the increasing prominence in the past 30 years is a result of greater awareness of the damage humans are wreaking on the environment, and is therefore a justified response, not just a politically acceptable viewpoint. My feeling is does the motivation matter? As long as Christian organisations are striving for better environmental stewardship, both in-house and on the lobbying front, that is surely a good thing, whether it comes out of response to Scripture and inner spirituality, or whether it comes out of response to increasing public awareness of the threats?

What would you suggest to the leadership of your church for going green?

Our church is currently working towards the Bronze EcoChurch Award, which is run by A Rocha. Through this, I am taking services to raise awareness of environmental issues, what the Bible says about nature, and what we can do to make a difference. We are getting better at recycling, including a new composting facility for our community café, we use environmentally friendly products like Ecover and recycled paper where possible, and we are looking to change our electricity supplier to a renewable source. Being on the leadership of the church and the café helps me push the environmental agenda!

To what extent do environmental movements have a spiritual or theological dimension?

I am going to answer this one as a personal reflection! My personal experience is that my environmental radar was switched on from birth. I always loved nature and felt grieved when it was harmed. I don't think this was nurtured in me particularly, it was just how God made me. It is part of my DNA. Growing up in

church, the environment wasn't talked about at all, though it was always my main passion and still is. I studied as a scientist, and never saw a conflict between science and faith, just as my passion for the environment seemed in harmony with God's beautiful design of the natural world and His love for it. Having only recently properly explored the theological roots for 'going green' in module 1 of this course, I now understand there is a sound Biblical basis for the eco-spirituality I have always had inside. I realise that God makes each one of us differently, and in my experience not many fellow Christians have their environmental radar (perhaps better referred to as eco-spirituality) tuned in to the extent that mine is. I have come to terms with this now, we each have our own passions. I understand that God is calling me to help other Christians tune in to their own eco-spirituality, therefore be encouraged to make lifestyle choices which honour the Creator and his creation. I am also learning that awakening a sense of wonder in creation is usually necessary before demanding lifestyle changes which may require sacrifice.

Explore the guidance from scripture on 'Going Green'

This was largely covered in Module 1, so I won't repeat in detail here, but in summary I think it comes down to two factors, intrinsic value and a virtue ethic. Firstly, God made the world, He made it very good, and He loves it. Therefore, if we love God, we should love and care for His creation – this is recognising the intrinsic value of nature, and therefore our actions should be in harmony with God's great love and care in designing His beautiful world. Secondly, God made the world so that humans could flourish in it. He instructed us how to use the resources wisely, and ensure the bounty was shared amongst other humans and the wild animals. Therefore, there is a virtue ethic here, we must live responsibly, ensuring that the earth's resources are equitably distributed, and that we don't pillage and pollute the earth to harm other people or the ecosystems themselves. The Bible instructs us to adopt practices where we allow the land to rest (Sabbath), where we allow the poor and wild animals to access resources (Gleaning) and where we redistribute land (Jubilee). These principles show that Scripture has always been advocating a 'Going Green' lifestyle and spirituality!

b) The study of the human spirit

c) The work of Ken Wilber

d) Wilber's 'levels of consciousness'

These sections have blown my mind! I'm struggling to see the relevance to globalisation at the moment. I think what the author is getting at is that for the problems of globalisation to be challenged, humanity needs to reach a higher level of consciousness whereby we become less self-centred, and more aware of the needs of others and the natural world, as we also engage spiritually with the creator God. We won't tackle the root causes of environmental degradation just by carrying out simple changes in lifestyle, but by a deeper awareness of the world and it's inhabitants, which leads to compassion, which leads to real change in how we think and act in every aspect of our lives.

7. Christian Critiques of Globalisation

a) Forms of Globalisation and Practical Theology

Christians need to consider other aspects of globalisation as well as economics.

Christians need to carefully consider what is bad and what is good about globalisation. Globalisation is a broad topic, and certain aspects (like Western-led capitalism) are often condemned as being bad for the environment and poor people. But that doesn't mean retreat from global to local would be better!

Christians, as with other critics of globalisation, often have weak arguments which either verge on utopianism (extremely unlikely to attain) or tinkering with reforms (unlikely to have a significant impact).

b) Repairing the damage

Consensus that western capitalism is bad for the environment and poor people. Reading the recent book by Stiglitz (2017), he suggests that large sections of society in developed countries are now discontent with globalisation, as their standard of living stalls or falls, and they see the rich getting richer and the government in the pocket of corporations. He sees the recent retreats from globalisation into nationalist and protectionist agendas (e.g. the Trump election, the Brexit vote, the rise of nationalism in Europe) being evidence of this growing discontent about the supposed promise of open markets and open trade failing to deliver better jobs, incomes and growing economies. People are becoming disenchanted with the hollow rhetoric, and eager to vote for policies like 'Make America Great Again' (which is massively ironic considering America pretty much wrote the rules and governs the globalisation system) because they aren't seeing the benefits. The environment doesn't feature much in these debates, it is almost solely based on economics and immigration. If anything, Brexit and Trump are likely to have a greater impact on the environment than the former business as usual globalised economic and political system.

c) Through the eye of a needle

Read this book by Atherton and Skinner (2007). Decided to focus my essay on whether globalisation can work for the poor and the environment.

Further reading excerpts

Guardian (2018). How capitalism cheapens nature, money, work, care, food, energy and lives, in order to grow profit, but leaves in its wake expensive consequences which aren't accounted for.[20]

'A powerfully innovative free market, directed by an increasingly coherent set of global or intergovernmental institutions seems the last, best hope of earth.' Pg 151 Kennedy, in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

[20] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jun/14/a-history-world-seven-cheap-things-rak-patel-james-moore-review?CMP=share_btn_tw

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'*The neo-liberal economic assumption that unfettered economic growth is the key to the welfare of all the citizens of the planet*.' Pg 170 Northcott in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

'*The WTO was above all the creation of the Clinton administration as it sought to shape the new emergent reality of globalisation so that it would continue to favour America's corporate financial interests*.' Pg 180 Northcott, in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

WTO … is at one and the same time an executive body, a governing body and a legislative body. Pg 182 Northcott, in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

Fair trade mark came from a Christian origin, to counter the injustice in world trade. Pg 184 Northcott, in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

'The crucial importance of a reasonable income for the attainment of happiness, and by elaboration also of human fulfilment and flourishing. Yet …a growing recognition that about a certain level of income, as achieved by most in the West, increases in that income do not deliver a commensurate increase in happiness at all.' Pg 244 Atherton, in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

The task is to restore the significance of ethical economics in debates over economic affairs, for there is no scope at all for dissociating the study of technical economics from that of ethics and philosophy. Pg 252 Atherton, in Atherton and Skinner (2007) (Quote taken from Amartya Sen's book 'On ethics and economics').

What it means to be church – mainstream and partnering with secular OR sectarian, being distinctively different? Pg 259 Atherton, in Atherton and Skinner (2007).

Francis (2015). *Encyclical letter 'Laudato si' of the Holy Father Francis*: *On care for our common home*.

- Pg 128 new global institutions are required
- Pg 131 local cooperatives can model alternatives, and civil society has a role to hold government to account
- Pg 141 the time has come to accept that degrowth may be necessary in some parts of the world
- Pg 142 – redefine progress – only development which creates a social and env improvement is progress

Possible essay titles

1. **What are current alternatives to the western global capitalist system, and do they have a future?**

- Brief introduction to the negative impacts of globalisation (especiallly western capitalism) on environment and society
- Are there alternatives to globalisation? Just transitions, Local futures, Degrowth movement, faith-based alternatives?
- How will they have societal and environmental benefits compared to globalisation?
- Do they stand a chance of gathering momentum to counter western capitalism?

2. **Can globalisation work for the environment and the poor?**

- Looking at the current pitfalls of globalisation for the environment and poor people
- Recognising the current benefits globalisation brings to the environment and poor people
- Can the rules of globalisation be adapted to be fairer for the poor? Stiglitz, 2017 e.g. transparency, participation, equality in global institutions, trade deals and 'benevolent self-interest'
- What can Christians do to accelerate these changes?

3. **How can Christians tackle the injustices of globalisation?**

- Accepting that globalisation is probably here to stay for the foreseeable future, what should Christians be doing to alleviate injustice? Discuss the following options:
    - Subvert the system (opt out of globalisation and adopt a different lifestyle altogether)
    - Change the system (using buying power, voter power, protest power to challenge the causes of the injustices)
    - Accept the system (invest time and effort in dealing with the symptoms of injustice)

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