

Happy to talk about plastic

BY BISHOP CHRISTOPHER

I'VE recently been talking in the House of Lords about what the government are planning to do about reducing plastic waste. Many of us have been stunned and disturbed by the reports on the effects of plastic waste, and the vivid pictures shown us by people like David Attenborough. I didn't imagine that ordained ministry might involve me talking to peers about plastics. But the more I think about it, the more I realise that's exactly what ministry is about.

It all depends on how big we think God is, and how great the scope of his love and salvation. When Christianity focuses on the individual soul, then talk of reducing our dependence on plastic seems pretty trivial. But time and again, Scripture paints us a picture of a God whose salvation is far greater than that, whose work is for the renewal of the whole of creation, which for now groans in anticipation of its healing. And, when Jesus Christ is raised from the dead, we see the new life of God coming into our world, bringing renewal and transformation in his wake. And we are invited to be part of that.

Every now and then there are parts of the Bible that are hard to translate into English because there's no direct way of saying the same thing from

the original languages. In 2 Corinthians 5.17, we read (as the NIV puts it) "if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come". You'll find all sorts of different translations, because the Greek reads something more like this: 'if anyone is in Christ - New Creation!'

There's such exuberance in those words! St Paul doesn't seem to make it clear as to exactly what he means, but somehow or other he's getting at the sense that Christ makes the whole of creation new, and when people are 'in' Christ, trusting in him and trying to follow his example, we see the world being renewed and given a new lease of life.

Being Christian in that sense means opening our eyes to everything that God is doing to make all things new, and it means looking for those ways in which the new life of God touches the present reality of creation.

And that means that our planet, and its care, should matter to us as Christians, because we can bear witness to the salvation of God by caring for God's creation, by showing what its renewal might look like. It means that thinking about plastic, waste, recycling, and reusing, are all acts of Christian faithfulness to the God who makes all things new.



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