

‘A Spiritual and Cultural Crisis’ – *Bishop Guli*

Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. *Psalms 37:3*



In June 2026, Bishop Guli addressed Chelmsford Diocesan Synod on the environmental crisis. This article comprises extracts from her address.

David Attenborough is certainly someone who has spent a lifetime noticing God's world. He has made an extraordinary contribution to opening the eyes of

millions of others to what we might call the wonder and blessing of God's Creation.

However, in recent years Sir David has not only noticed and described the natural world but raised the alarm about what it is he's seeing. He recently observed: "We have allowed our natural world and climate to reach breaking point," explaining further: "We are facing a man-made disaster of global scale. Our greatest threat in thousands of years is climate change. If we don't take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon."

The scientific evidence of human-induced climate change is now accepted by over 99% of studies published in the field. There is also mounting evidence, across all continents, about resulting wildlife loss, mortality and morbidity. Yet, despite good intentions by the Church and others, including at governmental level, backed by mounting evidence of effects, and stark warnings from experts – the world seems incapable of taking sufficient action to prevent the increased destruction and suffering due to our environmental crises. And we in the church are struggling too. Why is that?

Well, in large part because it is very complicated. There's a lack of human and financial resources in relation to reducing carbon emissions. More widely, structural, regulatory and logistic barriers exist in ensuring the sustainability of new housing and in identifying and switching from investments which increase fossil fuel use. There are also competing priorities such as the cost-of-living crisis; apparent conflicting information about effective actions; and more recently, a changing political landscape with some politicians framing climate action as no more than a lifestyle preference, partisan opinion, or simply "woke."

Many are now concerned that this political movement will sweep away or, at the very least, slow down any progress made in addressing our multiple environmental crises. In the face of all this, the Church must hold its nerve, be ready to speak prophetically, and – in actions as well as words – it must demonstrate hope and faith in God who is Creator and Redeemer.

Some have suggested that the slow response to climate change is because our environmental crises are not primarily scientific but spiritual. Rowan Williams has suggested that the crisis has "a great deal to do with our failure to think of the world as existing in relation to the mystery of God, not just a huge warehouse of stuff to be used for our convenience."

So how do we, as people of faith, respond to the idea that, at its root, this crisis is spiritual and cultural? Our starting place must be to see creation as sacred rather than disposable; as a gift rather than our possession. It is only a Copernican-like shift in perception which will lead to a

change in priorities and in culture, and an acknowledgement of the need to address financial and regulatory issues on scale and at speed. Ultimately, to understand better the interlinked roots of our different crises is spiritual work. To address the fear that some people currently feel is fundamentally a work of love.

The substantial work of addressing the climate crisis is for governments and nations, for big businesses and corporations. But meanwhile, we can play our part by doing what we can, not worrying about what we can't. It may just feel like it's a drop in the ocean, but as St. Teresa of Calcutta said, the ocean is made up of drops. Our small actions can collectively make a huge difference to the health of our planet and to the continuation of life on Earth.

To find out more or to share your ideas on Eco Church please go to the website www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church or speak to one of the Eco Church Group – Roger McFarland, Nicky Morecroft, Chris McFarland, Ian Poston, Dave Gauld, Beth Cornish, Ann Salmon, Shirley Duggan.

This month's eco suggestions

- Travel on **buses, coaches and trains**, and make fewer car journeys
- Improve **home insulation** where possible – loft, walls, windows and doors