

Climate, Cash and Conscience: Why the Ethics of Climate Change Is More Complicated Than Is Sometimes Thought

A consensus has emerged that the only ethical response to today's widespread concern about the effects of climate change is for the world to move to net zero emissions of CO₂ as quickly as possible, and for developed countries to make huge cash transfers to developing countries. Yet in the recent past, some well-intentioned policies which enjoyed consensus when first proposed have resulted in unforeseen negative consequences for the environment. Some of the measures now being proposed risk exacerbating rather than ameliorating poverty in both developing and developed countries. Responsible Christian stewardship may require re-thinking these issues.

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“Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it.” Isaiah 8:12

I. Introduction: COP26 and All That

- A. Glasgow welcomes the world

- B. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- C. Christian organisations

- D. Government responses

II. A Climate Crisis?

- A. Changing terminology

- B. A brief review of rhetoric versus reality

C. Some failed predictions

III. Environmental Policy

A. Some wrong turnings in the past

B. CO₂ and the neglect of other environmental problems

C. Environmental impact of the drive to 'net zero'

IV. Technical Difficulties in Achieving Net Zero

A. Ongoing requirement for Baseload (when no wind or sunshine available)

B. Electricity networks and availability of supply

C. Problems in accessing charge points for electric vehicles

V. Economic Impact of Net Zero

A. Impact on poverty in the majority-world

B. Impact on poverty in the developed world

C. Geopolitical considerations

VI. Conclusion: An Ethically Complicated Issue

A. Biblical basis for environmental concern

B. 'Net zero' has many positive features

C. Rushing to achieve 'net zero' has some significant negative features

Resources

Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation*, Longman & Todd, May 2010, 232 pages, ISBN: 978-0232527919.

See a review here:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/review/the-bible-and-ecology-rediscovering-the-community-of-creation/>

<https://netzeroclimate.org/> - Website promoting Net Zero

<https://www.netzerowatch.com/> - Website highlighting some problems with Net Zero