**Is the EU Referendum a distraction?** ****

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Whatever you think about the pros and cons of being in or out of Europe and the political and economic consequences of the referendum vote, have you considered it’s a time wasting distraction?

The clock is ticking on humanity’s ability to tackle climate disruption. No one knows the exact “tipping point” beyond which we will have scant chance of going all the way down the slippery side of dangerous global warming to a 5 or 6oC warmer world (which may be uninhabitable for most species on the planet including people). What is certain is that we need rapid, radical emissions cuts right across the globe to have a chance of staying within safe limits.

If our politians, indeed most of society, had a better understanding of risks involved in the game of roulette we seem to be playing with our children and grandchildren’s future I wonder if we might not be so wrapped up with the details of our relationship with the EU. Even if you consider the impacts on environmental legislation of being in or out (as outlined by [Hope for the Future](http://www.hftf.org.uk/eu-referendum-resources-1/)) these changes are going to take two years to enact.

Nation states like the Polynesian islands of [Kiritabi](http://www.climate.gov.ki/2009/11/19/a-call-to-the-world/) are on the front line of this climate disruption, its culture, lifestyle, and very sovereignty is under threat. We are all feeling the impacts of climate disruption more than we may realise, for example the flooding in Calderdale and Leeds last Christmas, or, with its wider ramifications, one of the contributing factors in the unrest in Syria was the mass rural to urban migration after the [2007-2010 drought](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/sep/08/aylan-kurdi-was-not-a-climate-refugee) which was exacerbated by climate change.

What can the church do in the face of the array of complex interrelated issues that climatic change poses? Firstly, let’s remember we have a gospel of hope for the renewal of the whole of creation (Colossians 1:19-20) and that Jesus’ bodily resurrection has made this possible. Our role is to follow His lead to take action to make it tangible here and now. We need to grapple with climate disruption and all the different aspects in our culture that are exacerbating it, there are no easy answers. Understanding the science of climate change is not optional for a Christian, in the same way as the Priest and the Levite should never have walked by on the other side. That understanding needs to influence our decisions about everything from referendum voting to supermarket shopping choices and holiday destinations. Christians who become low emissions people who take seriously the impact of how we live. It starts with us.

Secondly, it means being proactive in prayer. Let’s get intercessing for the earth: the transition to a low carbon economy that our country and others around the world need to make; for the outcome of the referendum to somehow raise the profile of our emissions targets and policies; those on the front line of climate impacts such as the coastal population in Bangladesh; for ourselves to change so that other follow us when they see our lives as a beacon of hope. Make use of [Pray and Fast for the Climate](http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/).

Thirdly, it’s time to be proactive in our community, to work as agents for change. We may be able to influence government policy by working collaboratively with our MP. We can certainly bring about change in our workplaces, villages, towns and cities and join the already active environmental action groups who are leading the way. They need the encouragement of gospel hope.

While the EU battle rages around us, let’s keep focused on the whole war that needs to be won.