

Time for Reflection: Rev David Coleman

Greetings - Since I was first invited to offer this reflection, I have moved from being a grassroots pastor in Greenock to the national scope of Environmental Chaplain for Eco-Congregation Scotland, a charity supported by various churches *and* the Scottish Government. In one way, that's a change of direction. In another, it's an intensification of the same calling.

Christian ministers' calling is never simply to speak what people want to hear, even to those who might think they're paying the piper. The -very diverse - Eco-Congregation movement encourages faith groups - so far *Christian*, though I look forward to work with Muslims and others. We encourage people of faith to enlist the treasures of their respective traditions in response to our shared global context of climate crisis. This, is my second visit here in two weeks, as I was quite rightly part of the mass lobby on 19th.

Your guidelines stipulate that speakers avoid "political." That's easy. For at least twenty years, since our friends in Pacific Island churches began to realise their homelands would not survive the rise in sea-levels, the task I have taken on is unambiguously *spiritual*, meaning, it touches on the deepest essence of who we are and our place in the created order. No party, no faith group, has a monopoly on the care of the planet.

Jesus encouraged his followers to "read the signs of the times" in the world around them. He pointed out that they were very well *able* to do so *and* act accordingly, *if they so chose*.

Today in complementary prayer and action, we seek collaboration *not* competition, as we are overtaken by what we rather hoped was going to be the predicament of our grandchildren. I wish that organised religion as a whole, were *already* setting people such as yourselves a positive and convincing example. We look to you.

I'm not here to *compete*, but to *convince*, which includes convincing *myself* and congregations and communities of Scotland to *read* those signs. In the Bible, God points humanity to the rainbow, a pre-existent phenomenon of universal scientific laws, with a promise that rising waters will not bring an end to the world as we know it. Nice. But people like me are obliged to read more carefully and note that the promise comes in context of our valuing and caring for every creature. Complacency is never an appropriate response to God's grace,