

Bishop's Brexit fear for UK's fight on climate change

BREXIT poses a risk to the UK's commitment to the joint climate agreement agreed at COP21.

That was the conclusion of the Bishop of Salisbury who revealed his concern in an interview with *The Church of England Newspaper*.

The Rt Rev Nicholas Holtam's intervention is significant because he is the Church's lead Bishop on Climate Change.

Last year, Bishop Holtam met President Hollande (pictured) to present climate justice petitions signed by almost two million people ahead of a final agreement at the United Nations Climate Change talks in Paris - COP21.

The Bishop later welcomed the resolution at the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris to hold the increase in global temperatures to 'well below' 2-degrees above pre-industrial levels, agreed after two weeks of talks.

"It is going to take time to discover what Brexit really means but the care of God's earth, our common home, needs us to act together. The environment does not know national boundaries.

"As someone who was very much involved with the faith programme of the Paris Climate Summit, I am concerned about how our leaving the EU will affect all the jubilation celebrated at the successful outcome of the negotiations," he said.

"There are UK laws that were developed unilaterally, there are UK laws that result from a transposition of EU Directives, and there are EU regulations applied directly. The UK Climate Change Act sets a long-term target that is identical with the EU's, to all intents and purposes, and tougher short-term ones. I hope that our coming out of the EU will not result in a loss of ambition.

"We will lose the 2030 renewable energy targets, but to achieve the carbon targets we'll need to keep building renewables anyway. It is likely we will not be covered by EU directives on energy efficiency of appliances, but again it will almost certainly make no difference because manufacturers in the EU market are going to be selling to the UK as well, and they'll have to adhere to improving EU standards."

The Bishop pointed out that new Prime Minister Theresa May has said that her government will remain a leader in response to climate change, "so we will need to press the Minister, Greg Clarke, to help her keep her word," he told us.

Bishop Holtam said that current UK policies on Climate Change 'are not adequate' to meet targets and that while there have been many achievements in the emissions sector, policies are needed to speed up the transition to a low carbon economy. He said that Government 'has to play its part' particularly in kick-starting investment in new technology, engineering and manufacturing.

"There have been many achievements and yet current policies aren't adequate if we are to meet our targets.

"Setting the political policy framework is crucial.

"I know from farmers in Dorset and Wiltshire that there is a strong movement towards agriculture being greener. It would be a mistake to think this always costs more. It doesn't. And not being green risks costing the earth," he warned.

The Church of England's Environmental Task Group has recently released a set of liturgical resources to allow churches to take part in the Creationtide season, running from 1 September to 4 October.



The resources, backed by Bishop Nicholas and curated by Canon Vicky Johnson of Ely Cathedral, includes the booklet 'Seasons and Festivals of the Agricultural Year' from Common Worship: Times and Seasons. This includes readings and blessings for Plough Sunday, Rogationtide, Lammastide, Harvest Thanksgiving and Prayer in times of Agricultural Crisis.

Worship resources also include those produced by the Environment Task Group, additional material for the Eucharistic Prayer (produced for a trial use by the Diocese of Guildford) and a liturgy for All-Age Worship, produced by Canon Johnson while an incumbent in the Diocese of Manchester.

Creationtide is an Eastern Orthodox initiative, introduced by the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1989.

Last year Pope Francis affirmed Creationtide as an ecumenical partnership when he declared 1 September an annual 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation', during a World Youth Day in Krakow.

"The growing concern about creation and the environment has made the Church aware that it needs to garner its liturgi-

cal resources to give full expression to this in worship and prayer," said Canon Johnson.

Bishop Holtam told us that finding the balance between choosing greener initiatives whilst juggling the needs of a demanding life is 'tricky'.

"For each of us this is a spiritual issue. When I can, I walk or ride a bike and use public transport. It was easy when I was the Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields in the centre of London. Now I am the Bishop of a diocese of over 2,000 square miles and 453 parishes stretching from the Marlborough Downs to the Jurassic Coast.

"I can't do my job without a car but I insist on a model that is efficient and performs in as carbon friendly a way as possible.

"I think the real key is in making travel low-carbon, not in tackling demand. In cities, a lot of it can be about changing the ways in which we move - but for the countryside, there's no real alternative to the car.

"Electrification, hydrogen, car-sharing with autonomous vehicles... all will be possible. Already, the most popular new car in Norway is electric - now, that would be great to say for the Diocese of Salisbury," he said.

Indian Christians mark 'black day' on discrimination

CHRISTIANS in Southern India have marked 10 August as a "black day" of shame to commemorate the Supreme Court ruling that held only Hindus could be classified as Dalits or untouchables and qualify for government protection as members of "Scheduled Castes".

In 1956 the Indian government recognised Hindu Dalits as a social class deserving government support, and in 1990 expanded the law to include Buddhists and Sikhs.

Dalits who convert to Christianity or who were born Christian, along with Muslims, are excluded from the benefits provided to members of the Scheduled Castes.

On 10 August 2016 the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore George Antony Samy released a statement saying: "We demand an end to using religion to divide us. Not just Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, but also those from Islam and Christianity should be considered Scheduled Castes."

Three days later the Rev Sunil Raj Philip, Director of the Church of South India's Dalit Concerns Department, released a statement on Facebook calling for the inclusion of Christians and Muslims in the Scheduled Caste list.



He explained that the "impact of this order is that Dalit Christian and Dalit Muslim cannot avail the affirmative action programmes of Government of India and various states on schedule caste, which includes reservation in education and employment of 15 per cent ...

"These are the important provisions the Constitution provides for the under-privileged communities in our country."

Mr Philip wrote: "Because of this discrimination, the Government indirectly forces marginalised people to be in the Hindu Religion. They hesitate to choose any other religion that they may want to follow. It is in violation of freedom of religion that is guaranteed in the Indian Constitution.

"This protest and struggle is the longest in India and the Dalit Christians and those who are in solidarity with them are really optimistic that the day of justice for them is not far and till that day they are committed to continue the struggle."

MOW archives are catalogued

THE ARCHIVES of the Movement for the Ordination of Women has been catalogued for the first time.

The collection, held by the LSE Library, is part of their larger Women's Library @ LSE, and a talk is being planned to mark the completion of the project.

MOW, which operated between 1979 and 1994, was headquartered in London but had a grassroots network with parish branches nationwide. It folded after the Act for the Ordination of Women was approved by General Synod and Parliament.

Fabiana Barticioti, Assistant Archivist at LSE Archives, is to give the talk. She told us that some of her favourite items in the collection are letters from MPs to supporters "because some of them can be very entertaining."

