

# Sermon from Rev. Bill Church

## Climate Change = Changing Us?

*(Readings: Leviticus 19.9-10; Psalm 15; Luke 1.1-4)*

A long time ago, there was series of advertisements, put out, if I remember right, by the electricity industry. They featured "Mrs 1970", who was shown in her immaculately clean electrically heated home pushing an electric vacuum cleaner – and she was wearing what appeared to be a negligee.

"Mrs 2030" will certainly have a home full of electric machines -though perhaps it will be Mr 2030 who is pushing the Hoover. And her house is more likely to be electrically heated, but it would be sensible to have a room temperature indicating woollies rather than silk pyjamas.

Big changes are needed to deal with climate change and that means big rhetoric but also ground level individual choices.

Rhetoric is called for, but also rationality.

One of the reasons Luke is my favourite Gospel is his declaration at the beginning that he is checking his sources, and looking at the detail and giving an orderly account. That is even more important when thinking about a difficult and divisive issue like climate change.

And it is divisive – talk that everyone will emerge better off is wildly optimistic.

One view of the "dominion" that God gave to humankind in Genesis is "domination" and exploiting to the full all the God-given possibilities. If you make the difficult decision that some assets could be used, but must not be used, the owners of those assets lose.

Not surprisingly, Brunei and Venezuela and Saudi Arabia and Russia will not be delighted to be told that their oil and gas should stay in the ground. Not surprisingly, historically rich and developed nations will not be delighted to be told that they should pay billions of dollars to help others adapt.

The owners of the grapes in Leviticus might have been reluctant to leave some on the vine, but at least it would be the local poor who would glean them. The man in Psalm 15 would at least have known the neighbour when he kept his promise "to his own hindrance."

We are likely to be asked to act to our own hindrance –inconvenience, extra cost, giving up established habits – for the benefit of people whom we can know only by report.

And in the case of climate change, as in all other cases, we should do a St Luke – check the sources, look at the detail, reach an orderly decision.

There will be quack solutions, greenwashing, impractical or counter-productive suggestions. Let them be sifted through and sorted out. And if the outcome is more frugality, more sharing, more long-term thought, so much the better.