

EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Recognition of the climate change crisis has forced the issue to transform from a political, ideological disrupter, to the socially discussed opportunity for making a personal difference creating a conceivable, certain and secure future. Chats have moved on beyond the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) (2016) mantra of “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle”, from which many daily habits have already been altruistically formed—including reducing or eliminating use of plastics, repurposing discarded resources, and household/organisation water conservation.

Developing global awareness of the amount of water required to ‘grow’ different types of food (UN, 2003, p. 17), among other issues, focussed the UN to initiate an International Decade of Action ‘Water for Life’ 2005 to 2015, from which emerged the Sustainable Development Goals including Goal 6, “Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” (UNDESA, 2015). This supported existing humanitarian NGO activity that captured charitable donors and offered some participation in ‘solving the problems of the world’. The need persists (UN, n.d.).

A new trend seems to assertively hover in social circles. Perhaps an extension of the climate debate to the notion of reformation of food lifestyle practices to contribute to the ‘life of the planet’ (Water, 2021). An increasing splatter of symbols, clarified by a descriptive key, has proliferated on the menus of our favoured eating places—perhaps GF (gluten free), V (vegetarian), VE (vegan) or VO (vegan option available). Specific dietary requirements for wellness, a contributor to wellbeing, have had a long history. Some are directly related to unique medical conditions—allergies, intolerances like coeliac, or diabetes and obesity, while others improve general health—eat more vegetables and fruits (a plant-based diet) adding fibre. Other diets are chosen for religious, ethical or cultural reasons. Of increasing impact are animal welfare perspectives, which if linked with wellness arguments and sustainability concerns, affirm a food choice of veganism (Sherman, 2020), shifting human ecology to increased compatibility with global plant and animal ecological principles of sustainability.

Veganism, like some religious convictions, race characteristics and unconventional opinions, identify minority groups whose uniqueness becomes socially subjected to ‘cancel culture’ (Neill, 2021, p. 6).

In its current form, cancel culture is anonymous, fuelled by a politically correct mentality that relies on the “thought police” to direct its behaviour [often on social media], it is intensely polarising – “I am right, you are wrong.” It teaches us that if someone does something wrong, or champions someone or something that we may not like or agree with, then we must stop supporting them immediately.

(Mintz, 2021, para. 12)

Cancel culture is a potential ‘cancer’ within Christian schools too. Effective treatment depends on the radiation of compassionate understanding, but also incisive expressions of love and mercy that ensure eradication and restoration of a ‘healthy tissue’ of relationships.

As this issues’ authors assert, confirming and affirming relationships is an essential element of teaching Christianly. **TEACH**

References

- Mintz, S. (2021, May 11). Cancel culture can be toxic to your mental health [Blog]. The Ethics Sage. <https://www.ethicsage.com/2021/05/cancel-culture-can-be-toxic-to-your-mental-health.html>
- Neill, S. (2021, July 10-11). Why cancel culture is ‘obscene’. Review. *The Weekend Australian*.
- Sherman, O. (2020). *Vegan Living: A simple guide to a cruelty-free, healthy, plant based diet*. A Lost the Plot Book, Pantera Press.
- UN (n.d.) *Water, food, energy*. Water Facts: Unwater <https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/water-food-and-energy/>
- UN (2003). *Water for people: Water for life*. The United Nations World Water Development Report - Executive Summary. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000129556>
- UNDESA. (2015). *We’re finally at the end of the UN Decade for Water 2005-2015 – It is time to say good-bye*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/>
- Water, C. (2021, March 28). Plant-based meat sales are soaring, but experts warn it may not be better for you or the environment. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/plant-based-meat-sales-are-soaring-but-experts-warn-it-may-not-be-better-for-you-or-the-environment-20210317-p57bi2.html>
- WWF. (2016, May 31). *Reduce, reuse, and recycle* <https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/change-the-way-you-live/reduce-reuse-recycle#gs.cgakyz>

“
confirming
and affirming
relationships
is an
essential
element of
teaching
Christianly.
”



[Photography:
Glennys Perry]