

A large part of my ministry before I became Bishop of Burnley was in Camden in London to those with addiction problems.

Their condition was severe and yet usually they were maligned, ignored and criticised by the wider community. No one has much time for addicts.

And yet we are all addicts. Our addiction is not necessarily to drugs or alcohol but it still has the potential to destroy us.

The addiction of the current age, shared by almost everyone, is to oil-based consumption.

Our 'drug' is the belief that we always need more and better things – bigger houses, larger TVs, faster cars, cooler air, newer phones and so on.

The result is the accelerated destruction of God's beautiful creation as we plunder the Earth's resources to feed our addiction. The warning signs are everywhere in changing climates, pollution, melting ice caps, extreme weather events and so on. The planet is showing every sign of not being able to tolerate the human race much longer.

The sad truth of addiction is that generally addicts need to reach absolute rock bottom before they act. In the case of this addiction, 'rock bottom' could be an unthinkable global catastrophe.

And that is why Christians are called to act prophetically and to act now. We know from the scriptures that God has given us the task of stewarding and caring for His creation, and the current age calls us to take that responsibility more seriously than ever.

Our Diocesan Vision calls us to build 'transformed communities'. What can a transformed community be other than one that is sustainable and in which human beings live in harmony with a nature of which they are a part?

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