

Devotion for Climate for Churches 20 August 2016

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Kava Theology

Good morning everyone. It is an honor and a privilege for me to have this opportunity to open our climate change workshop with a word of prayer. I want to thank Betsan and the organizer for inviting me to open our meeting today.

I have a 1 kg bag of Kava powder in my hand. It is a root bounded into powder form which you mix with water to make roughly 30 liters of Kava juice. Kava gathering is the old traditional way of sharing information where friends and communities come together and talk about daily issues. It is a place where stories and information are shared. The men use Kava gatherings for socializing and sometimes use it to start friendships between a young woman and young man.

At the beginning of the year, this 1 kg bag of Kava cost \$40 now it is August and the same bag costs \$100. Why has the bag increased by \$60? Well, I think that is why we are here today to think about the reality of climate change. Kava is very scarce right now in Tonga and I am sure it is throughout the Pacific. The problem is due to the heat, lots of sun, no rain and many many plants died.

The increase in the cost of Kava will affect a lot of things. It will affect the formal tradition of doing things like talking with friends over a bowl of Kava juice. Men will look for another form of socializing, like alcohol and we all know what that leads to. Men would not be able to afford Kava anymore and it will open doors for stealing and greed.

This is just one little example of what climate change does to the environment. It is not just affecting the growth of plants but it affects a lot of things.

I think we need to go back to the creation stories given to us in Genesis 1 and 2 to see what God wants us to do about his world. God created the whole world out of nothing. He created the world and it was perfect. Everything was good and he was happy with it and on the 7th day, he rested and blessed it for us. He blesses us so that we can be ready for Monday to carry on our work.

It says that he planted the garden and everything was good for the man. **In Genesis 2:15 it says that "The Lord God placed the man in the garden to cultivate and guard it. In another version, it says to till and keep it.** God did everything, he did the planting. Man did not do any planting, but he was giving the authority to work the garden and care for it. So we can enjoy what God has created for us for our survival and not forgetting that we are to care for the environment for the benefit of generations to come.

Some people do believe that God is in control and he has the final say on the world that he created and that is true, but we are created in the image of God and we ought to care for what God has created. So we as Church leaders are to remind and encourage our people to look after the environment and do what we can to help.

We as church leaders need to encourage and remind our people about the reality of climate change. We also need to change our heart and our thinking about climate change and we need to do what we can to make this world a better place for us now and for our children. God has given us a wonderful place to be and it is our task to care for the world.

Let us pray:

God, you created the universe and everything in it and it was very good. You called us to cultivate and care for what you created. Please help us to remember what you asked of us to till and care for your garden.

We remember those who are suffered around the world because of climate change. May you continue to be the great creator, gardener, and sustainer of life to them.

Thank you for bringing us together safely from all over New Zealand to participate in this workshop. We ask that you will bless our guest speakers and those who will present for us today.

Bless the committee and those who put this workshop together, bless us all as we commence our meeting and let your holy spirit guide and lead us throughout this day.

In the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask you all these things. Amen.