

What Does Going Green Really Mean?

Last summer a nationwide initiative began with a Plastics Free July. At a biennial church event I attended in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, we went one step further, to support the use of non styrofoam plastic free products. Our United Church of Christ Synod gave an overwhelming pledge to educate, inform and curtail the use of plastics detrimental to the environment. It was our commitment to Creation as stewards of the Earth.

One year later, with the daily practice of some designated plastics as safer for use in our current health crisis situation, plastics have resurfaced two- fold, overloading landfills and contributing to neighborhood litter. It has been a challenge to stay environmentally oriented and involved when reusables are not acceptable and plastic reigns. The choices are: plastic, plastic, plastic, toxic to we humans, pets, other living organisms and the landscape of our lives.

In the name of conservation and so that others will be able to experience, enjoy and protect the outdoors and appreciate nature, a plea for action exists. We can become complacent, uncaring and defeated but the bottom line is that the future is in contributions we can make now.

Beyond the multiple repeated suggestions to simplify, buy only what we need and can use, comes the awareness of what comes with each purchase we make. What can't be recycled/reused should not be produced in the first place. Perhaps as a University of Dhaka graduate student proposed over a decade ago, the problem with plastics is us, with our careless use and unthoughtful disposal of products in the environment, adding to toxic pollution of air, soil, water, wildlife, what feeds us. We need conscious consumption for a green and peace filled future.

Our efforts-goal for sustainability-living in such a way as to provide for the needs of today while at the same time assuring that those who come later will have what they need to live their lives beyond pandemic time- is a balance between consumption and conservation, reducing environmental impact, maintaining natural resources and using resources more efficiently. A platform for action. Make the choice, take the step.

Gail Landers, Old Lycoming Township, 17701 15 July 2020