

“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.”
ISAIAH 55:2-3

The Environment and Spirituality

Recently, I joined a Christian environmental group on a field trip to one of Hong Kong’s most mysterious destinations – a public dump. Global Ministries missionary Judy Chan reports, a group from our Kowloon Union Church, decided it was important to visit the not-so-beautiful places in the city to understand how our lifestyles impact Hong Kong’s environment.



JUDY CHAN

As we approached the landfill area, we saw large garbage trucks coming and going. Entering, we noticed off in the distance what looked like a wide open valley of plots of dirt. Much of it was covered by sea green plastic sheeting. Other areas were covered with grass and trees. We drove in our van (windows closed!) to see the landfill. To my surprise, the grassy spots were ‘restored’ areas, meaning my family’s garbage was buried underneath, covered by layers of heavy plastic, deodorizer and a few feet of soil and now greenery. The areas covered by sea green sheeting were being prepared as areas for garbage to be dumped in the future.

It is clear that the real problem is Hong Kong people produce too much garbage! It is one of the sins of an affluent society. Despite environmental education campaigns (recycle, reduce, reuse), it appears that people really need to learn the 4th “R” – repent! The only thing that has worked so far is making people pay. Plastic bag usage has dropped dramatically since stores began charging 10 cents per bag.

Our chairwoman, is a shining example of simple living. She makes a point of shopping infrequently, and tries to create no rubbish on Sundays. Most importantly, she believes, we must look within and ask ourselves why we need to buy, own and use so much stuff. Our Christian green group doesn’t have any easy solutions, but we are working on it. For you see, the environmental crisis is at heart a spiritual matter.

Global Ministries missionary, Judy Chan is responsible for communications, the ecumenical radio broadcasting ministry, English publications and ecumenical partnerships with the Hong Kong Christian Council.

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