

A Climate of Desire:

Reconsidering Sex, Christianity, and How We Respond to Climate Change

By Eduardo Sasso

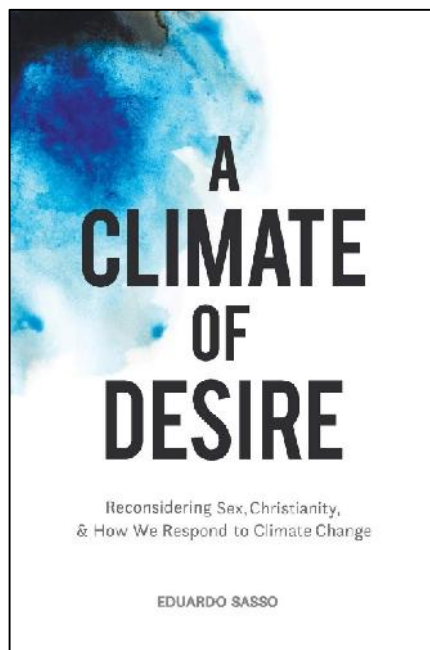
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This is an intriguing and challenging book addressing a vital issue of our time: the impact of climate change. The author asks us to wake up to the abuse and devastating effect of human economic progress on creation. He encourages us to think more deeply about the call of the earth and begin to re-orientate our desires to heal the land and create a better future.

Eduardo Sasso brings a wealth of experience to his work. He is a committed contributor to the renewable economy and co-founder (in 2015) of the Vancouver citizen group Earthkeepers – aiming to live within the Judeo/Christian vision of ecology, love of neighbour and climate justice. Holding degrees in engineering, theology and sustainability, he is now a business sustainability consultant with a focus on spiritual ecology.

The title theme of desire runs through the book, shining a light on the world we have created to meet our ever-increasing demands. To set the scene we are provided with an overview of the global economic system, with critical comment on agribusiness, supermarket culture, our industrialised food system, city culture and the seductive nature of marketing. Over-indulgence in the use of fossil fuels, coal, gas and oil, and a world human population increase (220% since the 1960s) has put so much pressure on the planet that it is no longer able to hold ‘that many of us, consuming that many things’ (p102).

This ‘snapshot’ of facts is an eye-opener to the uninitiated, a reminder to those no longer listening or to anyone who has not stopped to consider our situation seriously. The data includes: the rise in surface and sea temperatures; melting glaciers and ice-sheets (from 1990 a decrease rate in the range of 3.5-4.1% per decade); modern-day cities (emitting 80% of the world’s greenhouse gases); and the decline in the populations of vertebrate species



(by 58% between 1970-2012 according to the W.W.F. Living Planet Report 2016). It has taken less than 4,000 years for humankind to use up much of the earth’s resources that had taken millions of years to form. The ‘ecological vital signs’, Sasso concludes, reveal a land and living world groaning under the weight of our demands upon it.

At the same time the author is realistic in understanding the great achievements and gains that have been made from fossil fuels and other remarkable scientific and technological advances. He acknowledges the wealth and material progress that has spared millions from peril and poverty, but that has also been detrimental to the poorest in the land. He takes us through some of the ‘endless wonders’ made in the Industrial, Technological and Digital Revolutions, admitting that, like many of us, he loves his gadgets! The sociology of work is praised, its sense of achievement and the financial rewards that have enabled the acquisition of ‘increasing amounts of purchasable goods’. However, he feels that marketing has manipulated the human mind into an ‘artificial climate of desire’. The ‘global party’ needs to come to an end; business as usual cannot continue.

Describing himself as a recovering engineer, Sasso is like a man on a mission and may be a prophet in our time. We benefit from his change in mindset, the breadth of his knowledge and his ability to make connections across disciplines. Bible stories are woven in effortlessly throughout the book: Old Testament narratives of Creation, Jeremiah and Babel, all given a modern interpretation, speaking afresh into the ecological situation. He sees parallels, for example, between Babylon and today’s California and the virtual reality world. There is also a New Testament message of