

# News from the Ecochurch Team: Fast Fashion



By definition fast fashion is ‘inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trend’. Much modern clothing is not made to last. Due to super-fast production, designs are generally not well stress-tested before sale, and cheap synthetic fabrics are used in order to keep costs low. Much of it will end up in landfill after only being worn a handful of times.

The unnecessary over production of clothing is a leading cause of:

Climate Change because of the huge demand for energy from oil to make polyester. The fashion industry produces 8–10% of global CO2 emissions (4–5 billion tonnes annually).

Pollution from plastic microfibres entering our oceans from production, domestic laundry and landfill. Pollution also comes from chemical dyes. Companies push new trends endlessly and the seasons move faster than ever. 40% of the clothes produced will never be worn as companies make way for the next batch of clothing. This waste gets exported, to countries like Ghana. Overseas markets work

hard to repurpose and sell the clothing. This upcycling and reuse culture is a great example of a more sustainable and circular fashion industry. However, the sheer volume of poorly constructed fast fashion makes much of it impossible to use and upcycle and it ends up in landfill, washed onto beaches and into oceans. Waste is also incinerated by manufacturers: in 2018, Burberry shocked the world by leaking details of its 28 billion dollar bonfire of luxury goods.

Unethical labour more than 100 billion items of clothes are made a year by people working in dangerous conditions for poor wages, only 1% of garment workers in Vietnam earn a wage from which they can live. Child labour is another unethical aspect of the fast fashion industry.

Water usage is high. The fashion industry produces 20% of waste water.

## **What can we do**

When we treat clothes as disposable, we waste a precious resource – human labour. With any piece of clothing, it is worth remembering that someone made it, carefully, with their hands and probably with little reward. Pray for them.

Buy fewer items of clothing by choosing clothing that can be worn for longer and made from recyclable, sustainably produced fibres.

Consider the quality of clothing we donate to charities so as not to shift the problem of unusable waste to poor countries.

Upcycle our old clothing into new uses. Offer them for resale on internet outlets.

Engage in the clothing swaps which already are happening in our church community.

Tear Fund are launching a campaign to reverse the trend called 'The Great Fashion Fast'. Read more about it at <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/join-the-great-fashion-fast>

'Second Hand September' - this year, Oxfam is asking consumers to only buy second hand clothes for the month of September to fight throwaway fashion.

Pray for the start-up of new circular business models, which include resale, rentals, repairs and remaking of garments.



Photos by Gerry Metcalfe



in All Saints Churchyard

