Learning Together for: Sustainability

Compiled by Walter Abetz June 2018

**Some Definitions**

"A process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" The World Commission on Environment and Development

"Sustainable development is a dynamic process which enables people to realise their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the earth's life support systems" (Forum for the Future)

"In essence sustainable development is about five key principles:

1. quality of life; fairness and equity;
2. participation and partnership;
3. care for our environment and respect for ecological constraints - recognising there are 'environmental limits';
4. thought for the future and
5. the precautionary principle".

(From Making London Work by Forum for the Future's Sustainable Wealth London project)

"The environment must be protected… to preserve essential ecosystem functions and to provide for the wellbeing of future generations; environmental and economic policy must be integrated; the goal of policy should be an improvement in the overall quality of life, not just income growth; poverty must be ended and resources distributed more equally; and all sections of society must be involved in decision making".

(The Real World Coalition 1996, a definition based on the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development)

"We cannot just add sustainable development to our current list of things to do but must learn to integrate the concepts into everything that we do."  (The Dorset Education for Sustainability Network)

"A sustainable future is one in which a healthy environment, economic prosperity and social justice are pursued simultaneously to ensure the well-being and quality of life of present and future generations. Education is crucial to attaining that future."  (Learning for a Sustainable Future - Teacher Centre)

"The first and perhaps most difficult problem, one that seldom gets addressed, is the time frame…Is a sustainable society one that endures for a decade, a human lifetime, or a thousand years?

(The shaky ground of Sustainable Development Donald Worster in Global Ecology 1993)

**Bible Stories relating to sustainability** – there are many others …

1. Cost

Building a tower Luke 14:28-30

"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.”

Fighting an enemy Luke 14:31-32

Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.

1. Sustainable cooperation requires a common language

Tower of Babel Gen 11:6-8

And the Lord said, “Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

1. Sustainable food source ?

Elijah and the widow Zarapeth 1 Kings 17:10-15

So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.” 11 As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” 12 But she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” 13 Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.”

1. Are things sustainable time-wise

Moses and Jethro Ex 18:17-18

Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. 18 You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

1. Planning makes for a higher yet sustainable result

Starting to save early 1 Cor 16:2

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come.

1. Physically supporting others on the spur of the moment

Moses having his arms held up Ex 17:12

But Moses’ hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the sun set.

1. Fortifying Jerusalem against long term siege

Risk assessment Hezekiah’s tunnel 2 Kings 20:20

The rest of the deeds of Hezekiah, all his power, how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?

1. Knowing when to act for best results

Assess risks Tares and Wheat Mt 13:29-30

But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

1. Checking on advice for sustainable rule

Assess risks Rehoboam – taxing the people 2 Chr 10:

1. Making changes to sustain the apostolic purpose

Use of Time appointments of Deacons in Acts Acts 6:1-7

Some present day stories

1. Adjustments to culture for sustainability Fortescue Mining Group

Local Aboriginals were trained to drive mining trucks, and well paid every month. After a couple of months they said to their boss, “We can’t afford to work here anymore” – The boss asked “Why not?” They replied, “On payday we share out the money, and then we do not have any money left for three weeks!” So they were paid weekly … and kept driving trucks.

1. Being prepared for the worst to stay on task

I went bushwalking in January on the Freycinet Peninsula. We were told there was water in the creeks. It had been a dry spring, and I doubted the advice, and carried a litre of water – unnecessary weight according to my friend. But all the streams were dry on our day walk and he was happy to drink my water

!

1. Keeping Poatina going Body Corporate “Sinking fund” planning for repairs.

Charging people money beyond the day to day operations of the BC allows for major repairs when they become due. It is foresight for sustainability.

Christians talk about ‘stewardship’ What is stewardship

Appropriate use of resources

Appropriate development of resources

Appropriate planning

Appropriate rate of use/replenishment of resources

Self-Sustaining natural cycles”

Water cycle sea, evaporation, rain, rivers, lakes, sea

Oxygen cycle plants release oxygen / animals consume oxygen

Carbon cycle air, plants, animals, sea - carbon reserves: fossil fuels

Nitrogen cycle lightning, composting, plant /animal: protein to urea

Sleep / wake

Birth / death

Areas where Sustainability should be considered and trade-offs need to occur:

PERSONAL COMMUNAL

Physical my health, energy our health, energy

my property /place where I live our village

our world

Psychological Personal wellbeing Communal wellbeing

Spiritual “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”

Financial personal sufficiency Communal sufficiency

(bankruptcy is not a private matter …)

Temporal My time Others’ time

Beyond my life span Beyond the community’s

Life span

Ethical My personal trustworthiness Our trustworthiness

Freedom, efficiencies through trust

Education My knowledge others; knowledge teaching / learning with next generation

Handing on skills.

Sustainability require forethought and energy. … .Requires Planning

Some Easy Questions for Discussion – and Action

1. Which definition do you like best?
2. How does it relate to issues of sustainability in Poatina in general?
3. How does it relate to sustainability of your own life in Poatina?
4. Which of the 13 stories relating to sustainability do you connect with the most?
5. What is the connection?
6. Does it say something about Poatina? If so, what?
7. What do **you** think is needed in make Poatina last for another 50 years?
8. Make a list of what needs to be done now, in your opinion.
9. What on your list can you contribute to?
10. Compare your list from 3(a) with someone else’s list. Discuss both the things that are the same, and the things that are different.
11. What could be implemented now?
12. Make a summary and send it to Village management, together with your answers from 3(b).

(See next page for the tough questions!)

Some More Difficult Questions to Ponder

(Question is in **bold**)

Is my life style sustainable?

I eat and sleep, so my body is sustained.

I have a house, and income to buy food, but what if the financial markets collapse?

the government goes broke?

My life style is sustainable while I do not spend more than my recurrent income.

I do not grow my own food. I rely on others.

My food is grown far away from Poatina. If transport becomes unviable, I will starve.

OR Tasmanians will learn to grown their own food and have a less diverse diet.

We may have to labour in the fields if fossil fuels become too expensive.

OR will we build electrical machinery powered by solar energy.

I use many things that I do not make myself. They wear out, need replacing.

**How does sustainability work for you ?**

[By the way, the new heaven and earth will be organised sustainably !]

Doing unsustainable things

Jesus commended the widow who gave all that she had.

I can run at 25km/h for 100m. But I cannot run at that speed for an hour.

I can stay up for 36 hours without having a sleep, but after that …

Responding to need in unsustainable ways is an interesting issue.

**When is sacrifice inappropriate?**

Individual difference

What is sustainable for me may not be sustainable for someone else, and vice versa.

**How do you deal with this in our Poatina community?**

Sustainability of personal involvement in the light of giftedness.

Gifts to the Church (the people of God) – varieties of gifts

The parable of the talents

Matthew three servants: 5 talents, 2 talents, 1 talent

Recognition of different abilities at the start

Two of them doubled the value of capital provided

Joyful engagement vs falsely fearful, complaining laziness

Luke ten servants 1 talent each

No recognition of individual ability

Ten-fold, five-fold increase of capital

[What about the other seven??

Did they not want to give an account? And got punished?!]

Joyful engagement vs falsely fearful, complaining laziness

vs rebellious refusal to give account?

**How do we foster a community that is sustainable, productive, enjoyable, engaged?**