Opinion
Culture
EarthBeat





by Bill Mitchell

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NCR is trying something new this week.

Beginning today, you'll see articles on NCRonline.org written by staffers of several different publications but all focused on one topic: climate change.

The collaborative publishing project is part of an initiative launched several months ago by the Columbia Journalism Review and The Nation magazine. NCR is among 250 news outfits and other organizations taking part. Others include The Guardian, the Toronto Star, Scientific American, Sentient Media and the Christian Science Monitor. You can read a complete list of participants here.

The collaboration is called Covering Climate Now and reflects a shared belief among its media partners that we need to do a better job reporting what is undeniably one of the most important stories facing the planet today: its increasing endangerment by the failure of its inhabitants to reduce the sort of polluting emissions that are heating up the globe and driving up sea levels, putting the lives of humans and other species at risk in the process.

NCR has reported on the climate crisis for years, with staff writer Brian Roewe beginning his coverage in 2011 with reports from the U.N. climate summit in Durban, South Africa.

Eight years later, his reporting remains at the heart of NCR's climate coverage. You'll be able to read a story by him later this week in advance of Friday's worldwide climate strikes.

Beyond what we've been providing all along, executive editor Tom Roberts announced in July that NCR is planning a significant step-up in climate coverage. Staffers throughout the organization have been busy building EarthBeat, a new section of our website that will launch later this fall. It will include staff reporting, reader submissions and other features aimed at more fully informing readers on climate and environmental issues, as well as networking Catholics and other people of faith who are working to address these issues.

The climate crisis waits for nobody's schedule, of course, so we jumped at the chance to join forces with Covering Climate Now even before EarthBeat is ready. Among the stories we've shared with the other publications is a feature called Small

Earth Stories that we won't officially unveil until we launch EarthBeat. But you can get a peek behind the curtain here.

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This week, in addition to Brian's story about Friday's climate strikes, you'll be able to read an analysis of their significance by Bill McKibben, perhaps the foremost author/activist on the climate story in recent years.

We'll also publish a story by Mark Hertsgaard of The Nation about next Monday's Climate Action Summit at the United Nations, a gathering aimed at spotlighting what the world's governments are actually doing to head off climate disaster — and encouraging more of the same.

Not all the coverage we'll provide comes from traditional news organizations. Sentient Media, for example, describes itself as a "journalism nonprofit organization working to create transparency about animal rights." Later this week, we'll publish its story about "meatless Mondays" — a practice that some Catholics and religious groups have adopted more and more in recent years.

These are unusual times we live in. They call for some unusual approaches to journalism, such as Covering Climate Now, but you can trust NCR to stick to its core mission and values even as we do our best to innovate and address emerging needs.

We welcome your feedback on these efforts, as well as your reactions to what you'll read on NCRonline.org this week. I look forward to hearing from you at the email address below.

[Bill Mitchell is NCR's climate editor. His email address is bmitchell@ncronline.org. Follow climate news at @ncrclimate.]

This story appears in the **Covering Climate Now** feature series. View the full series .