

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, and his wife, Margaret Sentamu, have told the Church of England's General Synod that concern for the planet is not a Christian 'add-on', but intrinsic to the Christian faith.

Following a visit in the summer to churches and communities in the Diocese of Polynesia - covering Tonga, Samoa and Fiji - the couple saw for themselves the effect of rising tides and the loss of land where families had lived for generations. They were visiting the islands at the invitation of the Most Revd Dr Winston Halapua, the Archbishop of Polynesia, and shared their reflections with General Synod this morning.

During this morning's presentation, Dr Sentamu said "Concern for the planet is not a Christian 'add-on', but intrinsic to our understanding of the Gospel today. The affirmation we make when reciting the Creed - 'God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and Earth' - is foundational for the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord."

He concluded by saying "As Christians, the world over, and as Anglicans in England, we ought to be leading players in debates and in taking action about climate change. Because what ultimately matters is not scientific knowledge, or technology, or a change to our economic system - vitally important though all these are. What matters is how we see ourselves in God's world, how we as human beings relate to the rest of God's creation, on which our life depends."

The Archbishop's presentation comes as world leaders prepare for the United Nations climate change conference which opens next week in Paris. The Church of England has been backing the Pilgrimage2Paris in the run-up to the talks, with pilgrims walking from London to Paris to call on politicians to reach a fair, ambitious and binding climate deal.

The General Synod meeting in July overwhelmingly backed a motion calling for urgent action to tackle climate change, supporting the Church's new investment policy.

Notes

The full presentation, including photos from Dr and Mrs Sentamu's visit and the video that was shown, is [available here](#).

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