

GENERAL SYNOD

COMBATting CLIMATE CHANGE: THE PARIS SUMMIT AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

A Background Paper from the Environment Working Group

1. At the February 2014 Group of Sessions, Synod debated a Diocesan Synod Motion from the Diocese of Southwark which (among other things) called for the setting up of an Environment Working Group to lead the church's responses to climate change and environmental issues more generally. The group has been formed, Chaired by the Bishop of Salisbury and has given careful attention to its role in encouraging wider church action and making the most of the church's moral voice in this crucial area which touches on domestic and international politics, culture, spirituality, discipleship and actions for change at personal, community and corporate levels.

The Anglican Communion

2. In February 2015, a group of 17 bishops from across the Anglican Communion met in South Africa at the invitation of the Archbishop of Cape Town and Primate of Southern Africa, the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba. The Bishop of Salisbury was one of the participants. The group issued a declaration entitled, *The World Is Our Host: A Call to Urgent Action for Climate Justice* which can be read in full at <http://acen.anglicancommunion.org/media/148818/The-World-is-our-Host-FINAL-TEXT.pdf>. The Press Statement issued after the consultation is attached at Annexe 1.

The Ecumenical Context

3. Protecting the environment and combatting climate change is a growing priority for other churches as well as the Church of England. A particularly significant contribution to the theological and political debate is likely to come with the keenly-awaited papal encyclical from Pope Francis which is expected to be published on 18 June 2015 – unfortunately, just after this paper had to be finalised.
4. The meeting of the Anglican bishops in Cape Town found inspiration in the teaching of Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew and received a letter of support from Antje Jackelen, Archbishop of Uppsala in the Church of Sweden.

The Lambeth Declaration

5. On 29 October 2009 prior to the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen, The Archbishop of Canterbury (Rowan Williams) hosted a meeting of faith leaders and faith-based and community organisations at Lambeth Palace to discuss the response of faith communities to environmental issues. As a result the meeting agreed The Lambeth Declaration.
6. In 2015, taking account of the added urgency of seeking international agreements to limit climate change, the original Declaration needed to be strengthened to encourage all those involved to appreciate the importance of the meetings on Paris and the work and commitment needed to take the necessary action on the road beyond.

7. The text of the Declaration is attached in Annexe 1. The Archbishop of Canterbury is endorsing the Declaration and it is hoped that a wide range of faith leaders will wish to support it.
8. The 2015 Lambeth Declaration on Climate Change will be launched publicly by the Bishop of Salisbury on 17 June 2015.

The Paris Summit

9. Between 30 November and 11 December 2015, governments of more than 90 countries will gather in Paris for the United Nations climate change conference. As current international commitments on greenhouse gas emissions run out in 2020, the conference is expected to seek agreements on what happens from 2020 to 2030 and beyond. The UN is also pressing world governments to produce a set of “sustainable development goals” which would supplant the Millennium Development Goals.
10. Engagement with the process leading up to the Paris conference by churches and faith communities is taking many forms. A programme of pilgrimages is being planned with support from the Shrinking the Footprint team at Church House who are linking the various organisers with local congregations and others who want to take part with support from Christian Aid, Cafod and Tearfund.
11. Other events are being planned by churches in Paris. The Bishop of London has accepted the invitation of the Archbishop of Paris to take part in a series of events with other faith leaders on 24 November. The Ecumenical Patriarch will deliver a lecture on climate change at Lambeth Palace in November, and will also take part in events in Paris on 1 December.

The G7

12. Heads of Government of the G7 met in Schloss Elmau, south of Munich on 8th and 9th June 2015 where they discussed the major global challenges within the framework of this informal group of leading industrial nations. A major proposal from this Summit was the announcement that there should be a “decarbonisation of the global economy over the course of this century.” The group also reaffirmed the goal of limiting global warming in the twenty-first century to two degrees Celsius from preindustrial levels. European members had pressed their G7 partners to sign up to legally binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but met resistance from the United States, which has been reluctant to set such targets. Although short of details the announcement signals to investors and others the trajectory of travel.

A Low-carbon future

13. What is meant by a low carbon future? The term is used to mean a future economic model that is based on low carbon power sources e.g. as wind, solar, hydro-electric, tidal power etc. that have minimal output of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions specifically carbon dioxide. GHG emissions due to human activity are either causing climate change or making climate change worse.
14. The term low carbon power can also include power that continues to utilize the world’s natural resources, such as natural gas and coal, but only when they employ techniques that reduce carbon dioxide emissions from these sources when burning them for fuel, such as plants performing Carbon capture and storage. Low Carbon Economies are proposed as a means to avoid catastrophic climate change, and as a precursor to the more advanced, zero-carbon economy.

Fossil Fuel Subsidies, Climate Justice and the Poor

15. The World Bank has quoted an IMF study of fossil fuel subsidies globally which determined that the wealthiest 20 percent of the population gets a disproportionate 43 percent of the benefit from fossil fuel subsidies, while the poorest 20 percent gets only 7 percent. In fact, the poorest 60 percent of the population still doesn't get as much benefit as the wealthiest quintile.
16. The World Bank concluded that there are better ways to provide assistance to the people who need it most that are also less expensive for the national budget. By one estimate, the cost of transferring US\$1 to the poorest 20 percent of the population via gasoline subsidies is US\$33. If countries instead shifted that funding to targeted support for the poor, the funding would help the people who need it most, rather than those who need it least.
17. The World Bank's position has not been without controversy. It has been accused of continuing to fund programmes in the developing world which entail considerable consumption of fossil fuels (see Annex 2). However, whilst the details are disputed, the World Bank's actions (or lack of them) do not affect the importance of reducing fossil fuel subsidies and redirecting those resources to renewable energy sources.
18. The International Monetary Fund published an important piece of research in May 2015. This found that fossil fuel subsidies are higher than previously estimated and that, if externalities are also taken into account (that is, issues like health problems and deaths caused by pollutants associated with burning fossil fuels) the rate of subsidy is much higher still because, in contrast, renewable forms of energy do not cause the same costly externalities. The IMF research can be found here: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/fad/subsidies/>.
19. Further evidence comes from recent research in relation to the Stern Report, the New Climate Economy report and a study into investment and climate change by investment consultants Mercer. All found that in the long term, the costs of investing in the transformation of the fossil fuel-based economy are lower than the costs of "business as usual".

Shrinking the Footprint

20. The CofE's national environmental programme was launched in 2006 following the 2005 General Synod resolution supporting the message and recommendations of the report *Sharing God's Planet*, published by Mission and Public Affairs Council. Shrinking the Footprint is now managed jointly by MPA and the Cathedrals and Church Building Council. Following the General Synod debate in February 2014, Shrinking the Footprint is now a programme of the Environmental Working Group which reports to the Archbishops' Council.
21. New 'ecothological resources' were proposed by the Bishops' Climate Change Network convened by the Archbishop of Cape Town in February 2015. This followed the call during the 1998 Lambeth Conference to explore the great challenge and opportunity of Eco-Theology. 'Scripture was inspired in a different world, but biblical insights into the nature of the God-human-world relation provide a firm foundation for a contemporary ecological theology'.
22. Shrinking the Footprint (StF) has provided a banner under which numerous other initiatives are taking place. In the last twelve months these have included:

- **Environmental Engagement Programme** – StF is publicising a 2014 pilot organised by the Lichfield diocese to encourage all dioceses to promote environmental awareness and action at parish level involving mission, energy, food and biodiversity etc.
- **Churchyard Yews** are a major feature of a new Heritage Lottery Fund’s Ancient Yew funded project. Churches are encouraged to apply for small grants to encourage community heritage projects and support workshops to help maintenance, care and protection together with interpretation for both local and visitor interest.
- **Paris Pilgrimages Liaison** - Tearfund, Christian Aid and Cafod have provided funding for StF to appoint a UK co-ordinator for the various pilgrimages planned for the run-up to the UN Climate meetings. A website and programme of events is under development. As well as providing a link to all the UK initiatives this service will also provide a link to all international pilgrimages.
- **Eco-pod** - piloting sustainable new uses for closed, closing and underused churches involving appropriate structures built within them in ways to be sympathetic to the host buildings.
- **Historic Environment Adaptation Group** - involving Historic England, Historic Scotland, National Trust, Environment Agency, National Parks and Defra, chaired by StF.
- **The Adaptation of Cathedral and Church Buildings and Communities to a Changing Climate** - development and support of report.
- **Bats** - partners with Natural England in a £3million HLF bid to tackle the emotive issue of bats in churches.
- **Environmental news and information** - regularly produced for Diocesan Environment Officers, Bishops and clergy.
- **Our website**, www.churchcare.org/shrinking-the-footprint, is constantly updated and receives a large number of ‘hits’. Popular pages include guidance on taking action and an interactive map of renewable installations
- **Parish Buying** has been promoted by StF and energy data is collected through the scheme’s 5000 energy packages.
- **Social media** – StF is active on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube
- **Diocesan Environmental Officers** – all dioceses should have a DEO who receives frequent updates on a wide range of issues and encouraged to meet together at least once a year to discuss ideas, activities and to network.
- **Communications** - StF has strong Governmental links with DECC and DEFRA along with a number parliamentary groups, business associations and NGOs.
- **UNDP’s Faiths and the Sustainable Development Goals** – StF has been asked to represent the CofE in this two day event in September 2015.

Training for Ministry – the environmental dimension

23. The church’s clergy and lay ministers are strongly placed to lead debate and action on environmental issues, especially in the context of local communities. Many, however, do not feel well equipped to give a lead on a topic which is often perceived as the province of specialists and where technical information is often disputed. But the church has a key role in exploring the theological and ethical, rather than the technical, issues and these are often forgotten in public debate.
24. Training for ministry in the Church of England is at a particularly creative moment in its development, with the new Common Awards and new thinking taking place about

how lay ministry might be resourced. It is important not to overload the curriculum with a plethora of “issues”, but questions of ethics and the environment are a useful case study in how Christian ethics resources Christian action. Creating options and pathways for including environmental ethics and “eco-theology” in the training curriculum could encourage and support the church leaders of the future (especially younger candidates) to be enablers for others in seeking change and a sustainable future.

Prayer and Fasting for the Climate

25. An initiative was launched earlier this year supported by members of the Faith and Climate Network encouraging Christians to pray and fast on the first day of every month at any time of the day, singularly or with others, for a meaningful and just global climate agreement at the UN Climate summit. This is one way in which every member of the church can play a constructive role in movement for change and for the safeguarding of God’s creation – our habitat, the planet.

+Nicholas Salisbury
Chair
Environment Working Group
June 2015

Lambeth Declaration 2015 on Climate Change

As leaders of the faith communities we recognise the urgent need for action on climate change.

From the perspective of our different faiths we see the earth as a beautiful gift. We are all called to care for the earth and have a responsibility to live creatively and sustainably in a world of finite resources.

Climate change is already disproportionately affecting the poorest in the world. The demands of justice as well as of creation require the nations of the world urgently to limit the global rise in average temperatures to a maximum of 2°C, as agreed by the United Nations in Cancun. We have a responsibility to act now, for ourselves, our neighbours and for future generations.

The scale of change needed to make the transition to a low carbon economy is considerable and the task urgent. We need to apply the best of our intellectual, economic and political resources. Spirituality is a powerful agent of change. Faith has a crucial role to play in resourcing both individual and collective change.

We call on our faith communities to:

- Recognise the urgency of the tasks involved in making the transition to a low carbon economy.
- Develop the spiritual and theological resources that will strengthen us individually and together in our care of the earth, each other and future generations.
- Encourage and pray for those engaged in the intellectual, economic, political and spiritual effort needed to address this crisis.
- Work with our communities and partners in the UK and internationally to mitigate the effects of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the world;
- Build on the examples of local and international action to live and to work together sustainably,
- Redouble our efforts to reduce emissions that result from our own institutional and individual activities.

As representatives of the vast numbers of people of faith across the globe we urge our Government to use their influence to achieve a legally-binding commitment at the international Climate Change talks in Paris, and with the continuing programme beyond. Through our various traditions we bring our fasting and our prayers for the success of the negotiations.

We call with humility, with a determination enlivened by our faith and with awareness of the need for courage, justice and hope. We are faced with a huge challenge. But we are hopeful that the necessary changes can be made – for the sake of all who share this world today - and those who will share it tomorrow.

Statement from the Anglican Communion Environment Network of bishops: March 2015

Now is the Time for Prayer and Action on “Unprecedented Climate Crisis”: Anglican Bishops

A group of 17 Anglican Bishops from all six continents have called for urgent prayer and action on the “unprecedented climate crisis”. Their Declaration *The World Is Our Host: A Call to Urgent Action for Climate Justice* released today sets a new agenda on climate change for the 85 million-strong Anglican Communion.

The group met in South Africa in February to build on months of conversations carried out via the internet. The group involved bishops both from cultures and nations that are major contributors to climate change, and those producing low levels of CO₂ but disproportionately affected.

The Archbishop of Cape Town and Primate of Southern Africa, the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba, who brought the group together, said:

“We accept the evidence of science: Human activity, especially in fossil-fuel based economies, is the main cause of the climate crisis. We heard of extreme weather and changes to seasons; rising sea levels; acidification of seawater; depleted fishing grounds; and displaced people who are climate refugees.

“The problem is spiritual as well as economic, scientific and political. We have been complicit in a theology of domination. While God committed the care of creation to us, we have been care-less – but not hopeless.

“In the words of St Theresa of Avila, we are God’s hands and feet on earth – now is the time for us, rooted in prayer, to step up and take action on the climate crisis.”

The Declaration commits the bishops to specific first actions including: energy conservation measures in church buildings; more renewable energy; nurturing biodiversity on church land; supporting sustainability in water, food, agriculture and land use reviewing churches’ investment practices including a call for divestment; and closer ecumenical and interfaith co-operation.

The bishops commended the Fast for the Climate initiative, where they join many others in fasting and praying for the climate on the first of every month.

The bishops argue for ambitious and binding climate change agreements at national and international levels, and assistance for climate refugees.

Women, who make up the majority of the world’s poorest are hit harder by climate change. The Rt Revd Ellinah Wamukoya, Bishop of Swaziland and Africa’s first woman Bishop said:

“Women are more often dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, so the contribution of women is essential in decisions around climate change. Our communities must be equal, as in the Eucharist.”

Canon Ken Gray, a Canadian priest who is Secretary of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, said:

“It was a remarkable gathering, representative of the Communion’s diversity. The Declaration is a unique and authoritative document which will pave the way towards greater collaboration amongst lay and clerical leaders as the communion as whole comes to terms with the present climate crisis and our Gospel-driven need to respond compassionately.”

Notes

The World Is Our Host: A Call to Urgent Action for Climate Justice with a gallery of images will be available for download at the ACEN site at <http://acen.anglicancommunion.org/>
Enquiries should be directed to Canon Ken Gray

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CONTROVERSY AROUND THE WORLD BANK'S OWN ACTIONS**(FROM: *THE GUARDIAN* 6 MARCH 2015)**

A new analysis (In a report of Oil Change International - OCI) reveals funding by the World Bank of \$3.4bn (£2.3bn) for fossil fuel-related projects in the developing world in 2014 a rise of 23% on the previous year, despite repeated calls by bank's president to scrap such 'harmful' global subsidies for oil, gas and coal.

The executive director of OCI, said: "Bank staff are absolutely right to be concerned about fossil fuel subsidies, but they need to get their own house in order as well. They provided more than \$3bn in financing for fossil fuels last year, all of which are clearly subsidies for fossil fuel production. The World Bank should lead by example, not try to hide business as usual."

A World Bank spokeswoman said: "We have seen the [OCI] report and do not agree with the way it characterises our work. Critically, the report uses a completely different way of classifying energy projects to the World Bank Group." The spokeswoman said the bank's own assessment showed its support for fossil fuels almost halved during 2013/14, while its financing of renewable energy rose significantly.

But the bank admitted that its fossil fuel calculation did not include another tranche of funding for governance, called 'policy and institutional development' - part of which supports the burning of fossil fuels.

"In countries that produce hydrocarbons, these need to be considered as part of the overall energy strategy. In countries where natural gas is available, the development of this resource often provides a critical alternative to coal-fired power generation," said the spokeswoman, who added that gas was a "clean flexible fuel". The bank did not provide an estimate of how much it had put towards the fossil fuel industry through this type of funding.

Sasanka Thilakasiri, who advises [Oxfam International](#) on economic justice issues, said: "If the World Bank is suggesting that they are investing in fossil fuels via loop holes, this flies in the face of the good things they have been saying in moving towards a low-carbon economy. The World Bank needs to close this loop hole."