



ACEN DIGEST March 2014

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ECO-BISHOPS' INITIATIVE BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

EPISCOPAL LEADERS TO ENTER STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

At the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop Thabo Makgoba (Church of Southern Africa and ACEN chair) as



many as twenty bishops of the Anglican Communion will shortly enter a process of discernment and discussion around the church's engagement with the environment.

In a letter of invitation Archbishop Thabo asked potential participants "...to join me in a process of dialogue involving an exchange of ideas and concerns, and information about the responses we have already made in relation to climate change, and those we hope to make. Then, we can share our experience in an organized way with our colleagues in the

Anglican Communion. Our goal will be to develop a Communion-wide strategic plan that meets the challenges ahead and builds confidence in God's future." The invitation is to participate in a dialogue process leading up to and following a face-to-face meeting in Cape Town, South Africa in February 2015. To our knowledge this is the first time that bishops alone have been invited to speak with each other on ecological issues and invited to collectively speak to the communion globally.

Archbishop Thabo further asked bishops to: "send me a brief outline of your hopes, concerns, the obstacles you face, and what you would like to see happen at home and elsewhere in the Anglican world in relation to climate change and its impacts. This will help us to begin our conversation..."

Bishops will communicate initially by email and other electronic media. At the 2015 Cape Town conference an indaba style process of dialogue will be employed. This will not be a conference where "experts" provide information to participants but where participants will share at a deep level their experiences, hopes and concerns.

ACEN steering committee members have worked to create a balance between those regions which are immediately affected by climate change and those which have contributed to it significantly.

Responses to the Archbishop's invitation include:

Bishop Nick Drayson, (Salta) Northern Argentina, Southern Cone:

Though climate change is a relatively new issue for us in terms for Church, we are recognizing that this is a topic we have to rapidly push to the top of our agenda. We are keen to learn from and work with our brothers and sisters throughout the communion.

Bishop Chad Gandiya, Harare, Central Africa:

My immediate response was and still is a definite yes to joining you in purposeful dialogue about the environment . . . I believe we all need to start from where we are - at home, at the office, in our communities and in the nation and then it can become a worldwide campaign. I would like the church-our church to take a lead. After all, it is the fifth mark of what we as Anglicans believe about mission.

What binds the bishops together is a desire to respond to and implement the fifth mark of mission: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

JAMAICAN ANGLICANS - THE ENVIRONMENT: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



CORAL REEFS, BEACHES, FORESTS ALL SUFFER FOR "OUR SELFISH GAIN"

The Jamaica observer reports on a deanery day service focused on caring for God's creation [here](#).

The service was held under the theme, 'The Environment: Hope for the Future'. The message was delivered by Dr Las Newman, lay reader of St Andrew Parish Church on Hagley Park Road.

Newman urged congregants to take care of the environment, which he said is a part of their mission as believers in Christ Jesus. He urged believers to return to an "integration of religion with the world around us."

Newman advised that believers should do their bit to safeguard the environment by planting trees, forming environment clubs within the church and in their neighbourhoods, stop littering and the burning of garbage.

"Caring for God's creation is one of our missionary mandates. Let us take care of the environment and it will take care of you," Newman said.

The full article can be read [here](#).

SIGNIFICANT RESOLUTION PASSED IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND GENERAL SYNOD - February 12, 2014

DECISION TO ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE BY ALIGNING INVESTMENTS WITH CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY PASSED OVERWHELMINGLY

Operation Noah reports a significant recent decision in the Church of England's General Synod here.

A resolution put by Canon Giles Goddard "commits the Church to seriously consider how its investments reflect the urgency of climate change, including the option of divestment from fossil fuels. As Canon Goddard's resolution made very clear we need to make a series of radical transformations in our economy and society if we are to avert catastrophic and uncontrolled changes to the climate system. That is going to require leadership from the Church."

"Today the Church of England has taken the first step to re-engaging with the issue of climate change,' said Dr Isabel Carter, Chair of Operation Noah today. 'This vote commits the Church to seriously consider how its investments reflect the urgency of climate change, including the option of divestment from fossil fuels."

Canon Goddard continued: "There is now recognition of the need for a fresh public conversation about climate change and the future habitability of our planet, and whether we want a future for our children which is cleaner, safer and healthier. There is a need for the government to be willing to take responsibility for change. The Church could help lead that conversation. The need for leadership has never been greater. We look forward to working with the C of E on this issue."

The motion debated at General Synod called on the Synod to:

1. Call upon the national investing bodies to ensure that their investment policy (including the option of divestment) is aligned with the theological, moral and social priorities of the Church which find expression in the reports 'Sharing God's Planet' and 'Church and Earth 2009-2016' and in the 'Shrinking the Footprint' campaign.
2. Call upon the Ethical Investment Advisory Group to publish the report of its review by the end of 2014; and agree to the establishment of a General Synod Working Group on the Environment, to monitor this and other environmental issues.

The full Operation Noah release is [here](#).

Background papers for the synod debate are found [here](#).

LAND FOR LIFE (FUNDACIÓN REFUGIO) - UPDATE

LFL CONTINUES TO CHALLENGE DEFORESTATION IN NORTHERN ARGENTINA

LFL writes:

Since 2008, Salta authorities authorized the clearance of approximately 840,000 acres of native forests (roughly the size of Essex) – 28% of that has been in areas where deforestation is prohibited by law.

We attended and made presentations at public hearings at different locations across the Chaco on the 23rd of December and then again on the 3rd and 16th of January. We presented written challenges to a further two projects during January. with yet another proposal under examination, this time for the clearance of 48,000 acres at a place called El Pelicano, right in the very heart of the region we have been hoping to purchase some land for conservation.



These events at times leave us feeling ineffective, and sometimes depressed. It gets even worse in cases in which landowners bribe indigenous people to support their proposals for deforestation. We often ask if what we are doing is worthwhile, whether we should be doing things differently, and whether we should even be here.

We have, however, been encouraged by the fact that Greenpeace Argentina has initiated a public campaign aimed at putting pressure on the Salta government to put a brake on deforestation. We are also pleased to see that the Catholic Church is now taking on the issue as well.

Thanks to the time invested in constructing our database (GIS) we are able to provide technical input and data to these campaigns, as well as working on internationalizing the issue through the Anglican Communion.

LFL continues to value your prayers for patience, courage and stamina in challenging deforestation.

For more information or to offer support please contact [Dr. Andrew Leake](#) (ACEN rep, Southern Cone)



CARBON FAST 2014 NOW LAUNCHED

INTEREST IN INITIATIVE EXPANDING DAY BY DAY

Congratulations to Dr. Rachel Mash and Margie Jansen for their tremendous work developing and expanding the Carbon Fast initiative.

Chat on the ACEN listserv is already lively and the carbon fast blog will provide daily reflection and challenges.

With over 3000 members on the Green Anglicans Facebook page and hundreds more following on the ACEN list serve we can connect with and easily encourage and challenge one another. The **Anglican Communion News Service** article raised the profile significantly so much so that a Google search will yield dozens of regional and diocesan advertisements of the initiative.

Check it out for yourself:

The Carbon Fast 2014 page is [here](#).

The Green Anglicans Facebook page is [here](#).

Enough for now. A blessed and low-carbon Lent to all.

Ken Gray+