

# Anglican Church of Southern Africa

ACSA Response to the Environmental Crisis



**ACSA EN**

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Compiled by: Tim Gray

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## ACSA Response to the Environmental Crisis

### Introduction - Tim Gray

The following contributions were requested with two meetings in mind. The first meeting is the Anglican Communion Environmental Network meeting to be held at the beginning of August 2011 in Peru. A major part of this meeting will be a sharing of environmental issues facing the provinces of the representatives. Given the seriousness of the ecological crisis an understanding what each province is confronted with and how they are responding is an important part of the interaction. The various reports, articles and comments are an attempt to convey something of a picture of the issues that face the Southern African Anglican communities.

The second meeting in mind is the Provincial Standing Committee meeting in September 2011. This year is of particular importance, not only for Southern Africa, but for all of Africa. The UNFCCC 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties is to be held in Durban this year. COP 17, as the meeting is known, is the ongoing climate change negotiation process between the nations of the world in attempting to reach a binding agreement regarding green house gas emissions. In this regard I have included the Pan African Inter Faith Statement drawn up in Nairobi in June this year. The statement highlights anthropogenic climate change as an issue of justice, ethics and peace and challenges the nations of the world not to narrowly see economics as the sole criteria of adjudging national and global well being. Africa of all the continents needs to make its voice heard in regard to climate change. Of the 28 countries adjudged worst affected by climate change 22 are in Africa. The faith communities generally in Southern Africa have not yet added their voice to the climate change debate and seem to have failed to have heard the appeals of its own people increasingly threatened by intensifying drought and flood patterns. These events continue to be seen as weather issues and are seldom associated with the fossil fuel energy demands of industry and technology. It is hoped that that the articles and thoughts presented in this document may be helpful in drawing attention to the churches need to respond to the climate change crisis through advocacy and behavioral changes.

I am very grateful for those who responded to my requests to put something in writing. The articles will show that there has been some very positive and concerted response amongst some communities and especially at a local congregational level. The concept of the eco congregation has been taken up by several dioceses and congregations. Several dioceses have appointed coordinators of environmental desks and champions have emerged who are motivating a variety of projects and initiatives.

The province has approved a ten year environmental plan and Shaun Cozett who is the coordinator of ACSA EN has summarized those initiatives in an article which also includes the challenge of a budget to implement those plans.

Articles by Bishop Geoff Davies and Kate Davies remind us of the relationship that the province has with the Southern African Faith Communities Institute and of the current importance of this relationship in terms of engaging with the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP 17) to be held in Durban this year.

For the environmental crisis to be brought home to the parish means that theological education and training needs to be exposed to current thinking and practice. Janet Trisk shares some of her observations of the level of awareness of the ecological crisis for theological education within the ACSA.

Similarly the role of liturgy is vital in the formation of our attitudes and beliefs and Bruce Jenniker of the Liturgical Committee reflects on the APB and the Season of Creation liturgies.

Noeleen Mullet from the Johannesburg Anglican Environmental Initiative has written about eco congregations, the materials being used and the response of some communities while Andrew Warmback ( Diocese of kwa Zulu Natal) and Rachel Mash (Diocese of Cape Town) write of the environmental policies and initiatives emerging within their dioceses.

While these articles reflect on new awakenings within the Province it needs to be recognized that many historical communities have long engaged with environmental issues in the process of community development and community survival. Access to clean water, sanitation, appropriate and sensible land usage, development of food gardens have long been at the heart of rural church projects. Andrew Warmback’s reflection on the *Church of God the Creator* reminds us and encourages us in terms of what has been done and is ongoing. I acknowledge that reporting on this sector is inadequate and that it has been beyond my ability to gather the required stories. That we need such an awareness is vital both in responding to the needs and vulnerabilities of such communities but also in acknowledging the hopefulness that their witness brings in modeling environmentally sensitive communities.



1 THE 350.ORG CAMPAIGN TAKEN UP BY A PARISH IN THE DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

## Climate Justice for Sustainable Peace in Africa

*A message from African faith leaders to the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), from 29 November – 9 December 2011 in Durban, South Africa.*



*You must treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It is loaned to you by your children. – Kikuyu proverb*

### Introduction

Africa is a continent of the faithful. We gathered as African faith leaders at UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011, to discuss climate change and how it will be addressed at COP17.

Scientific reports indicate that climate change may well be the greatest threat that humanity has ever faced, with, on current targets, probable increased global warming of 2.5<sup>0</sup> C to 4<sup>0</sup> C by 2100<sup>i</sup> – widely agreed to be disastrous. Yet progress in international negotiations has not matched the scale of the crisis. There appears to be a deadlock between competing political and economic interests from various power blocs. We believe that to break this deadlock, new perspectives are required.

Firstly, economic and political processes have to be based on ecological principles, and not vice versa. There can be no infinite economic or population growth on a finite planet.

Secondly, there is a profound need for a renewed moral vision for the future of humanity and indeed of all life. We debase human beings by seeing them only as economic instruments, and debase the sanctity of life by commodifying it.

We must realise that well-being cannot be equated with material wealth. The quality of life is not dependent on the quantity of material things or growth measured by GDP. Instead, our standard of living depends on our standard of loving and sharing. We cannot sustain a world dominated by profit-seeking, rampant consumerism and gross inequalities, and an atmosphere of competition where the powerful take

advantage of the weak without caring for the well-being of every form of life. Development cannot be sustained if the affluent project themselves as examples to be copied by everyone else, and if the poor model their lifestyles on such examples.

These insights draw from the rich moral and spiritual traditions on our continent and elsewhere in the world. Despite the historical violence and disorganization that Africa has suffered and inflicted on itself, these insights have been transmitted to us by our ancestors who believed in the harmony of vital forces, between human beings and the rest of creation.

In our African spiritual heritage and our diverse faith traditions, trees, flowers, water, soil and animals have always been essential companions of human beings, without which life and being are inconceivable. We express this in different ways through our understanding of the world as God's own beloved creation, and our sense of place and vocation within it.

Our ways of thinking and feeling deeply influence the world around us. As we find compassion, peace and harmony within ourselves, we will begin to treat the Earth with respect, resist disorder and live in peace with each other, including embracing a binding climate treaty. We pray that compassion will guide these negotiations.

### **Our commitments as faith leaders**

Our African people and nations have to overcome the temptation of seeing ourselves as victims, who have no role and responsibility to play in reversing the current situation – we are part of the solution.

As African faith leaders, our responsibilities will be to:

- Set a good example for our faith communities by examining our personal needs and reducing unsustainable consumption.
- Lead local communities to understand the threat of climate change and the need to build economies and societies based on a revitalised moral vision.
- Draw on our spiritual resources to foster crucial ecological virtues such as wisdom, justice, courage and temperance, and to confront vices such as greed in our own midst.
- Acknowledge that climate change has greatly affected already vulnerable people (such as women, children, the elderly, the poor and the disabled), that it worsens existing inequalities and that this places an obligation on faith groups to stand in solidarity with the victims of climate change disasters, showing care, compassion and love.
- Plant indigenous trees and promote ecological restoration.

### **Our message to all world leaders**

As citizens, we are asked to put our trust in representatives at COP17 to decide upon our common future. We have no doubt that the Durban COP must decide on a treaty – and second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol – that is fair, ambitious and legally binding, to ensure the survival of coming generations.

We therefore call on you to:

- Commit to the principle of inter-generational equity, the rights of our children for generations to come, and to the rights of Mother Earth as outlined in the Cochabamba declaration.
- Refute the myth that action to cut emissions is too expensive, when it is far cheaper than the long-term costs of inaction.
- Acknowledge that investments in sustainability are a better guarantor of peace than military spending.
- Abandon Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of prosperity in favour of indicators that include human wellbeing, equality and the external environmental costs of human economies.
- Set clear final targets for phasing out the use of all fossil fuels, and deep interim reductions in carbon emissions that support the target of no more than one degree of global warming.
- Ensure that there is sufficient climate finance for adaptation in Africa, additional to existing development aid and that it is governed inclusively and equitably under the United Nations.
- Channel sufficient and predictable climate finance and technology from the historic polluting nations, in recognition of their ecological debt, to enable Africa to leapfrog into an age of clean energy technology.
- Close the gap between wealthy countries' pledges to cut warming emissions and what science and equity require.
- Assign for wealthy countries emission quotas that are consistent with the full measure of their historical responsibility.

### **Our message to Africa's political leaders**

We further urge African political leaders, as many of you are members of our faith communities, to take these particular measures:

- To regain a united voice and abandon expedient allegiances with blocs that are scrambling to appropriate Africa's natural resources.
- Recognise in all policy statements that our long-term social and economic interests require the stability of our biophysical environment today.
- Prioritise measures and adopt policies to resolve environmental degradation in our nations.
- Acknowledge and pre-empt the violence at all levels that climate change and environmental degradation is already fueling on the continent.
- Adopt and enact land policies that ensure equity and justice for all.
- Resist the approval of transactions with exploitative corporations that would cause serious environmental damage.
- Promote indigenous tree planting and protection of existing forests, lakes and rivers.
- Build much greater capacity within long-standing teams of climate negotiators.

- Greatly improve communications within and between African governments, and consultation with civil society, including faith communities, on issues of climate change.

## Conclusion

Every human generation is faced by particular challenges and opportunities. If we do not secure a stable climate for the sake of future generations, we will be held accountable by them and judged by history.

On this very critical issue of climate change, we must not fail. Every lost moment increases an irreversible threat to life on Earth.

*8 June 2011:— This communique was compiled jointly by 130 faith leaders representing Muslim, Christian, Hindu, African traditional, Bahá'í and Buddhist communities from 30 countries across Africa.*

### For more information, please contact:

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC):

Rev. Dr. Andre Karamaga (Nairobi): (254-20) 4441483, [k.andre@aacc-ceta.org](mailto:k.andre@aacc-ceta.org)  
[www.aacc-ceta.org](http://www.aacc-ceta.org)

Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA):

Rev Dr Johnson Mbillah (Nairobi): [generaladviser@procmura.org](mailto:generaladviser@procmura.org)  
[www.procmura.org](http://www.procmura.org)

Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI):

Bishop Geoff Davies (Cape Town): +27 83 754 5275, [geoff.davies@safcei.org.za](mailto:geoff.davies@safcei.org.za), [www.safcei.org.za](http://www.safcei.org.za)

## ACSA Provincial Environment Priority -Shaun Cozett

ACSA EN Coordinator and chairperson



Shaun Cozett holds a degree in Environmental Science from the University of Cape Town. He is a member of the Diocesan Environment Group of the Diocese of Cape Town, and serves on the board of the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute. Shaun served as the champion for the development of the Provincial ten-year plan for the environment.

In 2008, after being enthroned as Archbishop of Cape Town, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba hosted a consultation on the vision for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. It resulted in the following vision statement, which was presented to the Provincial Standing Committee in September 2009, Anchored in Christ, Committed to God's Mission, Transformed by the Holy Spirit. In order to enact the vision, eight priorities were identified that need to be addressed at diocesan and parish levels:

- |                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Liturgy and Worship               | 5. Environment               |
| 2. Theological Education             | 6. Women and Gender          |
| 3. Leadership Development            | 7. Children and Young People |
| 4. Health – HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria | 8. Public Advocacy           |

For each priority, a champion was appointed, with the responsibility of convening a task team and developing a 10-year plan. The task team for the environment developed the plan based on the framework developed by the Alliance for Religions and Conservation, and contains content based on the experiences in several dioceses. The plan has seven responses to the environment and the table below indicates the activities to date towards enacting each response:

Responses	Activities to date
1. Ensure that the 'Season of Creation' is promoted and celebrated within the ACSA annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A resolution to this extent was passed at Provincial Standing Committee in 2009.</li> <li>• Discussions were held with the Provincial Liturgical Committee to explore whether the Season of Creation could be included in the lectionary, but this does not seem possible.</li> <li>• The Provincial Liturgical Committee are working on a resource to aid parishes in the celebration of specific seasons, and they have highlighted the Season of Creation as of three seasons to be focused on in the first version of the resource.</li> </ul>
2. Create a programme like the Church of England's 'Shrinking the Footprint'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACSA hosted Brian Cuthbertson, the head of the Environment Programme for the Diocese of London, during January 2011. Brian visited six dioceses and presented on their diocesan programme.</li> <li>• A follow-up workshop is needed with the six dioceses that were visited.</li> <li>• There are active environmental groups in three dioceses, and as a result of the roadshow they</li> </ul>

	<p>have agreed to work with neighbouring dioceses on establishing similar groups.</p>
<p>3. Encourage the Province and each diocese to have an environment desk and/or environmental coordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A resolution in this regard was passed at Provincial Synod in 2010.</li> <li>• The majority of dioceses have not yet complied with the resolution</li> </ul>
<p>4. Produce appropriate resource material and establish an eco web page on the ACSA website to share lessons learnt.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the moment resource material is being sourced from partner organizations the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute and A Rocha, as required.</li> <li>• The primary resource being used for liturgical purposes is the Season of Creation.</li> <li>• A meeting was held with the communications committee, and in principle agreement was given to have an environmental page on the website.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Hold an annual ACSA Environmental Network workshop for diocesan coordinators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task team overseeing the implementation of the vision have noted that most 10-year plans indicate an annual workshop. They are exploring the possibility of having an annual ACSA workshop that would bring people from across the province together to discuss these matters. This is still in the conceptual phase.</li> <li>• Hope Africa, the Social Development arm of the province, have secured funding to host a provincial workshop this year. As COP 17 will be held in South Africa, they intend hosting an environmental workshop with representatives from every diocese. This is being planned for September 2011.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Re-establish formal contact with the Anglican Communion Environmental Network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several meetings of an interim committee have been held. The full formation is dependent on the appointment of diocesan coordinators.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Promote environmental action at parish level through the establishment of eco-congregations and/or A Rocha groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-congregation and A Rocha presentations were done part of the workshops with Brian Cuthbertson</li> <li>• The province has formally registered as a member of SAFCEI</li> <li>• SAFCEI are piloting the Eco-Congregations programme in the Diocese of Cape</li> <li>• Similar groups have been established in the Dioceses of Johannesburg and Natal</li> </ul>

## Appendix: Environment Task Team Plan Summary, as presented to Provincial Synod 2010

### 5. The environment

#### 5.1 Foundations

‘God created humankind in his image ... God blessed them, and God said to them “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth”.’ (Gen 1:27-8)

‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.’ (Gen 2:15)

‘The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the compass of the world and those who dwell therein’. (Ps 24:1)

‘Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything was held in common. ... There was no needy person among them...’ (Acts 4:32, 34)

#### ”What is Christian Stewardship?

Christian stewardship is the way in which Christians exercise their duty to administer what God has entrusted to them and to serve him gladly in his Church.

#### What has God entrusted to human beings to administer?

God has entrusted to human beings material possessions, time and talents, and made us stewards of his creation.”

– *From the Catechism, APB p. 435, Questions 83,84*

‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth’

– *The fifth of the Anglican Communion’s ‘Five Marks of Mission’ (1990)*

#### 5.2 Proposals

The task team believes that care for the environment is embedded in all the ‘Five Marks of Mission’ adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1990. So their plan looks at the church’s response to the environmental crisis across several areas, and seeks to incorporate holistic environmental action into the mission and ministry of the Church.

Any Provincial programme must give special attention to issues particular to the various countries that constitute the ACSA, to the urban / rural divide, and to the gap between poor and wealthy.

The task team’s plan has three main sections. The first identifies a range of critical environmental issues; the second focuses on what Anglicans can do at Provincial, diocesan, and parish levels; and the third details the resources, timeframe, budget, and people required to deliver on the plan.

##### 5.2.1 Environmental issues

The team identifies the following critical issues:

###### 5.2.1.1 Climate change

This is “the key emerging environmental issue”, and must be met by both *mitigation* (reducing carbon emissions) and *adaptation* (using alternative energy sources). The team details a range of strategies to address it.

### 5.2.1.2 Water

Both the availability and quality of water in Southern Africa are major challenges, with a wide range of causes that include the effects of industry and mining, increased urbanisation, agricultural run-off, waste disposal, and land use.

### 5.2.1.3 Air

The main concerns here are:

- Indoor and ambient air pollution, and the associated health impacts
- Climate change and variability, and its implications for ecosystems and human well-being
- Depletion of stratospheric ozone

## 5.2.2. Anglican responses

The team proposes seven responses, informed by the seven-year plan of the UK-based Alliance of Religions and Conservation:

- (i) Ensure that the ‘Season of Creation’ is promoted and celebrated within the ACSA annually.
- (ii) Create a programme like the Church of England’s ‘Shrinking the Footprint’.
- (iii) Encourage the Province and each diocese to have an environment desk and/or environmental coordinator.
- (iv) Produce appropriate resource material and establish an eco web page on the ACSA website to share lessons learnt.
- (v) Hold an annual ACSA Environmental Network workshop for diocesan coordinators.
- (vi) Re-establish formal contact with the Anglican Communion Environmental Network.
- (vii) Promote environmental action at parish level through the establishment of eco-congregations and/or A Rocha groups.

### 5.2.3 Timeframe

- **2011: Establishment of Provincial structure.** This includes appointing a Provincial Environmental Worker, setting up an oversight team, confirming budgets, and establishing partnerships.
- **2012: Policy and guideline development,** including developing a website, and setting guidelines for diocesan environmental desks and for a ‘shrink the footprint’ programme.
- **2013-2020: Implementation.** A range of structures, programmes, resources, and linkages will be put in place and begin to operate.

## 5.3 Budget

<i>A detailed budget is given in the task team’s report.</i>	2011-2020
Year 1	R282,500
Year 2	R307,750
Year 3	R425,525

## The role Anglicans have played in establishing and supporting SAFCEI, the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute - Kate Davies



Kate Davies is an environmentalist and the coordinator of the Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Institute Eco-congregations programme. She is a founder member of SAFCEI.

During the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the global environmental movement began to gain strength but the voice of Christians and other world religions was only a whisper in this groundswell. In those early years, the Church of the Province of Southern Africa or the CPSA, as it was then known, passed a number of resolutions pertaining to 'the environment'<sup>1234</sup>. In 1985, the CPSA Department of Mission, under the leadership of Bishop Geoff Davies, had a special focus on "*The Earth is the Lord's*". At that time however, the Church was caught up in the anti-apartheid struggle and it was appropriate that social justice issues took priority on its agenda. Many people equated 'the environment' with 'conservation' and claimed that the green agenda was a distraction from social justice issues. There was a belief that this line was being promoted by comfortable white Christians who cared more for iconic endangered species than for oppressed people. Links between poverty, social justice and the environment only crept in once the language of 'sustainable development' came into common usage.

In 1990, two delegates were sent from the CPSA to the WCC sponsored World Convocation on *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* in Seoul, South Korea. Climate change was on the agenda of that conference but in the early 1990s, Anglicans, like most South Africans, were caught up in the struggle and birth pangs of our emerging democracy. In spite of this, small pockets of good sustainability work, mostly involving small scale agriculture projects, were being done by many rural churches. In the mid-1990s Bishop Davies developed a booklet, outlining a Christian response to the social and environmental threats facing humankind from a southern African perspective. '*Save our Future*' was widely distributed throughout the CPSA.



The Diocese of Umzimvubu recognised the link between poverty, food security and environmental protection and initiated a sustainable agriculture and environmental education programme which supported projects in communities and schools in the former Transkei. An open-air 'eco' cathedral promoting the use of indigenous design and locally

<sup>1</sup> Provincial Synod, 1995: Save our future, Fifty years is enough and Family planning.

<sup>2</sup> Provincial Standing Committee (PSC) 1998: Environmental Network and World debt.

<sup>3</sup> Provincial Synod, 1999: Poverty, debt and the environment.

<sup>4</sup> PSC 2001: The Environment, The Church Environmental Network and The United Nations World Conference on Sustainable Development.

available materials and employing and training unskilled labour was built on the Diocesan farm along with a low cost conference centre that supported environmental learning. Archbishop Desmond Tutu officially opened the centre on World Environment day in 1995, at a multi-faith service which was co-hosted by the Diocese and WWF.

In August 2002, the CPSA hosted the Global *Anglican Congress on the Stewardship of Creation* at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre outside Johannesburg, prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which was convened by South Africa. Eighty concerned and informed Anglicans from the Communion's Provinces around the world met to share their stories, ideas and plan and prepare a response to the call for the church to be more actively involved in caring for creation and eco-justice<sup>5</sup>. The worldwide Anglican Communion Environment Network (ACEN) was born out of this gathering.

In line with the Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission "*To seek to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth*" and to act on the vision first outlined in the 1995 Provincial Synod Resolution (Save our future), a group of fourteen Anglicans from a number of southern African Dioceses met in Grahamstown in February 2004 to establish the CPSA Environmental Network.

### **"Celebrating God's Creation:**

### **Ukuvuyisana Ngendalo kaThixo"**

### **CPSA ENVIRONMENT NETWORK**

**15 February 2004**

**Vision: To cherish the living planet that has been entrusted to us by our creator and to promote a more ecologically sustainable way of life.**

**Aim and Objectives: To assist the CPSA fulfil its prophetic calling regarding environmental and economic issues by:**

- 1. Creating and encouraging environmental awareness and an appreciation of creation.**
- 2. Empowering environmental action and responsibility at a Parish, Diocesan and Provincial level.**
- 3. Providing environmental resource material.**
- 4. Developing and disseminating worship resource material.**
- 5. Ensuring environmental education is included in theological training within the CPSA.**
- 6. Collaborating with other environmental stakeholders.**
- 7. Supporting environmental and eco-justice projects in the CPSA.**
- 8. Speaking out and taking action against environmental and socio-economic injustice in institutions of governance and power.**

Because there was no formal Provincial recognition and no supporting finance, small pockets of environmental work in the Province only grew where there were local champions. The Revd. Andrew Warmback did sterling pioneering work in the Diocese of Natal and the Anglican Students' Federation through Leanne Seeliger and Sabelo Mashwama,

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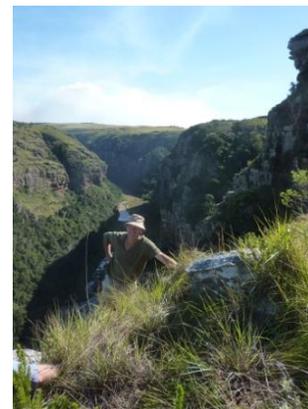
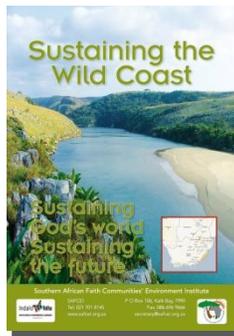
<sup>5</sup> The Anglican Consultative Council, Hong Kong, September 2002: The World Summit and UN Observer and Environment Network,

flirted with developing an environmental policy in 2004<sup>6</sup> and setting up an environmental competition with prizes sponsored by WWF.

In 2004, I did an environmental awareness and action survey of a number of Anglican priests in the CPSA. While all of them said they recognised and acknowledged the importance of God's creation, they emphasized that they had had very limited or no environmental ethics or eco-theology training. Caring for creation was clearly not yet on the agenda of most local congregations. In the light of these comments, I started looking for ways to help local congregations become centres of environmental learning and transformation, developing resource materials, including a handbook for Anglican parishes entitled *Creation Care: Practical ways of exploring and responding to environmental issues through faith communities*.



By 2004, Bishop Geoff Davies had retired from his Diocese and was beginning to focus his ministry more directly on eco-justice issues. He worked tirelessly with *Sustaining the Wild Coast* in opposing the proposed N2 toll road, and later, the application for prospecting rights for titanium mining on the coastal dunes at Xolobeni, by an Australian mining company. These developments would threaten a biodiversity hotspot, traditional livelihoods and an eco-tourism initiative in the Pondoland centre of endemism.



*The Msikaba gorge on the Wild Coast threatened by the N2 toll road*

He became the CSPA environmental spokesperson, frequently being asked to comment on eco-justice issues that were gaining prominence, including GMOs, biodiversity loss, food and water security and the growing challenges of climate change.

There was however, a growing sense of frustration that the Anglican Church was only paying lip-service to eco-justice issues and the CPSA Environment Network was a network only in name.

In 2005 a breakthrough came with support from the UNDP small grants programme to fund a "Faith Communities Environment Conference", to be hosted by the South African Council of Churches. Once again, people of faith concerned about the environment gathered at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre where members of the Anglican Communion had met in 2002. On this occasion however, it was not only Anglican delegates, but Christians from a variety of denominations and representatives from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim philosophies and faiths as well. Apart from members of the CPSA Environment network, a 'new' community of concerned Anglicans began to emerge from this conference.

<sup>6</sup> Anglican Students' Federation, 2004: Resolution on Environmental issues.

In recognition that environmental degradation was one of the most serious moral issues of our time, the faiths and denominations were asked to set aside their differences and work together to face the challenges of caring for our planetary life support systems. There was a clarion call on religious leaders in southern Africa to “place environmental justice at the forefront of their agenda, to promote a value-based economic system and take steps to safeguard the future of our children and planet earth”<sup>7</sup>. The assembled people of faith made a unanimous call for the establishment of a “Faith Communities Environment Institute”. It was to be a multi-faith initiative which would not compromise religious traditions but which would speak with a strong voice on behalf of people of faith.

In July 2005, Kenyan Nobel Peace Laureate, Prof. Wangari Maathai, officially launched SAFCEI, the Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute, at a colourful multi-faith celebration at Delta Park, a public open space in Johannesburg.

In the past six years, SAFCEI has grown from an organisation with a skeleton staff of volunteers (many of whom were Anglicans) to a civil society NGO with considerable status and credibility amongst environmental and faith based organisations. It is also recognised by government as an important civil society role player, particularly in the field of energy and climate change.



While SAFCEI members and the Board are representative of many different Christian denominations and all the major faiths in southern Africa, the organisation has always been ‘top-heavy’ with Anglicans! In the CPSA and now ACSA, social justice concerns have always had a high priority. Once the link between ‘green’ and ‘brown’ eco-justice issues is understood, it is easy to embrace the ‘olive’ agenda, a concept that was so imaginatively conceived by the late Steve DeGruchy.

## SAFCEI

**Vision: Faith communities committed to cherishing living earth.**

**Mission: We are an institute of people of many faiths, united in our diversity through our common commitment to earth keeping.**

**Our aim is to support the faith communities in fulfilling their environmental & socio-economic responsibility.**

In the early years when SAFCEI was getting established, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu took a lead and grasped the climate change nettle. Of SAFCEI, he wrote:

*“I endorse this initiative of the Faith Communities enthusiastically. We, who recognise that all good things come from the Divine Creator, have taken too long to acknowledge that the living out of our beliefs concerns most deeply the care and nurture of all living things and the environment on which they depend...”*

<sup>7</sup> Bishop Geoff Davies April 2005: SAFCEI special report.

*We are stewards of the diversity of life around us. Those who would destroy or misuse what is in fact our life support system must be challenged and admonished.”*

Our current Archbishop, Thabo Magoba, has shown courageous leadership in the environmental field, always willing to learn and welcoming a partnership between ACSA and SAFCEI. He has spoken out bravely against ESKOM, South Africa’s monopolistic energy supplier’s control and has promoted and encouraged the development and use of renewable energy.

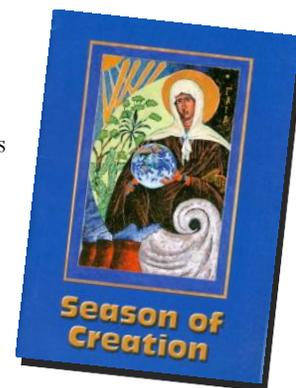


There has been a growing groundswell and slow flourishing of environmental initiatives, including eco-congregations, in ACSA Dioceses and parishes. These have mostly developed around the work of local champions, many of whom are Anglicans and founder or long standing members of SAFCEI.

The Revd. Andrew Warmback and The Revd. Sue Britton, from KwaZulu Natal, have done remarkable work in their local parish, archdeaconry and the wider religious community. Andrew has driven the process of getting the Natal Diocese to work towards becoming an ‘Eco-Diocese’. The Revd. Tim Gray, from Johannesburg Diocese developed his parish as an ‘eco-congregation node’ and the centre from which the Johannesburg Anglican Environment Initiative operates.

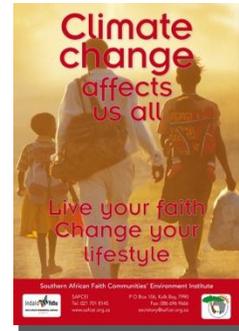
In Cape Town, Shaun Cozette has done much work amongst local congregations and has encouraged and helped ACSA to plan and develop long term environmental commitments. The Cape Town Diocese Environment Group has strong links with SAFCEI and there is a growing interest by many parishes in the SAFCEI hosted Eco-Congregation Programme.

In 2007, The Revd. Rachel Mash facilitated a team which included several SAFCEI members, to develop “*A Season of Creation*”. This wonderful series of liturgies, theological resource materials and activities focusing on six environmental themes, has been made available to all ACSA churches. The impact of ‘*The Season*’ has however gone far beyond the Anglican fraternity. It has become much sought after resource from other denominations and is widely advertised and distributed amongst SAFCEI eco-congregations.

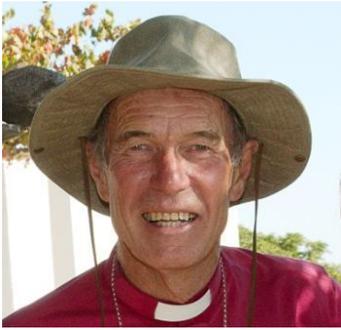


ACSA has played a crucial role in supporting the work of SAFCEI and building a groundswell of eco-justice action at both leadership and local congregational level in southern Africa. A growing number of Anglicans are participating in the Eco-congregation programme and some are deeply involved in planning and implementing the SAFCEI

spearheaded programme in the build up to the COP17 climate change negotiations in Durban in December 2011. In many ways, it might be said that SAFCEI was built on the foundations laid by a tradition of social justice activism which is deeply embedded in the ethos of the Anglican Church in southern Africa.



## ACSA's preparations for COP 17 – Bishop Geoff Davies



Bishop Geoff Davies is the founder of the Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Institute.

SAFCEI's plan for COP17 is outlined in the concept paper below. SAFCEI will make presentations at the Anglican Synod of Bishops and Provincial Standing Committee meetings at the end of September in order to bring the church leadership 'on board' and to share our plans to put pressure on the governments of the world to arrive at a meaningful and binding agreement at COP 17.

An essential component of getting the world onto a more sustainable path is the direction our energy policies are taking. South Africa has some of the best solar and wind resources in the world and needs to move from a coal intensive and fossil fuel based generating policy to renewables. The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town has given an admirable lead in speaking out against government plans to build two new coal-fired power stations, calling for renewable energy. This is an example of a witness that faith leadership can give. Following his Good Friday sermon challenging the government on its energy position, the chairman of ESKOM requested a meeting with him.

During September, SAFCEI will also co-host with the SACC, a climate change workshop for South African faith leaders in preparation for COP17. We will be providing appropriate worship material including generic sermons, prayers and liturgical material to be used by all the churches in the build up to and during the negotiations. If the ACEN could contribute to this we would be most grateful.

The youth of Africa are planning to fill a small wooden ark – the second ark of life! – which will carry thousands of petitions to be delivered to the Chair of COP 17 by Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the start of the conference. We pray the church will be on board with the ark so that, countrywide, members of our churches are aware of the significance of the UNFCCC COP 17 event.

We are also asking all faith communities to hold up the conference in prayer. Prayers will be offered in Durban at a mass rally of faith members on Advent Sunday, 27 November – the day before the conference commences. We will also be holding a multi-faith service on Sunday 4 December, praying for a successful conclusion to the conference, which runs from 28 November to 9 December.

If any members of ACEN are planning to come to COP17, we would be glad if they could get in touch with us. We would welcome their participation in the faith rally and prayer service and encourage them to visit the Diakonia Council of churches centre which has been earmarked as the Faith Communities hub for the duration of the conference.

[geoff.davies@safcei.org.za](mailto:geoff.davies@safcei.org.za) or [coordinator@safcei.org.za](mailto:coordinator@safcei.org.za)

## SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES'

### ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SAFCEI)

*"Faith communities committed to cherishing living earth."*

#### Climate Justice – Lasting Peace

Climate change is the greatest threat humanity has ever faced. All nations must take action – urgently. It is a moral and ethical issue – driven by human behaviour and values. It must therefore be solved by moral principles and a willingness "to do what is right." An over-emphasis by negotiators on financing, trade and offsets continues to delay the action needed to bring about immediate and sufficient change.

We, members of faith communities of Africa, believe it essential that the nations of the world come to an agreement based on moral principles of justice and equity at the COP 17 meeting to be hosted by South Africa in 2011. This will mean developing clean energy, reducing global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, taking steps to stem biodiversity loss and providing resources for adaptation among the developing countries of the world. Sixteen previous Conferences of Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have failed to reach an agreement that will reduce emissions to the level needed to combat climate change.

The faith communities of Africa are therefore organising 3 workshops in preparation for COP 17 to:

promote a theologically sound framework for responding to the challenges of climate change  
set out a plan of action for faith communities to support the effectiveness of the UN negotiations  
challenge South Africa as host country to set an example and give a lead  
agree on the moral principles and the support to be given to African governments in playing a  
leadership role founded on the principles of justice, equity and compassion and to present a united voice  
from Africa's faith communities.

#### **Southern African Workshop: 4 to 6 May in Lusaka, Zambia**

for faith leaders from South Africa, as host of COP 17, and neighbouring countries that hold extensive coal reserves or are reliant on South Africa for energy.

#### **Pan-African Workshop: 7 to 8 June at the UN Centre in Nairobi**

co-hosted with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) who will provide the venue at the UN Centre in Nairobi. We need to feed our conclusions to the UNFCCC Intersessional meeting in Bonn from 6 to 17 June and communicate the principles that should guide the negotiators and governments of our respective countries well before COP 17.

#### **South African Workshop: 19-21 September**

for South African faith leaders to motivate and inspire the faith communities of South Africa to pray for and participate in the COP faith events.

**Sunday 27 November:** the day before the 2011 COP commences, a major gathering of faiths – possibly a rally in Durban's new football stadium – led by religious leaders of the world. The purpose is to issue a clear call to the political leaders of the world that for the sake of our people and our planet, and in obedience to our Creator, COP 17 must arrive at an agreement based on moral principles that help protect and preserve the world for future generations.

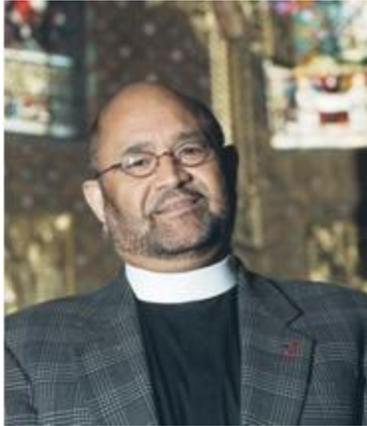
**Sunday 4 December:** a worship service to pray for the success of the talks.

Bishop Geoff Davies

29 July 2011

[www.safcei.org](http://www.safcei.org)

## Liturgy and Environmental Concerns - Bruce Jenneker



The Reverend Canon Bruce Jenneker teaches Liturgy, Anglican Studies and Homiletics at the College of the Transfiguration, the seminary of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa. He has served as Canon Precentor of St George's Cathedral in Cape Town, and the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. He was Associate Rector for Worship at Trinity Church Copley Square in Boston, USA. He has served on the Commission for Liturgy and Music in The Episcopal Church and now serves on the Provincial Liturgical Committee of ACSA. He is a member of *Societas Liturgica* – the international academy of liturgy, and of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation.

*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, the book currently in use in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa is in line with the Prayer Books of the Communion in offering thanksgiving for God's work of creation through and in Christ - in the Eucharistic Prayers, and its inclusion of prayers for the environment in the Prayers of the People. Together with the Psalms and Canticles these elements hold before the worshipping assembly the created universe and concern for it.

Because through him you have created everything from the beginning and formed us in your own image ...  
First Eucharistic Prayer, *APB 1989*

For he is your living Word; through him you have created all things from the beginning, and formed us in your own image.  
Second Eucharistic Prayer, *APB 1989*

He is the Word through whom you made the universe, the Saviour you sent to redeem us. Third Eucharistic Prayer, *APB 1989*

He is your living Word, through whom you have created all things.

Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, *APB 1989*

Give to all a reverence for your creation and make us worthy stewards of your gifts.

Prayers of the People: Form C, *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*

Father, you created the heavens and the earth: bless the produce of our land and the works of our hands.

Father, you created us in your own image: teach us to honour you in all your children.

Father, in your steadfast love you provide for creation: grant good rains for our crops.

Prayers of the People: Form C, *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*

*APB 1989* was being written in the 70s and 80s when the awareness of the ecological crisis to which we have brought our planet was not yet as generally understood and as sharply focussed as it is today. *APB 1989* is therefore, sadly, a product of its time. The inclusion of a Great Thanksgiving for Creation and Redemption in The New Zealand Prayer Book and Eucharistic Prayer C in *The Book of Common Prayer 1979* of The Episcopal Church in the USA – to mention just two Prayer Books of the Communion – provide those who use them with patterns of prayer and thanksgiving that support the liturgy’s work of confession, thanksgiving and intercession with regard to creation.

It was the awareness of the lack of material to support this liturgical responsibility that led to the development of resources for *A Season of Creation*. A group of church leaders with concern for the environment and the need for resources to inform our public worship initiated this important response. The resources were edited and collated by the Provincial Liturgical Committee. The Synod of Bishops approved the use of the materials and the Archbishop presided at an inspiring and thrilling launch of the *Season of Creation* at the end of August in 2008. The materials are still being widely used in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, sometimes with great creativity and success in revising and updating the materials.

*A Season of Creation* focussed on Biodiversity, Land, Water, Climate Change, Greed and Stewardship. The booklet provided Background Papers, Fact Sheets, Readings, Collects, Prayers of the People, two Eucharistic Prayers, a collection of hymns, and Postcommunion materials. Resources for engaging children and youth, and for small group discussion were also included. The materials were produced free of copyright. Parishes were encouraged to purchase copies of the book for their leaders and were free make copies of whatever they needed to distribute. Generous support from the Diocese of Washington, DC, St Paul’s and St George’s Edinburgh, Christchurch, Washington, DC, St Martin’s Bergvliet and the Provincial Liturgical Committee of ACSA sponsored the production of the Book

2008 with its awareness, focus and energy seems a long time ago now, and while groups throughout the Church labour diligently at holding concern for creation before us all, we have by and large slipped into apathy again. It is time to undertake a project that would make liturgical engagement with this important concern integral to our worship, not an optional, negotiated extra.

As the team was developing the resources for *A Season of Creation*, a thought-provoking and challenging discussion arose about the language we use to speak about our ecological responsibilities and failures. The creation account in Genesis 1 gives to humanity ‘dominion’ over creation [1:26]. The Hebrew behind the English is of a piece with it: humans are vested with power and control over creation. However the Hebrew notion translated as ‘and fill the earth’ [1:28] has connotations of replenish and refresh, consecrate and make perfect – not simply ‘populate.’

Genesis 1: 26, 28

*New Revised Standard Version*

And God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

This additional meaning given as a nuance to 'dominion' is amplified in the account in 2 Genesis where the Hebrew translated as 'till' has the connotation of serving – as in a slave or bondsman – to perform or render a service, reminding one of the now archaic use of 'husbandry' as a term for 'tilling the earth [with all its patriarchal and sexist referents 'husbanding' does suggest the mutuality of contract, at least, and the interdependence of a covenant, at best.]

Genesis 2:15

*New Revised Standard Version*

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

The Church must undertake a fresh investigation of the theology of creation and the language we use to explore it, together with a reflection on how that theology can be expressed liturgically in the context of a selfish world that is blind to the peril in which we have placed 'our island home.'

## Eco-Congregations - Noeleen Mullet



Noeleen Mullet has been passionate about the Environment for as long she can remember, and studied Wildlife Management in 1972 and Environmental Education Diploma from UNISA in 2005. She has been involved in Environmental Education at pre- and primary schools for the past 20 years.

Noeleen was instrumental in St Michael and All Angels Anglican Parish of Weltevreden Park becoming an Eco-Congregation in 2008 and joined the Johannesburg Anglican Environmental Initiative Steering Committee (JAEI) in 2009 and has been responsible for the Eco-Congregation Portfolio since 2010.

### What is an Eco-Congregation?

- Eco-Congregation is an International concept
- It is a local faith-based community that makes a commitment to live more sustainably in response to the wisdom of sacred text and faith traditions – in this case God’s Word – the Bible.
- It is a tool to help Church Communities begin to address environmental issues in all that they do.
- Eco-Congregations strives to assist in giving guidance in taking responsible action towards addressing environmental issues
- Parishes are encouraged to adopt a holistic and integrated long term environmental plan.

### What is the purpose of Eco-Congregations?

- Our faith calls us to care deeply for one another and for our only home planet Earth, which we share with all other living beings.
- Our own well-being depends on the health and flourishing of Earth’s life support systems. We need to learn to be less wasteful and share more fairly and by doing so, strengthen our faith and deepen our appreciation and compassion for all of God’s Creation.

### Why is there a need for Eco-Congregations?

Environmental problems are not just a problem “out there” – in another part of the world. South Africa has many environmental problems ranging from energy and water crises; pollution; changing weather patterns; destruction of habitat; loss of biodiversity, deforestation; desertification; alien species; greed and poverty and much more.

Many problems are residual effects of past administrations, but many more are due to ignorance and greed.

Through Eco-Congregations, we can begin to address this lack of knowledge, appreciation and care of our precious environment.

### If we believe that -

- God is the Creator
- We are Stewards of the good things entrusted to us
- Justice is for the poor and the land

- Our mission is to proclaim repentance and hope –
- Then we have a responsibility to take care of our Environment – our gift from God

It is difficult to know how to respond and make a meaningful difference in our lives and the lives of communities, but there is much that we can do to improve the situation. We are part of the problem, but we can definitely be part of the solution!

### **Reasons for Parishes to become involved as an Eco-Congregation**

Climate change is the most complex and serious environmental challenge of the 21st century

- To reduce the carbon-footprint of our Community
- To address the loss of biodiversity resulting from disregard, apathy and greed
- To address the misuse, wastage and greed of Natural Resources
- To promote environmental awareness education amongst our Community
- To address lack of appreciation of our absolute reliance on the Environment for life itself
- To take God’s instruction of being “Good Stewards” of the earth seriously

### **What does becoming an Eco-Congregation involve?**

#### **1. Ecological Spirituality**

As a people of faith, we need to express our gratitude and care for God’s Creations in our celebrations and acts of worship, teaching, preaching, prayers and meditation.

#### **2. Custodianship of God’s Gifts**

As a people of faith we are called to care for the world and all that is in it. When we turn our places of worship, community meeting spaces and homes into centres where we set an example of good earth-keeping practice, we will inspire others to do likewise. By living more thoughtfully, saving resources like water and energy and looking after what we have, we can turn good intentions into practical actions.

#### **3. God’s people at work in the World**

The future life on our planet is threatened by human activities. Eco-Congregations will lead the way to a more sustainable future by becoming involved in community projects, networks, lobbying and working for better environmental standards and practices.

### **Resources available to assist Parishes with Eco-congregations**

#### **Creation Care**

This booklet, developed by Kate Davies of SAFCEI (South African Faith Communities Initiative) offers practical ways of exploring and responding to environmental issues through faith communities.

#### **A Route Map for Eco-Congregations**

This leaflet, developed by JAEI, offers a step-by-step procedure to establishing an Eco-congregation. (included at end of article)

#### **A Season of Creation**

Celebrating the Season of Creation annually is encouraged by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town. To this end a resource book “Season of Creation” was developed for use within Parishes. The book contains six sections covering the themes of Biodiversity, Land, Water, Climate Change, Need not Greed and Stewardship.

- Each section contains:
- Eucharistic liturgy
- Background information to assist with preparation of sermons and prayers
- Fact sheets aligned with the themes
- Small group study material

### Tree Planting

It has become customary for the Bishop of Johannesburg, Revd. Brian Germond, to plant a tree at Parishes he visits in order to encourage Greening within the Diocese.

### Eco- Sharing Mornings

JAEC hold Eco-Sharing mornings where representatives of the Eco-congregations within the Johannesburg Diocese come together to share their experiences of the Eco-Congregation experiences

### Active Eco-Congregations

#### Johannesburg Diocese

There are six Eco-Congregations in the Johannesburg Diocese at present:

- St Francis of Assisi Parish, Parkview
- St Martin’s in the Veld, Rosebank
- St Michael and All Angels Parish, Weltevreden Park
- St Luke’s Parish, Orchards
- St Stephens’s Parish, Sunninghill
- St Monica’s Parish, Midrand



Various activities taking place within these Parishes are:

- Establishment of an Environmental Committee – “Green-team” at the parishes in order to lead the Environmental cause.
- Regular Environmental Services – especially using theme days – e.g. Season of Creation, World Environment Day, Arbor Day, etc.,
- Inclusion of “environmental” hymns and songs at services
- Prayers focusing on environmental concerns.
- Involving the Youth of the Parishes in Environmental Awareness
- Establishment of compost heaps
- Monitoring of problem areas e.g. Waste management and energy/water usage and implementation of systems to address these issues.
- Weekly “Green Tip” in pew leaflet
- Information & updates in Newsletter and on Website
- Bible Studies focusing on the environment in House Groups
- Eco-news board for updates and press cuttings



- Encourage attendance at monthly JAEI breakfasts.
- Suggestions on ways of simplifying lifestyles by using less energy through innovation
- Information booklets on Environmental aspects – e.g. Energy
- Promoting the planting of indigenous plants in Parish grounds
- Creating respect for creation
- Theme days – e.g. Earth Day, World Environment Day, Arbor Day, Marine Day into our Sunday Services.
- Outings
- Installation of rainwater tanks
- Eco-breakfasts with invited Environmental Speakers to Breakfasts and Social Events
- Take part in “Earth Hour” annually



*Making bird feeders out of waste materials*

### **Diocese of Natal - St John the Baptist, Pinetown**

St John the Baptist Parish has had an Environment Group and for a number of years and have worked at greening their Parish in a number of ways:.

- **Recycling** - The Parish has containers at the church for the recycling of paper, glass and cans which are used by parishioners and the Community. “Anti-waste” items are also collected for use in pre- and primary schools. Grass and leaves from their property are composted.
- **Monitoring use of resources** - Water and electricity metre readings are taken on a weekly basis to ensure responsible use..
- **Water Tank** - Fundraising is taking place to install a rainwater tank to harvest rainwater from the roof.
- **Grounds** - Together with a neighbouring Primary School, their grounds form a ‘green lung’ in the area. The property is also being “indigenised” with local plants.
- **Liturgy** - Environmental days such as World Environment Day are celebrated liturgically, as is Harvest Festival, which is usually accompanied by a parish picnic.
- **Arbor Day** - An “Arts and the Environment” evening is held on Arbour Day where parishioners are encouraged to celebrate creation through sharing their paintings, poetry, stories etc. Trees have been planted on the grounds of the church to mark significant occasions.

- **Season of Creation** - Since the publication of the Provincial Season of Creation booklet in 2008, the Parish has marked this season.
- **Vegetable Garden** - A vegetable garden is maintained on the property, the produce of which is given to those who attend the monthly Ukukhuthaza Aids Concern Group.
- **Notice Board** - A prominent notice board with current environmental information is positioned outside the Church hall, attracting the attention of parishioners and visitors alike
- **Eco-tips** - Short environment tips are given in the weekly pew leaflet giving parishioners ideas to live more just lifestyles.
- **Collaboration with others** - Participation with other churches and organisations in respect of environmental activities are encouraged.

### **Future of the Establishment of Eco-Congregations**

There is no doubt that Eco-Congregations must be encouraged at all Parishes within the Province of South Africa, and JAEI will be initiating a campaign to do this within the Diocese of Johannesburg in the near future.

*“We cannot own the sunlit sky, the moon, the wild flowers growing,  
for we are part of all that is within life’s river flowing.  
With open hands receive and share the gift of God’s creation  
that all may have abundant life in every earthly nation.”*

**Noeleen Mullett**

JAEI Eco-Congregation Portfolio

[ecoact@absamail.co.za](mailto:ecoact@absamail.co.za)

082682 4426



# Johannesburg Anglican Environmental Initiative

## A route map for eco-congregations

JAEI is a Diocese of Johannesburg Initiative

[www.jaei.org.za](http://www.jaei.org.za)

Coordinator: Rev Tim Gray

Parish of St Francis

Parkview

011-646-2660

Version 1.6

November 2008

## What is JAEI?

The Johannesburg Anglican Environmental Initiative is a formal body of the Anglican community of Johannesburg who are attempting to address the challenges being faced by this generation with regards to the environment. We believe it is God's will that we look after this precious planet we call home. We believe that we have an ethical and moral responsibility to work towards sustainability and social justice in relation to creation.

One of the core activities of JAEI is to encourage parishes in the Diocese to become eco-congregations so that they can join us in this mission.

## What is an eco-congregation?

A parish in the Diocese of Johannesburg is considered an eco-congregation when it has made a decision to take the journey mapped out in this document and thereby become aware of environmental issues facing us and the moral and ethical challenges to taking action towards addressing these issues. Any religious grouping anywhere in the world can and should commit itself to such a process, and many have already responded to the environmental and social justice issues they see around them and have taken on some form of environmental or sustainability programme. This is good.

However, in order to become a JAEI eco-congregation, a parish in the Diocese of Johannesburg needs to express an interest in the process, submit an eco-congregation data form, establish a leadership group and commit to achieving a number of objectives, as set out below. You will then be joining us and other parishes as we make the journey together.

## How do we start?

We are indebted to the UK based Eco-Congregation Project and that website has many very useful resources that you can download ([www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales](http://www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales)), in fact we encourage you to download them and use them as part of your process. However, we will benefit if we collaborate and share insights and resources. For this reason we encourage parishes interested in becoming an eco-congregation to contact JAEI ([www.jaei.org.za](http://www.jaei.org.za)) and become part of the larger process. [Note: paper copies of documents can be made available to you if you don't have easy access to the internet.]

### Step 1: Indicate an interest

You need to contact JAEI to indicate interest in becoming an eco-congregation. Download the eco-congregation data form from the JAEI website for this. Note that the form needs to be signed by an authorised member of the parish council. It is important that the parish council and the rector are part of this process. We are in the process of identifying and gathering resources (and placing them on the website). These are one of the ways we will try to assist you to meet your objectives.

## Step 2: Establish a leadership group

A key part of becoming an eco-congregation is to have a leadership group (it can go by whatever name you choose to call it). This group should consist of committed individuals rather than attempting to be representative of the various groupings in the parish. However, it is important to avoid having a small, isolated group of zealots doing their thing without any linkages or impact on the wider parish community, or outside of the authority structures of the congregation.

Submit the names and designations of your leadership group members to JAEI.

*You are now a JAEI eco-congregation. But your exciting journey has only just begun!*

## Step 3: Carry out a parish eco-audit

The eco-audit, (which we can think of as a kind of check-up to assess your parish's environmental status) is a required first step for your eco-congregation journey. There are various eco-audit tools you can use. We recommend two such, both SAFCEI documents and now available on the JAEI website. One is *Earthcheck* for use by any faith community and the other is *Creation Care*, developed in the Anglican context. It draws on the UK project's Module 1 - see their website, [www.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ecocongregation.org)).

These two audit tools are resources to assist you to conduct an eco-audit of the main aspects of church and parish community life. The eco-audit should not be done by one small group on behalf of the parish, but should ideally be done by as many groups as possible, according to the specific category being examined. It would be especially effective if relevant sections were also done by home groups. However, a central coordinating group is essential. The eco-audit should have an influence, not only on the church property and activities, but on what parishioners do in their homes and even their places of employment.

Once you have completed this audit (and we recommend doing it quickly and simply – the main work comes next), you can develop a plan of action to take you further on your journey and towards a possible Eco-congregation Award. You should revisit the eco-audit periodically (at present we are suggesting an annual review, but this may be too onerous – time will tell). The review of your eco-audit will help you to monitor and assess progress.

Keep the results of your eco-audit and reviews. After a period of two years you become eligible to apply for an Eco-congregation Award. Your eco-audits and reviews will need to be submitted as part of your Award application.

## Step 4: Develop and implement a programme

Use your eco-audit to plan actions to improve your parish's environmental status. This plan could consist of many different activities and projects. These are up to you, but should maintain diversity across the three main areas described two paragraphs down and also take into account the Award criteria at the end of this document. At the beginning you will feel all at sea and may be wallowing around a bit. That is normal. Once you have developed a plan of action, you will also find that it changes as you go. That is also normal. Importantly, keep it simple and don't take

on too much. You can get more ambitious as you gain experience. Keep your eco-audit results and reviews as well as your planned programmes for submission to JAEI in case you decide to apply for an Eco-congregation Award.

At this early stage of our journey together, and in addition to the all the other activities you plan, we are recommending that JAEI eco-congregations make use of Modules 2 to 12 on [www.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ecocongregation.org) to help them work out their programmes. You could elect to work through all of the modules over a three year period, or just a selection, as you feel is appropriate. These modules are free resources and we have been encouraged to make use of them by the Eco-Congregation Project. Please note, though that we are not in the UK, but in a very different part of the world, with major developing world challenges. Our own responses to environmental issues should take account of our context, so while using these modules, do contextualise them and adapt them as necessary. In time we will develop our own material. We will give recognition to parishes who assist us in developing contextualised materials.

In your planning, bear in mind that you need to maintain a diversity of activities across the following main areas:

1. **worship and teaching** – linking environmental issues with the Christian faith e.g. through services, children's work or home groups. (UK Modules 2 – 6)
2. **practical** – practising what is preached e.g. an energy, churchyard or recycling project. This includes personal and home lifestyle changes leading to reductions in ecological footprints of the parish and the parishioners. (UK modules 7 – 9)
3. **partnerships and networking** – working with or through your (i) local community on environmental issues e.g. a local conservation, water management or water quality project, a clean-up campaign, a project with a school or other community group, gaining positive publicity; (ii) national or global community e.g. advocacy for more sustainable energy options, fundraising and direct support for development projects, advocacy or direct involvement in sustainable and affordable housing. (UK Modules 10 – 12). Where possible, build partnerships with other congregations, other faith groups and eco-organisations.

Your programme should be planned with a long-term view in mind, and sustainability of effort and results. In order to apply for an Award (see below) you will need to have been a registered JAEI eco-congregation for 2 years. So high intensity, short-term (and usually low-gain) efforts *on their own* are not encouraged. The criteria that will be used to assess eco-congregations for an Award are listed at the end of this document. Use them to guide your planning.

### Step 5: Apply for an Award

After being active as an eco-congregation for a period of 2 years you are eligible to apply for an Eco-congregation Award. The application form is available on the JAEI website.

Parishes must have undertaken one reasonably substantive piece of work or a number of smaller projects in each area. For their first Award, parishes may submit information on projects undertaken both prior to and since registering with JAEI. It is important that the parish is able to show that their environmental concern and activity is sustainable and ongoing. For this reason, the Award is renewable every 2 years. With your application you will also need to submit your eco-audits, your plan(s) of action, reports of activities, newspaper articles if possible, photographs etc. - anything that provides evidence of a job well done.

## Award criteria

These are some criteria that JAEI will use in assessing Award applications:

- Established a leadership group
- Conducted the eco-audit
- Developed a programme of action. Guidelines can be found on the JAEI website.
- Carried out a local project that involved significant numbers of people and had links with local community groups. Ideally this should have long-term impact and/or duration
- Held environmentally-related liturgical events at least twice per annum (e.g. linked to church or world environmental calendar)
- Held an annual educational event (e.g. educating parishioners or the local community)
- Evidence presented of sustained changes in lifestyle choices / commitments
- Environmental notice board / newsletter / communications mechanism
- Mission / outreach.

These will not be applied rigidly, and each eco-congregation will be assessed within their local context and in terms of available resources. As much as JAEI will be guided by these criteria, so should you use them to guide your planning.

## Water - in the Anglican Province of Southern Africa – Fiona Maskell

Fiona has been a lifelong student of geological / geographical / scientific issues, and as an adult has become a Christian (once the two could be reconciled!). Thanks to JAEI ( the Johannesburg Anglican Environmental Initiative) she has been part of spearheading an eco-congregation at her parish church. She is involved in the eco-activism group, Earthlife Africa Johannesburg, which runs a workgroup focused on Acid Mine Drainage (addressing the toxic legacy of mining on the Witwatersrand and Highveld).



### The nature of our land

The Anglican Province of Southern Africa includes Angola and Namibia in the west, Lesotho, South Africa and

Swaziland in the south, and Mozambique on the eastern coastal plain. As a bioregion the belonging of Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia to the Anglican Province of Central Africa is a shame, but there it is! The rainfall levels drop from east to west - a moist 1500mm (per annum) off the warm Indian Ocean, a critical for crops 500mm centrally, and tiny in the Namib desert on the cold Atlantic Ocean.



The Province as received is an ancient landscape, being shaped in its current form from 100 million years ago<sup>1</sup>. The peculiar asymmetry of the drainage has the Vaal and Orange (Gariiep) Rivers rise close to the east coast and flow westwards across the entire country of South Africa. The northerly Limpopo and Zambezi Rivers flow to the Indian Ocean over the escarpment of the plateau. These patterns have ancient beginnings but the last

few centuries have brought dramatic change, with humans the dominant shapers, changing flora and fauna in the land, and recently profoundly altering the drainage.

The current ecosystems reflect the rainfall and topography: savannas on the high eastern interior giving way to scrubland in the Great Karroo of the west. Mozambique is low-lying on the eastern coastal plain, and in the west, the Namib Desert changes northerly to grassland and becomes more treed to woodland and forest in Angola. In the south western Cape is the winter rainfall fynbos, a UN World Heritage landscape. Except for Angola and Mozambique, southern Africa is water-scarce and semi-arid, a region where careful conservation of water resources is vital for well-being.

Of the peoples, the Khoikhoi and San of the Kalahari are the region's oldest inhabitants. The Bantu have moved south into the area over the last thousand years, settling all the way to the Cape. Europeans, and shortly afterwards Asians, arrived at the Cape three centuries ago moving northwards ... to the decimation of the herds and the 'taming' of the land. The Winds of Change foretold in 1960 finally reached South Africa in 1994 with a remarkable (we Christians

say miraculous) peaceful transformation demonstrating the peoples' ability to self-regulate in the face of disaster<sup>2</sup>. This transformative quality is again needed as the people face a nexus of environmental challenges, an acute one being around water.

### Threats and challenges

Nelson Mandela, at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, said "One of the many things I learned as President was the centrality of water in the social, political and economic affairs of the country, the continent and the world."

Southern Africa's water-energy-food needs are a nexus of challenges! Water takes energy – to pump, purify, and desalinate. Coal-powered energy (South Africa generates loads of it) takes clean water, but the coal mining fouls water sources by AMD (Acid Mine Drainage). Growing food needs clean soils and water, and energy, but the fertilisers foul the water. On top of this, Climate Change might bring dryer weather and make our crops more difficult to grow.

Moreover ...

**The demand for water is increasing!** Southern Africa's population is increasing, and it is urbanising. For many folk, basic needs are not met (of potable water, sanitation, electricity, food, and housing) so there is an urgent political imperative to supply those needs. Waste of water makes things even worse - 'demand-side' management can be very handy, but 'perversely'<sup>3</sup> it is sidelined in favour of a 'supply-side' approach.

**The water is being polluted!** Water sources of springs, aquifers and wetlands are threatened by AMD, and the rivers and dams absorb ever greater amounts of fertilisers and urban sewage (often untreated, and loaded with phosphate detergent).

So we 'need' more water but we have less. It is an urgent crisis.

These water issues are shared with many countries (provinces) around the world. South Africa has its own flavour, shown in these word pictures, both for better and for worse ...

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century discovery in South Africa of gold in staggering amounts gave rise to the 11-million strong (and growing) mega-metropolis of Johannesburg in Gauteng province, and the country of South Africa became an economic and regional power. Johannesburg is an unusual city in that it does not lie near a water body but is rather on a watershed divide, the Witwatersrand ('ridge of white waters'). Water feeding the city is pumped (at an energy cost) from afar!, making Joburg's 'water footprint' many times larger than its geographical area.



Progressive conservation schemes like the 'Work for Water' campaign (picture) employs folk (generating sorely needed jobs) to remove exotic vegetation that transpires way too much groundwater.

South Africa has lots of coal. The coal is used to generate electricity and to convert coal-to-gas at such high energy cost that Sasol's Secunda plant is the world's single biggest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup>. SA is a large emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> (world ranking of 13<sup>th</sup> by quantity and 33<sup>rd</sup> by per capita), yet in 2010 the World Bank

approved (probably for the last time in the face of global opposition) financial support for the Medupi generation station in the Lephalale wilderness, an area in Limpopo province drained/fed by a ('til now) pristine but modest stream.

In coastal areas, after times of drought, growing cities are resorting to desalinating seawater to meet their needs, at high energy cost.

In the Karroo, treasured by South Africans resident and afar, the international Shell oil company is prospecting shales for notorious fracking. This arid, fragile and pristine ecosystem depends on its poorly understood groundwater, and cannot afford for it to be fouled.

AMD from Coal mining in the Eastern Highveld (in the beautifully named Mpumalanga province) fouls both the prime agricultural land of the country, and the source of the Vaal River and its tributaries. Land over the abandoned coal mines collapses and AMD poisons the soils and waters. Geologists in the country's universities call for a moratorium on further mining in the interests of the water sources and the agricultural land<sup>5</sup>.

Wildlife and migratory birds draw succour and life from the wetlands of the Highveld.

120 years after gold was discovered, Gauteng too faces the perils of AMD. The gold-bearing rocks of the Witwatersrand formed 2,5 billion years ago before Earth's atmosphere had free oxygen, but now the rocks are exposed by mining. The minerals oxidise, and the rising water in the mines brings sulphuric acid and other heavy metals (some radioactive) to the surface. Tens of millions of litres per day foul the land and destroy river creatures. The humble Tweelopiesspruit (picture) flows from the West Rand town of Krugersdorp through a nature/game reserve and compromises the Cradle of Humankind, a UN Heritage site where pre-human remains occur in vulnerable limestone. Further downstream in the Kruger National Park, crocodiles suffer tragic effects as their body fat atrophies. A wonderful dolomitic aquifer spans a large area (from the Highveld to the Kalahari), accumulated over eons as a source of precious quality water, but the AMD is entering it too. Huge financial implications of AMD in Gauteng province cause much political jockeying ... who will foot the bill: the private sector or the taxpayer? Courageous activists labour to hold government accountable<sup>6</sup> whilst the private sector looks for financially viable solutions. The 'polluter must pay' principle (wisely entrenched in the country's progressive water laws) comes up against the reality of abandoned mines whose owners cannot be held accountable, because they have long since died or vanished. One voice of hope and renewal<sup>7</sup> holds that in cleaning the waters (pumping and treating to remove acids, salts and heavy metals) for the decades until the water again runs clean will create jobs to ease the devastating 25-40% unemployment rate. The opposite scenario of disastrously fouled waters and loss of economic viability must be avoided!



## Prayers for Action (and contemplation)

*Creator God, we praise You for the wisdom with which you have created our land and its creatures. We rejoice in its beauty and its integrity, and we give thanks for the wonderful bodies of water and the rivers that traverse it. We pray that this precious land will be loved, valued and honoured, as a sacred co-creature.*

*Our Brother Jesus, we pray for the peoples of Southern Africa, for their needs and aspirations, that their basic Life needs will be met ... with dignity on the one hand, and that the peoples will value what is given and use it wisely, on the other. May they share with neighbours and all Your creatures.*

*May Your Holy Spirit bless the eco-congregations of Southern Africa, giving wisdom, energy and strength to their leaders in SAFCEI (Southern African Faith Communities' Environmental Institute) and in Johannesburg for JAEI (Johannesburg Anglican Environmental Initiative). We pray that the Church will 'get' the message and Awake O Sleeper!, choosing the path of Life.*

*Holy Father-Mother God, we hold up for Your Healing and Love the soils, holes (mines), streams, humans and creatures experiencing the toxic effects of AMD. May the myriad characters with their competing interests cooperate and act for good. We pray that the Government of South Africa will exercise responsibility to guard the nation's water resources. We pray for the courageous activists opening up the political space and building awareness, that their efforts will bear the fruits of Justice and Healing. We pray against corruption and denialism (of both Climate Change and the dangers of AMD), that people of integrity and truth will be chosen for positions of influence and power. For the humans and non-humans living in dangerous circumstances we pray for justice, that the Life You have given may prosper and be in celebration.*

**Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.**



## References

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Earthlife Africa Johannesburg [www.earthlife.org.za](http://www.earthlife.org.za)

FSE Federation for a Sustainable Environment and Mariette Liefferink

**God bless Africa. Guard her children, guide her leaders, and  
give her peace, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.**

## Theological Education and Environmental Concerns – Janet Trisk

### Janet Trisk

I am presently rector of St David's Prestbury, and director of theological education for the diocese of Natal. Prior to this I taught at the College of the Transfiguration for 12 years. I am not formally associated with any eco group but have been concerned with eco issues for many years, particularly because, as a theologian, I am aware of how Christian theology has contributed to attitudes and practices which have led to environmental degradation. My main concern is how we construct a theology which encourages healthy attitudes towards the earth and the body.



### The place of environmental issues in the theological education curriculum

When I first started teaching at the College of the Transfiguration (CoTT) in 1998 I initiated a course in Women's Studies. In fact issues pertaining to women were already in the curriculum (for example in Biblical Studies courses students were invited to consider the place of women in Middle Eastern Biblical cultures.) However, my view was that the issues relating to women should not only be dealt with in the usual range of courses, but that they should be foregrounded in a particular way. So for example in the Women's Studies course we looked at feminist and womanist Biblical hermeneutics, feminist ethics, the context of women in church and society and so on. Later, the academic staff made a similar decision in regard to HIV AIDS and introduced a course specifically looking at pastoral, theological and ethical issues pertaining to the pandemic. It is interesting that a similar decision was never made in regard to environmental issues.

Nevertheless environmental issues have been part of some of the other courses. For several years I taught a course entitled Implementing Transformation in Church and Society in which students were invited to take on a practical project as part of their learning. Almost every year of the groups of students chose projects with an ecological focus. In systematic theology there are obvious ways of including environmental concerns for example when looking at humanity as stewards of creation, or working with theologians such as Sallie McFague and her understanding of the earth as the body of God. In my own teaching (my field is systematic theology) I have taken care to make connections between environmental issues and issues of poverty and have introduced several generations of students to the ideas of L Boff in his *Cry of the earth, cry of the poor*. Similarly, environmental issues form part of the Ethics courses and in the course on Liturgy, students are introduced to the Season of Creation resources.

At a post-graduate level, the university with which I am most familiar is UKZN. There the Theology and Development Honours programme has specific sections of the course dedicated to the environment and ecological concerns. Again however, there is no undergraduate course that is dedicated to theological responses to environmental issues.

### Environmental concerns in the practice of theological education

In my experience, environmental concerns have never been considered in making policy decisions about theological education and training. For example, there are never questions asked about the environmental impact of moving students and their families to a particular site of learning. I also do not know of a training institution that has undertaken an audit of its environmental footprint. However, at a more micro-level I know a number of lecturers try to find ways of making our teaching and learning more environmentally friendly, for example by inviting students to submit assignments electronically so as to save the cost of printing hard copies.

At CoTT (the only residential training facility in the ACSA) environmental concerns are very much part of chapel worship. For example in doing creative worship, students frequently focus on environmental matters. However, one may observe a disjunction between these special services which foreground environmental issues and the excessive use of the photocopier in producing service booklets and hymn sheets.

The students alone should not be faulted for failing to make connections between the stated aims of worship and the practices in producing a service. Neither the Cott administration nor the Governing Council (to the best of my knowledge) have put environmental concerns on their agenda. For example, there has never been a practice of buying locally produced food. There have been discussions about installing solar heating, though this was deemed too expensive. Even cheaper environmentally friendly actions, such as the installation of rainwater tanks, have not really been taken up.

From time to time, students have initiated food gardening projects. However, the transient nature of the student population has meant that, in the absence of a full time person overseeing these projects, they too come and go.

In summary then, at the only residential seminary in the Province, there is an academic awareness of environmental issues, but there is also a large gap between awareness and action.

## Cape Town Diocese Environmental Group – Rachel Mash



FIGURE 2 ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA AT THE DIOCESAN CLEAN UP DAY

The inaugural meeting of the DEG was held at St Saviour's Church in Claremont on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2009. It was attended by 13 individuals representing 11 parishes.

The parish representatives were invited to describe the involvement of their parishes with issues of the environment and particularly with regard to the Season of Creation. The focus in the parishes represented then ranged from very committed to, at that time, unengaged.

The inaugural meeting was followed by a visioning retreat at Eagles Rest, and a visioning workshop a few days later, which was well attended. The outcome was the vision and mission of the DEG:

**Vision: God's creation restored**

**Mission:**

To mobilize the Diocese of Cape Town through: Education, Sharing of resources, Eco congregations and Partnerships

To work for the restoration of God's creation with environmentally mindful actions as individual and communities

To follow through on the above we arranged a workshop at which we were addressed by Bishop Geoff and Kate Davies of SAFCEI and at which Bishop Geoff outlined the organisations into which the DEG could be integrated, and from which we could seek resources and guidelines: ACEN and AROCHA. We devised a series of Action Plans for 2010, on which we based our activities during the year.

Those present at our meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 agreed to form a steering committee, which has been strengthened by individuals wanting to help, and others who have been invited to join. Meetings have been held every two months since then.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Environmental Youth Summit:** Environmental Youth Summit which, considering it was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> May, shortly before or during the June exams, was quite well attended. This was an exciting day which culminated in a poster making competition where posters were designed out of rubbish.

**A Christian Environmental Workshop:** A Christian Environmental Workshop, held at St Peter's in Mowbray on Sunday afternoon, the 31<sup>st</sup> May. Allen Goddard addressed both gatherings, introducing Arocha and its objectives and opportunities it can offer Eco-congregations.

**Diocesan Cleanup Day:** The members of the Diocese of Cape Town were invited to this event which took place on a fine spring afternoon in early September. It was hosted by St Cyprian's, Retreat, and was attended by around 150 people. After a short service, involving the youth of St Cyprian's and during which we were addressed by

Archbishop Thabo, we walked to the Langevlei and attempted to clean it up. Kevin Winter sampled the water for us and found the quality to be surprisingly good and the gathering was addressed by the Chairman of the Friends of the Langvlei who outlined plans for the survival and future use of the vlei for its community. We are particularly grateful for the interest shown by Archbishop Thabo, and have decided this is an event we want to repeat annually.

20 top theologians attended the meeting of the Inter-Anglican Standing commission on Unity, Faith and Order from around the world. In recognition of the carbon emissions created by flying Anglicans around the globe, they planted a tree at the Church of the Reconciliation in Manenberg. They also left a donation which is being matched by the Diocesan Environmental Group which will be used to green the church.

**Recycling:** The Diocesan Office has started Recycling and the Diocesan Environmental Group provided recycling bins for each office. The proceeds from the recycling are donated to the DEG.

**Season of Creation:** Many parishes celebrated a Season of creation in 2010, but it was noted that they were fewer than 2009, and plans are afoot to re-work the resource for 2011, in particular with the focus on COP 17 to be held in Durban (International Conference on Climate change).

Prayers and the liturgy from Season of Creation have been circulated to all parishes to celebrate June 5<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Day.

**Planning Day:** An eco-congregation training day is being planned for May 28<sup>th</sup>.



## Diocese of kwa Zulu Natal – Andrew Warmback

The Venerable Dr Andrew Warmback is an archdeacon in the Dioceses of kwa Zulu Natal and Rector of St John the Baptist Church in Pinetown. He is a founder member of the Southern African Faith Communities Institute. The title of his PhD was *Constructing an oikotheology : the environment, poverty and the church in South Africa*.



### Introduction

The Diocese of Natal, part of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA), is a large diocese. It has about 100 parishes, is divided into 15 archdeaconries and has three bishops. It stretches up from the Indian Ocean (with a coastal border of a few hundred kilometres in the East) to the Ukahlamba-Drakensberg Mountains (a World Heritage Site) in the West. Its main city is Durban with about three and a half million residents, a large number of whom are shack dwellers. Much of the Diocese is rural. It is an area of great biodiversity and beauty as well as land degradation and water and air pollution.

### Environment Committee

For about twelve years there has been a group meeting regularly within the diocese with the purpose of encouraging environmental awareness and action among the parishes. Currently we receive an annual grant from the diocese and report regularly to Diocesan Council and Diocesan Synod. I committee was formally established following a resolution passed at the Diocesan Synod in 2001. It meets about four times a year, usually at different venues within the diocese. A small core group meets regularly between committee meetings to oversee the work. The committee aims to raise awareness about environmental issues within parishes and to encourage a response to them. At our meetings we provide opportunities for those present to report back on environmental activities that they had been involved in and to discuss important issues relating to the environment. While we are a committee we encourage anyone who is interested to attend the meetings.

We have tried to focus on the ‘big issues’. Over time we have discussed and tried to make responses to a number of environmental issues, including: the N2 Wild Coast Toll Road, the World Bank Loan to Eskom, the dwindling of protected areas and the concerns around nuclear energy.

### Particular Projects and activities

#### Genetic Modification of Food

The 2003 Natal Synod authorized the Committee to monitor the genetic modification of food in South Africa. We did this through the collection of newspaper articles on the subject as well as through the gathering of information from organizations who work on the issue. We compiled a report on the issue which we made available to the following Synod (which meets every three years).

#### Food Sovereignty

Following a presentation in 2007 by Bishop Rubin, who spoke at a traditional foods workshop at the botanical gardens in Durban and as part of an on-going focus, we worked on a book to promote the use of traditional vegetable. Written by Mary Kleinenberg, the book is called *Afro-Veg: Traditional vegetables, nutritional benefits*

*and recipes*. On 1 December 2009 it was published and at its launch Professor Albert Thembinkhosi Modi, Associate Professor of Crop Science of UKZN, and the author spoke. We have sold all 200 copies.

### **Parish Environment Handbook**

In 2006 the committee prepared and distributed the publication, *Involving parishes in caring for the environment: Guidelines and resources*. As there had been a continuing demand for it, it was updated and reprinted and distributed to clergy at the end of 2008. The publication includes a rationale for the churches engagement in environmental issues, liturgical and biblical resources, a parish environmental audit that could be used by parishes wishing to become eco-congregations and references to books and other useful resources.

### **Lent Course**

In 2008 one of our members, the Revd Sue Britton, wrote the Lent Course for the Diocese. It was entitled, *God brings new life to our world: Material for Sunday services and bible studies for small groups on the theme of creation*. It has subsequently been used at other suitable occasions.

### **Good Friday sermon on the environment**

In 2010 the Committee made a particular effort to publicise the Diakonia Ecumenical Good Friday service with the theme “Creation – Crucified by Greed”. The preacher was our archbishop, Thabo Makgoba.

### **Link Diocese conference on the environment**

The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham invited delegates from our diocese to lead a workshop at a conference on responses to climate change in our diocese. Held from 16-19 September 2010, called “Green as a Leaf; Renewing a Theology of Creation”, we were represented by Dean Ndabezinhle Sibisi and Archdeacon Ivan Gunkel.

### **Deeply Rooted**

This three day course took place from 2-4 November 2010 in Stellenbosch and was led by Prof Ernst Conradie (theology), Bishop Geoff Davies (leadership) and Ms Kate Davies (eco-congregations). Revd Thulani Ngcobo, a member of the Environment Committee, was sponsored to attend this course which proved to be very informative.

### **Policies**

#### **Climate Change Policy Document**

A diocesan synod resolution was passed in 2007 in which it was decided to draw up a policy to guide churches and other diocesan institutions in their efforts to mitigate against and adapt to climate change work. This was prepared and circulated to the diocese. It will be updated regularly.

#### **Energy Saving Tips**

The bishop issued a list of Energy Saving Tips which the Diocesan Property Manager drew up. We encouraged the widespread distribution and use of this document which is entitled, “Typical energy and water saving actions that must/may be taken from March 2010 when building new buildings or when fitting or installing new equipment when renovating existing buildings.”

## **On-going work**

### **Season of Creation**

Two of our committee members contributed sections to this provincial liturgical resource and one of our members attended its launch in Cape Town. We have promoted the use of this Season within our Diocese

### **Eco-congregations**

The eco-congregations programme provide a framework for parishes to commit themselves to using what they have - including land, buildings and other resources, as well as its “educational programmes” - in an environmentally responsible way. It tries to give effect to the slogan: “Think Globally, Act Locally.” At both the Lambeth Conference in 2008 and again at a meeting of primates in 2009 encouragement was given for Anglican parishes to form eco-congregations.

The Pinetown archdeaconry environment committee have worked at implementing the eco-congregation principles and have helped audit one another’s churches. We are working at promoting eco-congregations within the diocese.

### **Provincial 10-year plans for the Environment**

Members of the committee participated in the giving of input into these plans for our Province which were accepted by Provincial Synod in October 2010. We work at ways of implementing these plans in our diocese.

### **Relationship with other organizations**

#### **SAFCEI**

Members of our committee were represented at the SACC initiated Ecumenical Environment Conference which took place in Pretoria in March 2005. This conference agreed to the formation of the South African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute (SAFCEI), which was launched in July by Prof Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate. We have encouraged support for and membership of this organisation.

#### **Working with other Church Environment Organisations**

We have tried to keep abreast of the activities of the Anglican Communion Environment Network (ACEN) as well as the Anglican Church of Southern Africa Environment Network; A Rocha; the Network of Earthkeeping Christian Communities (NECCSA), which produces a regular an e-mail newsletter on church and environmental issues, as well as SAFCEI. We would like to forge closer ties with other diocesan council committees and groups within the diocese.

#### **COP 17**

By far the most important event on calendar for us this year is COP17 which will be held in Durban from 28 December to 9 November. Anglicans in our diocese have been playing a key role in mobilising the participation of faith communities in COP17. We work closely with the SAFCEI in these preparations.

### **Resources and Communication**

The committee has collected useful resources, such as posters, pamphlets and books that can be borrowed and used as a resource for parishes. Yearly we obtain copies of the “Year of Special Days” (with list national and international environmental and others days) and distribute them to the bishops and archdeacons. Environmental information is also regularly circulated by e-mail to a list of interested persons.

## **Gratitude**

We are grateful to the diocese for their financial contribution towards this work and to Bishop Rubin Phillip for his unstinting support.

Andrew Warmback: Convener

## Some Parish Stories

### St John the Baptist, Pinetown (Diocese of kwa Zulu Natal)

This parish, situated about 20km inland from Durban in the suburb of Pinetown, is over 150 years old. It has about 400 families or individuals on the parish roll.

We have an Environment Group and for a number of years we have worked at greening our parish. We give some examples of this.

#### Recycling

We have containers at the church for the recycling of paper, glass and cans. These are used by the parishioners as well as members of the community. We also collect various other items that we pass on to those working with pre- and primary schools. We also provide for the composting of the grass and leaves that come from our property.

#### Monitoring use of resources

On a weekly basis we take the water and electricity metre readings. Being conscious of this usage inevitable leads to it more responsible use.

#### Water Tank

In line with our desire to set an example for parishioners we are busy raising funds for a water tank to harvest the water from our church roof.

#### Grounds

Together with a neighbouring Primary School our grounds form a 'green lung' in the area. For the past five years we have had a policy of indigenising the grounds, creating some water-wise sections.

#### Liturgy

We celebrate, liturgically, environmental days like World Environment Day and have celebrated Harvest Festival, usually accompanied by a parish picnic.

#### Arbour Day

Over the past few years we have held an arts and the environment evening on Arbour Day in which we have encouraged parishioners to celebrate creation through sharing their paintings, poetry, stories etc. Trees have been planted on the grounds of the church to mark significant occasions.

#### Season of Creation

Since the publication of the Provincial Season of Creation booklet in 2008 we have marked this season.

#### Vegetable Garden

This is maintained behind our our hall. The produce of the garden is given to those who attend the monthly Ukukhuthaza Aids Concern Group.

#### Notice Board

We manage a prominent notice board outside our hall which is updated regularly with current environmental information. This notice board attracts the attention both of parishioners as well as visitors to the church.

### Eco-tips

Over the past few years we have had short environment tips in our weekly pew leaflet giving parishioners ideas to live more just lifestyles.

### Collaboration with others

We have encouraged participation in other churches and organisations in respect of environmental activities.

Andrew Warmback: Rector

### The Church of God the Creator

A friend of mine, the late Revd Richard Shorten, when asked by his bishop, The Rt Revd Ross Cuthbertson, to submit suggested names for the new church in Newlands East, suggested “The Church of God the Creator.”<sup>8</sup> One Sunday morning in my mind I paid this church a visit...

In travelling to the church, I passed a number of people making their way there by foot. Some had travelled by taxi. On entering the church property I was given a warm welcome and shown my way to the entrance.

I could not miss noticing the birds and butterflies as I walked passed the vegetable and muhi garden, set out according to permaculture principles. Some of the property still remained as natural grassland. I was told that this community vegetable garden on the property was used to grow vegetables to supply the local AIDS clinic with nutritional food. While the garden was designed as a water-wise one any further water needed was taken from the water tanks next to the church building. It was hard not to notice the recycling containers: not only could you bring to church paper, tins and glass but also plastic, used oil and old batteries.

As I approached the entrance of the church I was struck by the beautiful building, which I learnt had been built from the stone in the area by local workers. Inside I noticed its design was such that there was no need for artificial lighting and heating.

The service as led by the pastor, a young woman, who had previously worked for the National Biodiversity Institute. The service was engaging – it was part of their annual Season of Creation celebration. The singing in a number of different languages seemed to include everyone. The liturgy was a simple one which people knew by heart. There were no hymn books, service sheets or pew bulletins to be seen. The reading was by a very elderly man who read from *The Green Bible* and the sermon slot, led by the preacher, included a short play by the children, dance and some discussion by the congregation.

Our prayers included prayers for the world, for the upcoming international conference on climate change, for the work of Earthlife Africa and the Botanical Society, as well as the success of the appeal against the development of a nuclear power. (In the notices, given later, people were encouraged to join in a local protest against this development).

Later in the service a child was baptized. Her parents were given a fruit tree to be planted at home. The water used in the baptism would be used to water the tree when it was planted and the parents were told that after the child was

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<sup>8</sup> At the time of Richard’s death he was Anglican Chaplain to Stellenbosch University.

bathed the bath water was to be used to further water the tree. When the tree bore fruit the fruit was to be sold to support the child's education.

Receiving of communion intrigued me. Those in wheel chairs and the visually challenged were guided first to the communion rail. Organically grown, non-genetically modified and locally produced bread and wine were used. We were given extra bread to take home to our communities to give to those who were hungry.

After the service, the congregation was invited to the hall for further fellowship, reflection on the service and refreshments. Solar panels on the roof were used to heat the water for the drinks. I learned that the hall was used during the week for the eco-coffins project and other community projects.<sup>9</sup> The young people had an active guerilla gardening campaign in the neighbourhood and stored their plants in another area of the hall.

I left feeling strengthened, challenged and blessed...

Andrew Warmback



3FOOD GARDEN IN DIOCESE OF KWA ZULU NATAL

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<sup>9</sup> This is a project in which alien pine trees are cut down and the wood used to in a project of previously unemployed people.

## Women and the environment - Sue Britton

Sue Britton is a priest in the diocese of Natal, South Africa, serving in the parish of St John Baptist, Pinetown. As a passionate advocate for social justice

Sue was involved in anti-conscription and anti-apartheid activism and was a founder-member of the Movement for the Ordination of Women in Natal. More recently her social action has been related to poverty, gender prejudice and HIV/AIDS. As the world got hotter, even more unequal, and apparently heading for global suicide both financially and ecologically, Sue became more deeply involved in economic and environmental justice activism. This led to being at the founding conference of SAFCEI (Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute) and being elected onto its Board. At present Sue is deeply involved in mobilisation and organisation of faith communities around the Durban COP17.



Sue's deep interest in spirituality, feminist theology and non-violent direct action for justice and peace undergird her social action to play her part in saving God's precious planet earth, our only home. She really desires Jethro (10) and Layla (3) to have a life worth living when they grow up. Grandmotherly love is a joyful, painful encouragement to work for hope in a good future for all.

**Introduction:** It is good to share briefly something of the depth of involvement of Anglican women in Southern Africa in the area of care of creation.

Firstly, and most obviously, in regions such as Southern Africa many Anglican women live in impoverished rural areas, where the survival and health of their extended families depend on knowledge of their environment and skills in the careful use of local resources to provide nourishment and health. Intimate understanding of the use of indigenous plants and vegetables is unfortunately sometimes lost in the move to peri-urban informal settlements and township surroundings. Yet many women do still cultivate their vegetable gardens when they have the space. And community vegetable and herb gardens are increasingly encouraged by local parishes.

Here are a few stories – without names – of Anglican women making an exceptional contribution to care of creation, and the mission of promoting and encouraging responses to God's bounty, as well as drawing attention to the threats posed by humanity's ignorance, carelessness and greed.

**A churchwarden:** There is the churchwarden of an urban parish who works in a well-known ecumenical social action agency, promoting environmental education through exposure visits to toxic parts of the city, analysis of root causes of the pollution and degradation, discussions of effective responses, training in such skills as permaculture – as well as greening the Centre in which the agency operates.

**A Priest:** There is the priest, herself with a rich gifting for liturgy, who stimulated others to take part in creative writing and produced a world-class parish resource book of liturgies and information for a six-week '*Season of Creation.*'

**A cookery book writer:** There is the woman who studied local indigenous vegetables, experimented with recipes using them, and produced an acclaimed cookery book of delicious food using locally-grown and sourced produce.

**The jewelry makers:** There are the women who come together in self-help groups to make use of the skills learned in producing beautiful jewellery from so-called 'waste', to help earn a small income.

**The environmentalist:** There is the environmental expert who uses her educational skills to produce leaflets and posters explaining climate change, biodiversity, water etc., plus a handbook sharing in accessible form how to set up and maintain eco-congregations, why they are important and why they are a key tool for the churches. And then gets theologians and educators from other faiths to adapt the material for local groups of Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others.

**COP 17 interfaith advocates:** And there are the women, working with men, working both within their own churches and through an Inter-Religious Council, to promote understanding of climate change and the COP17 negotiations to be held in Durban later in 2011, and to mobilise participation in this event in collaboration with many civil society groupings.

Great stories. A great movement for life and justice.

However, we have to admit that latent sexism in the church would be evident were the full stories to be told. There are, sadly, many cases where women are carrying out brilliant work in the shadow of men and under their patronising gaze, often barely recognised for their amazing gifts, skills and contributions, because of their gender.

Women are often the inspiration as well as the implementors of so much work around creation care. But men too often seem to have a need to take centre stage, and often find it hard to 'allow' women to be seen as the leaders they really are.

But God sees, and knows.

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