

‘Sustain and Renew the Life of the Earth’

Resource Material for your Environment Policy

The following paper is offered to assist diocesan, deanery and parish groups follow up this resolution.

The Five Marks of Mission express the fundamental purposes of the church in a succinct way. They are backed by the Anglican Consultative Council, the Lambeth Conference of Bishops and the General Synod. In brief, they are: evangelism, nurturing discipleship, helping the needy, struggling for justice, and caring for the environment. In full, the Fifth Mark is:

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

This paper invites you to make this concern a real feature of parish, deanery and diocesan life, and suggests practical ways of doing so.

A Theological Basis

The Genesis stories show the creation as inherently good. Humans are given dominion over it (Genesis 1.28) and are to care for it (Genesis 2.15). One result of the Fall, however, is enmity between humans and nature (Genesis 3.15). Later, the prophets dreamed of a time when humanity and the natural world would live in harmony with each other (Isaiah 11.6-9). In the New Testament Jesus often drew on nature to illustrate his teaching (Matthew 13), and St Paul sees redemption on a cosmic scale (Romans 8.18-25).

Today we realise that ‘dominion’ has too often been interpreted to mean exploit, treat violently, use solely for human ends. We now understand it to mean be responsible for, nurture, manage sensitively. We are increasingly aware of our inter-relationship with the natural world and our dependence on it. Taking the long view, our redemption is not complete until it includes that of the whole creation. This gives us a powerful motivation to heal our broken relationships with the natural world. This paper shows how we can take further steps to put this into action.

Key Tasks for the Church

First of all, to make the Fifth Mark of the Mission real in our lives, we can:

- i. Give thanks for the creation, confess the sin that damages it, pray about the natural world and for those involved in its use and care.
- ii. Find out about current Christian thinking on the environment by contacting organisations such as:
Christian Ecology Link (CEL, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER. Tel: 01524 33858. Website: www.christian-ecology.org.uk),
Eco-congregation (The Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ Tel: 02476 853061. Website: www.ecocongregation.org), or
The Conservation Foundation (1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. Tel: 0207 591 3111. Website: conservationfoundation.co.uk [ask about ‘**Parish Pumps**’]).
- iii. Study the scriptures and the Christian tradition, and environmental issues, reflect theologically and practically on them, relate them to the Marks of Mission, and work with adults and young people on appropriate attitudes and action.
- iv. Care for those parts of the environment for which we are specially responsible as the church – the fabric and contents of our buildings, plants and animals in our churchyards, our glebe land, clergy houses, and other church property.
- v. Campaign, often with others, to put right damage to the environment, avoid further possible damage, and safeguard the integrity of the natural world...
- vi. Set an example, as individuals and as the church of ‘living lightly’ on the earth.

Devising your Environment Policy

Then, to make sure that appropriate action on the Fifth Mark of Mission is taken, we can commit ourselves to devising and adopting an appropriate environment policy at every level in the diocese. The resolutions passed by the Diocesan Synod in September 2005 as set out above, gives us our starting point and our motivation for this.

In devising a policy for your particular group within the diocese, you may wish to include certain General, Group, and Specific clauses, as you think most appropriate. We encourage you to amend, and add to, the clauses suggested below. The process of formulating your policy is as important as the final result, so we encourage you to discuss the matter fully with your group. You will need to win hearts as well as minds to this concern.

Guidance on an Environmental policy can be found on the Diocesan Website. A sample audit is on the Diocesan Website at www.glosdioc.org.uk

General Clauses

1. We affirm the Fifth Mark of Mission ('to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth') as a central part of our life, work and mission.
2. We will take environmental concerns fully into account in our mission, worship, study, education, training, pastoral, administrative and other programmes and projects.
3. We will identify environmental issues in our village, town, county or area as a whole, and devise appropriate action on them.
4. We will appoint a person as our Environment Officer and encourage him or her to bring environmental concerns forward on a regular basis.
5. We will seek appropriate information from a Christian environmental group (eg. *Christian Ecology Link*, *Eco-congregation*, *Parish Pumps*) and keep abreast of current thinking.
6. We will undertake an 'environmental audit' of our premises and property, make a list of the most significant aspects of the natural world for which we are responsible, and devise appropriate plans to care for them.
7. We will consider the environmental impact of all our policies and plans, and accept that additional costs may be incurred.
8. We will ask our members to consider their personal impact on the environment in their daily lives.
9. We will support the work of local and national environmental organisations, as appropriate.
10. We will hold a formal debate or discussion on environmental issues and policy at least once every three years.
11. We ask the Archdeacons to include questions on environmental policies in their Articles of Enquiry to the parishes on a regular basis, and to review and assess the answers received.
12. Promotes the role of the Ecumenical Sustainability Group

Group Clauses

*(Particularly for diocesan departments.
To be adapted for use at local level as appropriate).*

Finance Committee:

13. We will pay attention to environmental concerns in our banking and investment practice, and continue to pay regard to the national church ethical investment policy.
14. We will continue to use, and recommend to others, rates of car mileage payments that encourage the use of more environmentally-friendly vehicles.
15. We will take environmental concerns into account in managing diocesan glebe land, and other property owned by the diocese, and seek to encourage tenants and other occupiers to do the same.
16. We will seek ways to assess the value of our land and property for wildlife, and to manage them to conserve biodiversity, wherever possible.

Houses Committee:

17. We will seek to meet the environmental standards set by the Green Guide for clergy housing, and accept that additional costs may be incurred.
18. We will encourage parishes, architects and contractors to take environmental concerns into account in their work.

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC):

19. We will review the Topics booklet *The Environmental Impact of Building Works and Services in Church Buildings*, and other booklets, and keep them up to date.
20. We will encourage parishes, architects and contractors to take environmental concerns fully into account in their work.

21. To look at the appropriate use of renewable energy, eg wood fired boilers, sun and windmills.
22. Encourage appropriate use of church buildings, churchyards etc to support wildlife.

Liturgical Committee:

23. We will encourage parishes and others to include environmental concerns in their worship, and provide a range of appropriate materials for them.

Board of Education:

24. We will encourage church schools in the diocese to adopt environmental policies, and to give environmental concerns a higher profile in their life and work, within Health and Safety legislation.

Specific Clauses

Transport:

25. We will encourage environmentally-friendly forms of transport, walk, cycle, use public transport, share cars, keep journeys to meeting venues short wherever possible, and keep fossil fuel emissions as low as we can.

Energy:

26. We will make an energy audit at least every three years, look for economies in heating, use thermostats, fit low-energy light bulbs, improve insulation, switch to 'green' energy suppliers, install solar panels, keep temperatures down, avoid stand-by mode and turn off computers and electrical appliances when not in use, and seek to save energy, wherever possible.

Purchasing and Waste:

27. We will seek ways to reduce consumption, particularly of paper and envelopes, and the impact of our activities on the environment, use

recycled paper, re-use and repair wood and other items, recycle waste and if necessary take it to collection points, reduce the negative social and environmental impacts of computers, use low-environmental impact cleaning materials (avoiding chlorine-based and phosphate-rich powders), avoid using disposable and plastic items, avoid artificial fertilisers and pesticides, and use wood from sustainable sources, wherever possible.

Biodiversity:

28. We will assess the value of our land and property for wildlife, and manage them to conserve biodiversity, wherever possible.

Catering:

29. We will seek to purchase food and drink that meets the LOAF principles (Locally-sourced, Organically-grown, Animal-friendly, Fairly-traded), avoid over-catering, and use seasonal foods.

Water:

30. We will avoid using water unnecessarily, install water meters where appropriate, check for leakages regularly, fit water-minimising systems to taps and cisterns, and collect rainwater, wherever possible.

Adopting and Applying your Environment Policy

Finally, we invite your group formally to adopt your policy, sign it and date it. If you would like others in the Diocese to know what you have agreed to do to 'sustain and renew the life of the earth' in your place, we invite you to send a copy of your policy to the Department of Social Responsibility, 38 Sydenham Villas Road, Cheltenham, GL52 6DZ. And then publicise your policy widely, and review it at agreed intervals.

Please feel free to photocopy this leaflet for local use.

Further copies can also be obtained from the Department of Social Responsibility, 38 Sydenham Villas Road, Cheltenham, GL52 6DZ.

Thoughts on the Environment

A paper from Mr Nigel Chetwood

I believe that the threats to 'Gaia' can be separated into two divisions – those that threaten the very existence of life on earth, and those that despoil the careful long-term balance required between using the earth's resources and destroying those very resources required for 'good living.'

This second strand surely includes such things as urban sprawl, car density/traffic gridlock, pollution, loss of habitat for certain species, reduction in biodiversity, and so on. Yet these problems simply become background noise in the face of those threats from the first strand – those that will substantially affect the ability of mankind to even exist.

We face the proposition that the present rates in increase of greenhouse gases will lead to increases in global temperatures that will in themselves cause the release of carbon dioxide. There are about 40,000 links on the Internet to the search question "runaway + carbon dioxide" that frankly are best ignored with their frightening scenarios!

Yet the basic proposition that we face is that we will be unable to control the environment in ten to forty years' time unless we take positive steps now.

We know that it is very likely that the Greenland ice sheet will fully melt over the next 100 years raising sea levels by 10 metres. We can but guess at the consequences that will come from millions of people being displaced to already-populated higher ground.

We know that each person in the UK produces about 9 tonnes of carbon dioxide through heating and lighting of the home through the use of gas or coal, car travel, flying to distant parts for holidaying or buying vegetables grown in countries far away. In France the level is only six tonnes as the country produces most of its electricity through nuclear power.

We know that we could produce the majority of our electricity through nuclear power and heat our homes and power our cars with hydrogen. We also know that the Government is unwilling to take any action that could cause it to lose votes.

We believe that the earth can absorb 3 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person.

We know that to meet Greenpeace's philosophy we would have to reduce our economic activity to that of Turkey, the first country running down the rank of carbon dioxide producing countries, to have only 3 tonnes of carbon dioxide production per person.

I resigned from the Tewkesbury Local Strategic Partnership this year because my perception of local government that it has descended to the level of 'box ticking'. "Have we considered that problem? Yes." So the box gets ticked. Has anything been achieved? No. Perhaps I'm being unkind, but I sense that our draft proposals seemed a little like box-ticking, rather than providing a moral lead.

After the vote on the environmental debate in General Synod, Bp Richard commented that everyone acknowledges that there is a problem, but nothing gets done. Dare I suggest that our disinclination to think about issues such as SUV/4-wheel drive cars at our meeting last week mean that again we are reluctant to face the real issues?

Activity	Comment	How we might save
Diocesan Synod	2000 miles driven by attendees for each meeting.	Meet less often but have a longer meeting.
Vicarages & churches heated by oil	Renew boilers as necessary with pelleted wood burners	Negotiate deal with local producer of wood pellets to kick-start the process so other organisations could use it.
'Mileage' allowance	Generous allowances encourage wasteful travel	Set single allowance adequate for today's small car, and reduce annually.
Meetings in general	Too easy to jump in the car to attend a meeting	Use the phone....TalkTalk now have a cover charge £9.99 +VAT per month for all calls any day any time
Meetings in general	Many people have Broad-band	Use "free" video links. Is it possible that even the Diocesan Synod could be carried out by video-conference using clergy links?
Meetings of clergy	Give clergy a broad-band connection	Bishop/archdeacons communicate via video conferencing.

There are other things that we could do that would appeal to the wider public, show that the Church IS in the fore-front of energy-use reduction, and really reduce carbon dioxide production.