

AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, SOUTH AFRICA

Long-term plan on the environment – summary

INTRODUCTION

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) is made up of 27 dioceses in six countries. ACSA is headed by the Archbishop of Cape Town, and has approximately four million members across Southern Africa.

This 10-year plan was drawn up after ARC's Windsor Celebration in November 2009, and forms part of the 10-year vision and mission called Anglicans ACT. It draws on the existing commitment to environmental protection in the ACSA following the adoption of a resolution at the 2009 Provincial Standing Committee of the Church that resources should be offered to energise the local church to "safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth". This is one of the Five Marks of Mission agreed by the worldwide Anglican Consultative Council in 1996.

ACSA has an existing Environment Network, which consists of a diocesan coordinator from each of the 27 dioceses and a provincial champion who serves as the link between the network and the Provincial Synod. Since 2011 it has employed an environmental officer for the Province, who also assists the Archbishop of the Province in his role as co-ordinator of the Anglican Communion Environment Network. It now proposes that over the next 10 years that the Province should become an Eco-Province with each diocese establishing an environmental desk with diocesan environment co-ordinators.

The long-term plan advocates for development that enables the people of Southern Africa to progress out of poverty in ways that do not put new pressures on the environment and at the same time, acknowledges the magnitude of the carbon footprint of South Africa in relation to the rest of the continent.

The long-term plan focuses on the following areas:

FAITH CONSISTENT USE OF ASSETS

- The Dioceses of Johannesburg and Natal have adopted green building principles for new church buildings, which will cover water heating, water saving and power saving.

EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Promote eco-camps and excursions for young people and children where they can develop a greater appreciation of the environment;
- Encourage Anglican youth to take the lead at schools and campuses to help drive and champion environmental initiatives and set up special recognition awards for young people who make a positive difference;
- Build on and extend the module on the environment based in ethics developed by the Theological College of the Transfiguration, the provincial seminary, which aims to equip new clergy to interact with environmental issues.

WISDOM

- Promote the use of the Church's existing theological resource on the environment 'Seasons of Creation' at all levels;
- Develop a green Anglican Prayer Book with an exploration of how liturgy can be greened;
- Encourage the development of eco-congregations and/or A Rocha groups, local faith community environmental projects, education projects and partnership projects with other NGOs;
- Establish an annual Geoff Davies Environment Lecture to stimulate theological discussion around issues of the environment;
- Develop a Theology of Simplicity – for example, highlighting how the Sabbath principles of 'enoughness' is a challenge to us to rest from unnecessary consumption.

LIFESTYLES

- Develop a 'Shrinking the Footprint' initiative for ACSA. This is an initiative of the Church of England, which encourages individuals and parishes to understand their carbon footprint and to implement ways of 'shrinking their footprint'. The goal, for the Church of England, is to reduce the Church's overall carbon footprint by 80% by the year 2050.

MEDIA AND ADVOCACY

- Set up an environmental website sharing stories and examples of action being taken around the Province and set up a newsletter reporting on greening success stories for dioceses and parishes.
- Lobby for a greener economy.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ECO TWINNING

- Partner with Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) and A Rocha South Africa, an international organisation working with churches to achieve their environmental objectives and other faith groups

CELEBRATION

- Promote various feast days in the liturgical year of the Church to celebrate the gift of creation such as Harvest festival, Eastertide and Feast of St Francis;
- Set up creation care days to showcase what is being done within parishes;
- Celebrate open-air Eucharists and environmental competitions especially for children and young people.

This plan was approved by the Provincial Synod, the highest decision-making body of the Province that meets every three years, at its meeting in 2010. A more detailed implementation plan is being developed and will be presented at the 2012 Provincial Standing Committee.

This plan was launched at ARC's Many Heavens, One Earth, Our Continent celebration held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2012