

Micah Challenge



May 2009

# Theology of Climate Change

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## Climate change

### 1. Introduction

Climate change is as much a social and moral issue as it is an environmental issue. Its far reaching effects will touch all of us in some way. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) a group of over 2,500 leading scientists from around the world are now predicting a rise in globally-averaged temperatures of between 2°C and 6°C by the end of this century<sup>1</sup>. With these changes in temperatures, scientists are predicting that we in Australia will experience more extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and heat waves, further water shortages and more intense bushfires.<sup>2</sup> The most recent IPCC Fourth Assessment Report stated that it is now very likely that most of the observed increase in globally-averaged temperatures in the last 50 years is attributable to human activities.<sup>3</sup>

The current climate change that the world is experiencing has historically been caused by those of us in wealthy countries as we have developed our economies. However, the people who stand to lose the most are people in impoverished countries, who have historically contributed least to the problem. Furthermore, they lack the financial resources to cope adequately with the problem. The deep injustice of wealthy countries' actions and the disproportionate effect this will have on people in poorer countries, requires a moral and ethical response.

As Christians, our faith shapes the dimensions of our moral and ethical response, which includes a strong imperative to fulfill Jesus' most basic teaching "to love your neighbour as yourself" (Mtt 22:39) We are also called to advocate for those who are voiceless or marginalised, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Lk 4:18-19) In developing a theology of climate change, this bias for the poor and tackling injustice is paramount.

Micah Challenge acknowledges the dual need to both reflect faithfully on the gospel and respond by taking concrete action.

Micah Challenge firstly aims to deepen the commitment of Christians to the idea of an integrated gospel of good news – to proclaim and demonstrate

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC Fourth Assessment Report <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

<sup>2</sup> Climate Institute <http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/images/reports/ipccimplications.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> IPCC Fourth Assessment Report <http://www.ipcc.ch/>



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the love of Jesus to a world in need. We want Christians from all backgrounds to show God's kindness and justice, in response to the words of Micah.

Secondly, Micah Challenge aims to be a prophetic voice calling upon and influencing leaders around the world to defend the rights of the poor and oppressed (Ps 82). Micah Challenge urges decision makers to fulfil their promise to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on global poverty by 2015.

Climate change threatens to cut across the success of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These eight goals were developed in response to the world's main development challenges and include:

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Climate change is already beginning to undermine poverty reduction and sustainable development objectives under the MDGs and is set to get worse. It cuts across all development issues and seriously threatens the lives and livelihoods of impoverished people around the world. It affects food and water security, health and sanitation, as well as displacement and migration issues, conflict and disasters. Developing countries are more vulnerable to climate change because they are more directly dependent on their immediate natural resources than are developed countries, and because they have a lower economic capacity to cope with environmental hazards and shocks. Despite the fact that climate change is being primarily caused by people in wealthy countries, people in developing countries will bear the brunt of the impacts.<sup>4</sup>

A theological approach to climate change that takes seriously this bias for the poor needs to consider the consequences of our economic systems and the impact this has

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<sup>4</sup> Make Poverty History, *See the Bigger Picture, Act on Climate Change*, 2008, <http://makepovertyhistory.com.au/>



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on development. Whilst Climate Change has been seen as an environmental issue in the past, it is also now a social, ethical and moral issue. An appropriate ethical and moral response needs to also address the way in which we live and the impact it has on others.

The Jubilee tradition offers a framework for looking at this issue. The original Jubilee laws in Leviticus 25 were, in part, a recognition of our fallible human condition. The Jubilee tradition recognised that over time, injustice comes to mark human social and economic systems. This means that they must be reviewed on a regular basis, and that the community must be prepared to take action against inequality.

The Biblical vision of community sets forth the just, periodic redistribution of wealth as a vital part of the restoration of equity. Equity itself makes possible the genuine flourishing of community. There is evidence in the Bible that such restoration need not be confined to only the year of Jubilee, but that it should be ongoing (Nehemiah 5.1-13; Luke 4.18-19).<sup>5</sup>

In further considering a theology of climate change it is worthwhile considering the questions:

1. How should Christians see themselves in relationship with God and the natural world?
2. What is a Christian response to growth-based economics and development – how should we view our relationships with each other?
3. What would an ethical and moral response to climate change look like and how does this translate into action?

### **2. Our relationship with God and the natural world**

Christians must be wary of the trap of thinking there is choice between caring for people and caring for Creation, when in reality, the two are inseparable. To care for people and particularly those living in impoverished countries means that we need to address climate change, as this will have disastrous implications for humanity. To care for the earth is to care for ourselves.

Evangelical leader Rev. Richard Cizak expands on this point:

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<sup>5</sup> Australian Jubilee 2000 Debt Coalition, National Council of Churches in Australia, Resource sheet for churches for Jubilee Sunday- 5 March 2000.

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Mercury pollution from coal burning utility plants in the United States falls from the atmosphere into our rivers and is consumed by fish. This in turn impacts our children, because now one out of six women in America has unduly high levels of mercury in their systems - impacting unborn children. It's a sanctity of human life issue that relates to the environment.<sup>6</sup>

However, the question remains, do we need to care for this world when we have been promised a new heaven and a new earth? In Peter's writing about the second coming, he urges that we "ought to live holy and godly lives as [we] look forward to the day of God" (2 Pet 3:10) What therefore constitutes holy and godly lives with respect to our relationship with Creation.

Rev. Cizik says,

If it's God's world, we have no license to destroy it. And there is no sense in which, by allowing that to happen, we are going to increase or encourage the chance of the return of Jesus Christ. To tolerate the destruction of the Earth in the name of encouraging the return of Jesus Christ is a violation of all that God has taught us. In the first book of the Bible, God says in Genesis, "Watch over and care for it." Watch over and care for it - that is our duty."<sup>7</sup>

The Creation stories in Genesis (Gen 1 and 2) provide two perspectives on how we are to relate to God and the natural world – are we called to have dominion over Creation or are we called to be stewards?

The Creation story in Genesis 1 has been widely discussed in relation to the instruction to humanity to subdue the earth and rule over all creatures.<sup>8</sup> However, the more dynamic implication of this passage rests with the first part of verse 26, "Let us make mankind in our image according to our likeness." In this passage, humanity is placed in a particular relationship with God, we are called to be God's likeness.

What does it mean to be created in God's likeness? In Genesis 2, humanity is given the task as gardener, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." (Gen 2:15). As gardeners we have a relationship with the earth. We

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Rev. Richard Cizik, <http://www.thegreatwarming.com/revrichardcizik.html>

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Rev. Richard Cizik, <http://www.thegreatwarming.com/revrichardcizik.html>

<sup>8</sup> Norm Habel (2003) has written about the Hebrew understanding of this passage. Adam is told by God to 'till/serve the soil and protect/sustain it'. The verb to 'rule' and the verb to 'serve/till' are exact opposites. Likewise the verbs 'subdue' and 'sustain' are opposites. Habel concludes we can't rest solely on the command to subdue.



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can choose to let things be or we can choose to plant things in particular places, pull weeds out, add nutrient to the soil, harvest, we make decisions. However, these decisions need to reflect what else we know about God's likeness and the teachings of Jesus. How can we tend God's world in a way that allows the Creation to flourish and cares for human life particularly those who are marginalised. This requires an element of restraint. In Genesis 1, God places limits over humanity's interaction with other living things. In Gen 1:29 God limits our diet to fruit from trees with seeds in them. It is only after the flood narratives that God says humans can now eat "everything that lives and moves" (Gen 9). However, God says the consequence of this is that every living creature will be filled with "fear and dread" of humanity.

Michael Abbaté in his book *Gardening Eden*, says,

Along with Adam, we were created to be gardeners of Eden. This is the critical concept of stewardship that helps me understand my true job responsibilities from God. ... God gives us this universe freely, wanting us to discover the joys of responsible stewardship, of moderation, and the freedom that comes with self-discipline and caring for a flock, of not squandering resources. And by doing these things, God tells us, we'll better understand and appreciate Him."<sup>9</sup>

Genesis 2 provides a partial lens through which we can view the Creation story in Genesis 1. We 'subdue the earth' and 'have dominion' over nature but it is in our role as gardeners. Whilst this role gives us a certain amount of control over nature, we are also completely reliant on it and God who wills it in to being. We have a vested interest in the garden flourishing to enable things to grow in order to feed ourselves. We therefore need to see ourselves as powerful, but with that power constrained by God.

The model of servant kingship is the other part of the lens through which we can view this relationship. This is the role given to the kings of Israel (Ps. 72) and explicitly adopted by Jesus when he came to Earth.<sup>10</sup> The idea is that a king should rule with a view to serving - that decisions are made for the good of the whole rather than the benefit of the individual with a view to balancing up the current inequities. This model also implies that our role is to engage with the world as it currently is and work out

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Abbaté, *Gardening Eden*, Waterbrook Press, Colorado, 2009 pp.40-41

<sup>10</sup> White R, & Spencer N, *Christianity, Climate change and sustainable living*, SPCK, 2007, p.85



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what needs doing in the garden in order for life to flourish. This will be an ongoing task. Our faithfulness in God will allow us to work out what those tasks are.

The key challenge is to see if we can manage the garden in a way that all life is fed. Instead of the soil being stripped of its nutrient, the nutrient is maintained and life is abundant for future generations as well. Instead of a model that assumes we can control the garden, we recognise the limits and the needs of the garden itself in order to allow it to be naturally fertile and to go on feeding us. Whilst we acknowledge our power and our ability to subdue, we remember the example of Jesus who came “not to be served but to serve” (Matt 20:28, NRSV). Adopting an attitude of humility will help ensure that all are adequately fed.

### 3. A Christian response to economics

The Greek word for house is *oikos*. This is also the source of the words *economics*, *ecology* and *ecumenicity*. Sallie McFague argues, “The three belong together: in order for the whole household of the planet to flourish, the earth’s resources must be distributed justly among all its inhabitants, human and earth others, on a sustainable basis.”<sup>11</sup>

Climate change highlights the inequities of the world. We still live in a world where the richest 20% consume 80% of the world’s resources. With climate change, these inequities are exacerbated as it is those who are already poor who will be disproportionately affected by climate change. Economics is not just about money; it is about who lives and who dies, and who lives decently and who does not.<sup>12</sup>

McFague argues that climate change raises the question about how all of us - human beings and other creatures - can live justly and sustainably on the planet, and specifically what sort of economic models are sustainable. She argues Western Christianity,

“has through its individualistic view of human life supported the neoclassical economic paradigm, the current consumer culture, which is widening the gap between rich and poor and is a major cause of global warming.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> McFague, S. p.83

<sup>12</sup> McFague *op. cit.* p.36

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p.85



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Instead she argues, Christianity should support an ecological economic model, “one in which our well-being is seen as interrelated and interdependent with the well-being of all other living things and earth processes.”<sup>14</sup> This economic model would also see the just sharing among all of basic, needed resources in a fashion geared to long term sustainability. Justice and sustainability are the norms that guide the allocation of resources in this model of economics; they are also what is needed to avoid excessive climate change.<sup>15</sup> This she argues is more in keeping with what Jesus meant for us in the parable of the banquet when all are invited. (Matt 22:1-13, Lk 14:15-24). However, this is a challenging task as,

Unlike our first century Mediterranean counterparts, North American middle-class Christians are not terrified by the unclean, but we are terrified by the poor. There are so many of them – billions! Surely we cannot be expected to share the planet’s resources justly and sustainably with all of them. .. and not just needy human beings, but the air, the water, the land, and each and every creature not matter how small and seemingly insignificant. The terror implicit in this parable lies with its radical inclusivity – nothing, no one is left out.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, to actually achieve a more just and sustainable world, she argues Christians have a vital role to play because religion has a central role in forming who we think we are and what we have a right to do.

Individualistic anthropology is deep within our consumer-oriented culture and is presently supported not only by religion but also by government and contemporary economics. When these three major institutions – religion, government and economics present a united front, a sacred canopy is cast over a society, validating the behaviour of its people. ...it legitimates human beings continuing to feel, think and act in ways that are basically contrary to the just distribution of the world’s resources and the sustainability of the planet itself.<sup>17</sup>

To adopt an ecological model means we need to rethink how we relate to each other in order to achieve a just and sustainable outcome in the face of climate change. The

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.85

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p.37

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p.93

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* p.85



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two greatest commandments, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind and with all your strength ... and love your neighbour as yourself” (Matt 22: 36-40) are central to achieving this. In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25 - 37), Jesus says to love our neighbour we must show mercy and actively live out our commitment. Sometimes this may even mean a cost to ourselves. Theologian Karl Barth suggests that “No praise of God is serious, or can be taken seriously, if it is apart from or in addition to the commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Praise of God must always be understood as obedience to this commandment.”<sup>18</sup>

In a world where economic injustice exists, to love your neighbour involves wrestling with this injustice. In the parable of the steward in Luke 16:1-13, the steward is told to be wise with the resources entrusted to him, that he can’t serve both God and Mammon. Jesus also warns against us storing up our wealth (Matt:619-21) and “how hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.” (Lk 18:24). Christians in wealthy countries therefore need to acknowledge that we can’t in all good conscience rest easy in our wealth while others go hungry.

### 4. Understanding our role - how our faith translates to action

#### 4.1 Hope for the future

To start moving towards a more just and sustainable world we have to first have hope that a different world is possible and imagine what that world will look like.

In 1987 the Brundtland Report, also known as *Our Common Future*, alerted the world to the urgency of making progress toward economic development that could be sustained without depleting natural resources or harming the environment. Published by an international group of politicians, civil servants and experts on the environment and development, the report provided a key statement on sustainable development, defining it as: *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Karl Barth, translated by Edwards, Bussey and Knight, *Church Dogmatics III, 1: The Doctrine of Creation*, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1958, in Clifford, P. *All Creation Groaning: A theological approach to climate change and development*, Christian Aid, June 2007, p.9

<sup>19</sup> This description of the Brundtland report is taken from a link on the Atmosphere, Climate & Environment (ACE) Information Programme website: [http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/eae/Sustainability/Older/Brundtland\\_Report.html](http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/eae/Sustainability/Older/Brundtland_Report.html). A copy of the Brundtland report can be downloaded from: [www.anped.org/media/brundtland-pdf.pdf](http://www.anped.org/media/brundtland-pdf.pdf)



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Needs in an ecological economic model involve a vision of justice for all. So whilst we are lucky enough to have been born into a wealthy country, that privilege comes with a responsibility.

### 4.2 Acknowledging Sin

Christian Aid's Paula Clifford defines sin:

in the breakdown of human relationships, revealed in the unjust distribution of resources which creates a chasm between rich and poor. Sin also lies in the loss of connectedness between human beings and the environment, which has brought about the crisis of global warming. And in all this there is, too, the breakdown of the relationship between us and God.<sup>20</sup>

Sallie McFague takes this a little further and says sin "is the refusal to share, the refusal to work for systemic changes in our laws, institutions and practices that will help bring about a more just and sustainable planet"<sup>21</sup> In this way sin is seen as the consequence of an action and also in the refusal to acknowledge that breakdown and actively work for something better.

The concept of "structural sin" emerging from liberation theologians in Latin America is also useful for our consideration.<sup>22</sup> The idea of structural sin is that a broader social dimension to sin exists beyond individual wrong-doings for example racism, sexism, classism. "If everyone else is doing something, the impulse to question one's own behaviour quickly dies away. This is replaced by a feeling of powerlessness: there's nothing I can do that will change anything, so why should I bother?"<sup>23</sup> This further highlights that an adequate response to climate change requires action at both an individual and societal level.

### 4.3 Towards redemption - the message of the resurrection

Action is the key message of the resurrection. Jesus says "Feed my lambs." (Jn 21:15), "go and make disciples" (Matt 28:19), "forgive people's sins" (Jn 20:23). A restored relationship with God must entail a change in relationship with others. Jurgen Moltmann says to believe in the resurrection means

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<sup>20</sup> Clifford, P. *op. cit.* p.9

<sup>21</sup> McFague S. *op. cit.* p.38

<sup>22</sup> A discussion of structural sin is given in Northcott, M.S., *A Moral Climate: the ethics of global warming*, D.L.T., 2007

<sup>23</sup> Clifford, P. *op. cit.* p.11



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participating in this creative act of God's. ... God is the life-giving energy which makes the poor rich and lifts up the downtrodden and raises the dead. Faith in the resurrection is itself an energy which strengthens and raises people up, liberating them from the deadly illusions of power and 'having' in the perspective of life's future"<sup>24</sup>

In the context of climate change this means restoring our relationship with those who are vulnerable to its effects.<sup>25</sup> It also means acknowledging the economic injustices which exist and actively working within the world to overcome our structural sin, in order for society to mend its own relationship with those who suffer.

The following eight principles<sup>26</sup> provide some guidelines about what this action might look like.

### 4.4 Eight principles for sustainable living

These principles have been developed drawing on the work of the Jubilee Centre<sup>27</sup> and focus on the quality of relationships between human beings and God. The concept is that, through the right ordering of relationships, personally and institutionally, a context can be created in which environmentally sustainable living becomes both a possibility and a joy. "It is hard to see how a relationship that is marked by severe inequality, oppression or emotional brokenness can be deemed as genuinely 'good'."<sup>28</sup> Therefore these guiding principles inform an understanding of how our relationships might be re-ordered so that our relationships better reflect a right relationship with God. These principles also acknowledge that the particulars of what is 'sustainable' is not going to be the same for every situation. For example, whilst switching to renewable energy rather than relying on coal fired electricity is an important step in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and becoming more sustainable, the type of renewable energy that is appropriate will change depending on the situation – some sites are very suited to solar, for others wind would be more appropriate. These principles are therefore only a first step on the path towards sustainability.

*1. Value and protect creation, see this as a joy rather than a burden*

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<sup>24</sup> Moltmann, J. "The Resurrection of Christ - Hope for the World", Jesus Christ for Today's World, SCM Press, London, p.80

<sup>25</sup> Clifford. p. 13

<sup>26</sup> Adapted from White R, & Spencer N, *Christianity, Climate change and sustainable living*, SPCK, 2007, pp.153-157

<sup>27</sup> Jubilee Manifesto Schluter and Ashcroft (eds)

<sup>28</sup> White, R. & Spencer, N. *op. cit.* p.152



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Humanity has been given the responsibility to work with and care for Creation, whilst acknowledging that Creation is a gift from God. Our role as carers is an opportunity for joy – to see it as a burden is to miss an important element in our relationship with God. We also need to re-order our relationships at all levels to incorporate the costs of environmental damage or seek to minimise these so that we are not pursuing economic growth at the expense of sustainability. We also need to focus on the benefits of sustainable living such as more time, less pollution, rather than see it as a hair shirt we must adopt in order to survive. It is hard to sustain something that feels like a chore, but much easier when it brings us joy. Offering prayers of thanks for what we have already have can keep us focussed on the joy and not the burden.

### *2. Reflect the close bond between society and the environment in our decisions.*

To care for Creation is also to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. To claim that we love our neighbour whilst harming the world that we share is misguided at best. This principle provides a lens through which we can evaluate social and economic policies – do they acknowledge and strengthen the link between us and the environment we share? For example a policy which supports the development of fuel-efficient cars is better for the environment. But a policy which seeks to build community infrastructure such as local shopping strips, green spaces, medical centres, footpaths and safe public transport so that the need for cars is dramatically reduced in the first place is better for both the environment and the human community.

### *3. Pursue justice for the vulnerable and marginalised*

As we have seen, concern for the vulnerable is a key theme throughout the gospel. Given the disproportionate consequences of climate change on those in poverty throughout the world, this principle becomes particularly important. This also acts as a lens through which we can assess policies and point policymakers in the direction of measures that actively help the vulnerable such as progressive taxation and an adequate overseas aid budget. It is also a reminder about the need for people living in wealthy countries to engage in a certain level of self-sacrifice in order to do their fair share of taking action on climate change.

### *4. We should not confuse wealth and value: our goal should be relational health rather than money or personal freedom*

Much of the biblical teaching emphasises the dangers of placing wealth as the key pursuit in any society. Trustworthy, helpful and joyful relationships, rather than wealth should be the goal to which we aspire. This has implications for our personal lifestyles, but also for how we measure wealth as a society. Whilst far from perfect, sustainability indicators such as carbon footprints and development and relational



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well-being indices such as the Human Development Index and the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare need to be seen alongside GDP per capita to get a more accurate measure of well being.

*5. We should favour regulated solutions that take account of natural, human and social capital.*

Connected to the biblical apprehension over wealth is unease over centralisation. The power that comes with control over large sums of money (such as a king or a highly centralised government would enjoy) is a potentially dangerous thing that requires restraint or at least mechanisms of accountability. The principles of Jubilee – the Sabbath days and years, the ban on interest and labour restrictions all suggest that people and land have an intrinsic worth beyond what is determined simply by market demand. It also points to the need to protect people and land from unrestricted market forces, through regulation and implementation of safeguards to protect fairness and preserve social capital and cohesion.

*6. We should express commitment to our immediate environment and favour local solutions*

The importance of place is a significant element in and determinant of human well-being. Land and property therefore need to be treated as more than just a form of capital if we are to get an understanding of what it is like to be gardeners. The wisdom of indigenous people and those who have local knowledge of 'their place' is a vital ingredient in finding sustainable solutions. Strengthening local communities and people feeling a genuine connection to where they live increases the capacity for community campaigns against corporate interest. Members of strong communities also have greater feelings of security and a greater willingness to be involved in sharing resources. This principle can also act as a policy lens – does a policy invest power and responsibility in a locality or does it attempt to solve its problems for it?

*7. We should aim to offer just and equitable access to natural resources*

The idea behind this principle is that all living things have a share in the world's resources and an opportunity to optimise their share. One of the guiding principles in the international climate change negotiations is that the polluter should pay in an attempt to even up the current imbalance between who has utilised and accessed the earth's resources at the expense of others. The World Council of Churches has also been promoting the concept of ecological debt - the idea is that industrialized Northern countries - their institutions and corporations – have a debt towards Southern countries because of the manner in which they have used these countries'



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natural resources, often devastating and contaminating natural environments.<sup>29</sup> This principle also reminds us that humanity is merely one aspect of Creation. We acknowledge that we share the planet with other living things which also need space and habitat to flourish.

*8. We should respond seriously and with hope.*

Underpinning all these principles is the idea that, while we have the option as free beings to walk away from them and from God, the commands to love God and our neighbour demand a response. A faithful response is a hopeful response – a belief that God has not abandoned us, but rather given us the foundations of what we need to work towards a sustainable world.

### 5. The role of the church

These principles highlight that change needs to take place at all levels of relationships – the personal and political, in our local communities, state, national and internationally. However, we will find different ways of responding in our various contexts. The following are a range of suggestions for more specific activities that churches can undertake which illustrate some of what these principles mean in practice.

#### 5.1 Church Buildings

Conduct an energy audit of your church building. This involves finding out via your energy bills how you use energy in your building and recording who uses it (ie. what times of the day/year). You can then work out how to reduce what you are using. Examples of typical actions that churches can take include: changing lights and light fittings, installing timers on hot water units, sealing up drafts to keep heat in, behaviour change to reduce wastage ie. turning lights off when not in use.

#### 5.2 Worship

Conduct a service of worship around the environment. This might include taking part in the Season of Creation during September / October. Resources can be obtained from: [www.seasonofcreation.com](http://www.seasonofcreation.com). Alternatively you might consider linking in with World Environment Day or National Tree Day or Clean up Australia Day or something particular to your local congregation.

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<sup>29</sup> World Council of Churches, “Ecological Debt: Who Owes Whom?”  
[http://www.oikoumene.org/ru/news/news-management/a/rus/browse/2/article/1722/ecological-debt-who-owes.html?tx\\_ttnews%5Bcat%5D=96%2C33&cHash=bc84579c89](http://www.oikoumene.org/ru/news/news-management/a/rus/browse/2/article/1722/ecological-debt-who-owes.html?tx_ttnews%5Bcat%5D=96%2C33&cHash=bc84579c89)



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### 5.3 Extending the influence of the church community

Promote and provide resources for members of your church to take action in their own lives and outside the church. Examples include:

- a regular list of tips printed in the church notice sheet
- participation in a church environment group
- conducting or participating in a workshop which teaches and encourages people to make their lives more sustainable
- organising a carpool to church
- encouraging the sharing of resources – an excess garden produce swap, register of items people are happy to lend, babysitting trading scheme.

### 5.4 Mission/Outreach

Conduct one event to demonstrate the church's commitment to being a "green" church. This could involve one of the following or similar:

- Organise a meeting of church representatives to visit your local MP
- Have a 'Green Film Night'
- Hold a panel discussion or debate on climate change
- Get your church involved with a community event on climate change
- Organise a forum for the local community on an environmental issue
- Conduct a letter writing night at your church

## 6. Conclusion

Whilst climate change threatens to adversely impact on all of us, but particularly on those who are already impoverished, as a faithful people we have hope that a better world is possible. We are a powerful people. Our faith can equip us to re-imagine a world where justice exists. However we must acknowledge our complicity in our sin and actively world towards a better world.



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