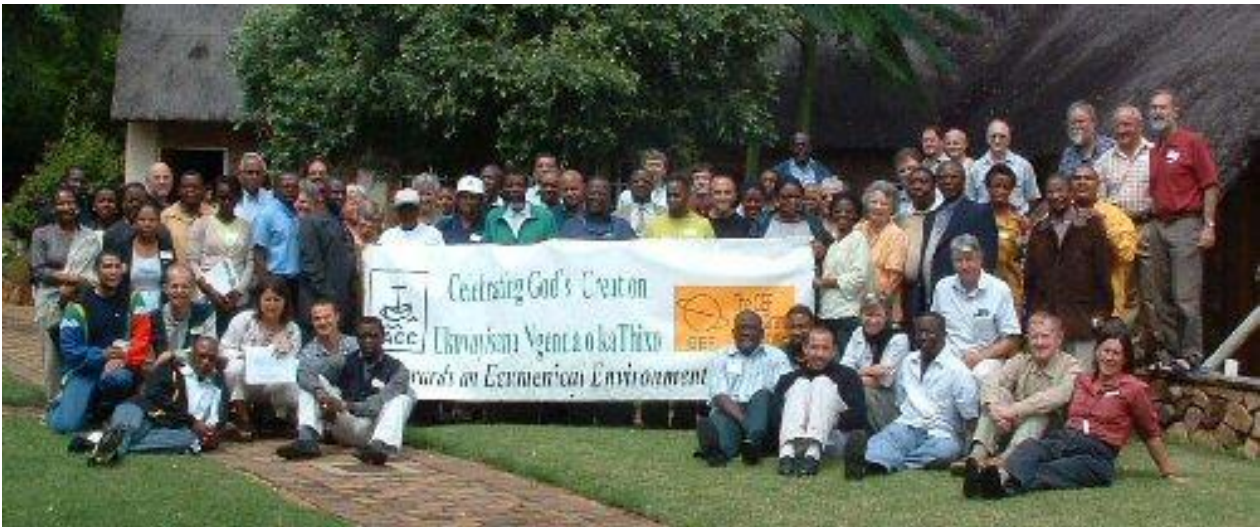


“Faith Communities Committed To Cherishing Living Earth”



A Report on the National Environment Conference for Faith Communities

The Good Shepherd Retreat Centre, Hartbeespoort.
14 – 17 March 2005

And a Progress Report For the Inaugural General Meeting of The Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute - SAFCEI -

Goedgedacht Conference Centre, Malmesbury
12–14 March 2007.



This Report is produced by
The Southern African Faith Communities'
Environment Institute
– SAFCEI –

Edited by Kate and Thandi Davies

March 2007

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ENDORSEMENTS

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M Tutu

"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.

I hope and pray that the Institute that has been established will strengthen and be empowered to play an important role in our society. 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 children are our future, as they learn the spiritual truths we espouse; they should also learn that our interdependence on God is bound up in our interdependence on each other and the wonderful world in which we live.

*I hope many will support this Institute generously.
God bless you."*

John Green, President of WESSA the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa:

"SAFCEI, with its vision of "faith communities committed to cherishing living earth", is critical to achieving WESSA's mission of "promoting public participation in caring for the earth" in Faith Communities where they gather in temples, mosques and churches. WESSA fully endorses the vision and work of SAFCEI and encourages Faith Communities and WESSA to work together in partnership to cherish the living earth".

Tony Frost, CEO of the World Wide Fund for Nature – South Africa (WWF-SA):

"We have only one planet as our home! We have no-where else to go. Those that influence over the way we think about the world have an incredibly important role to play. Our Planet's bounty is non-sectarian, it is not interested in the material wealth or status of the people on it, it is finite and it does depend on everyone to play a role in its care. Therefore the work that SAFCEI proposes is unique in its reach, critical in its importance and deserves the support of all those working for a cleaner, healthier and friendlier world."

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“Executive Summary”

How environmentally literate and motivated are the faith communities when it comes to caring for physical world which supports all life and which many believe God brought into being. What do theological texts say about the responsibility of ‘earthkeeping’? Is there a unique role that religions can or should play in the environmental crisis of the 21st Century? How can faith communities collaborate with environmentalists and civil society to add their weight to the growing voice of disquiet over the precarious state of the world? There has for some time been an urgent need for a forum to assist faith communities engage with contemporary environmental issues and risks. Environmentalists and faith groups are at last beginning to explore these questions together because they have, with few exceptions, only recently begun to talk to each other seriously.

Following the 2004 Jo’burg+2 Conference (a follow-up to the World Conference on Sustainable Development), application was made to the GEF Small Grants Programme for support to hold a national conference of all religions of South Africa to assess the present involvement and potential role faith communities could play in tackling the growing environmental crisis in South Africa. A grant was awarded and after much preparation and with the endorsement of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), a National Ecumenical Environment Conference was held at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre at Hartbeespoort from the 14th to 17th March 2005. This finally created an opportunity for the start an important multi-faith environment initiative.

The conference was a huge success, and culminated in a resolve to establish the ‘South African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute’ (SAFCEI). It was a gathering of people from all over South Africa, from many different faiths, together with guest speakers, who provided specialist input on a variety of topics. There was a wonderful atmosphere of sharing, communication and learning from each other. The various faiths included numerous Christian denominations, and representatives from Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Bahá’í and African Traditional Religions. There was also a written submission from the Jewish faith. All enriched the conference content with personal faith-environment stories and experiences in a spirit of openness and generosity.

The invited guests shared their perspectives and ideas on their work for environmental, economic and educational organizations. The specialists provided background information in order to promote a deeper understanding of the environmental issues and risks that face us in the 21st Century. From this well informed and knowledgeable position, members of faith communities were in a better position to make choices and decisions about the potential role they could play in caring for the world.

From the personal reflections in group discussions at the start of the conference it became evident that there were a broad range of issues that needed to be addressed in every community. People had identified and were aware of these issues, but in many cases they did not have the capacity to do anything about them. The aim of a Faith Communities’ Environment Institute would be to support faith communities – nationally, regionally and locally, to find ways of tackling environmental issues from their faith perspective. The Institute would aim to provide information and support to the faith communities and, where necessary, help link them with informed specialists. These networks would promote the building of knowledge, confidence and capacity amongst members of the faith communities in order to respond to environmental issues and risks in their different community contexts.

After introductions, the programme started with presentations on a broad range of environmental and eco-justice issues. Religious leaders then shared their own faith perspective on the environment. After a series of small break-away discussion groups, plenary gatherings discussed and debated 'The Way Forward' with further input on the 'sustainable development' discourse and approaches to active participation and environmental education amongst the faith community sector.

During the final discussions, the conference participants proposed and endorsed the establishment of a 'Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute' with Bishop Geoff Davies elected as convenor and co-ordinator. The Hartbeespoort Declaration and a press statement were formulated by the participants before the proceedings ended.

The conference was infused with multi-faith prayer, worship and celebration which added a deep ethical purpose and cohesive spiritual dimension to the gathering. Participants worked and shared ideas together in an atmosphere of generosity and common purpose which is rarely experienced in conferences. The tranquil surroundings of the Good Shepherd retreat centre provided an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation and participation.

A brief summary of the conference presentations follows.

'Critical Environmental Issues'.

John Anderson (Gondwana Alive) talked about earth's geological history, biodiversity and extinction, linking this with how we humans are bringing about the 'Sixth mass Extinction' through our destructive habits.

Shaun Cozett (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry) spoke on natural resources: our precious and biologically diverse country and how industrialization, inappropriate and insensitive development and ignorance has led to habitat destruction, deforestation, coastal land degradation and the over-harvesting of resources. He also told how 'alien invasive' plants are destroying natural vegetation and described the benefits and success of the Working for Water Programme.

Elin Lorimer (SA Climate Action Network) spoke about energy and Climate change and how our inefficient use of energy and over-reliance on fossil fuels are contributing to the problem. She discussed some of the global implications – particularly the impact of global warming on the poorest sectors of society.

Mariam Mayet (African Centre for Biodiversity) talked about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), which are posing an incalculable risk and threat to natural biodiversity and indigenous varieties of seed, with little or no monitoring of their impact on people's health.

'Critical Eco-Justice Issues.'

Victor Munnik (Environmental Monitoring Group) spoke about environmental justice, quoting the World Social Forum slogan: "solidarity in diversity, and diversity in solidarity." He stressed that although we are all from diverse cultures and backgrounds, this conference is providing an opportunity for everyone to come together spiritually, to work together for environmental and social justice.

Mashile Palane (Earthlife Africa) discussed the potential negative impacts of the nuclear industry on health, human and environmental wellbeing. He mentioned the under-developed possibilities of alternative renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and gas.

Riaz Tayob (Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute - SEATINI) talked on Economic Justice. He highlighted how the World Trade Organization is able to dictate what a country can and can't do in terms of economic development and how this relates to the environment. "The WTO agreement permits the average African to live on less than \$1 a day, the average European cow to live on \$2 per day and the average Japanese cow to live on \$4 per day". He stated that the 'money system' is central. Unless we tackle the money system, our value

system, environmental system, production system and consumption system are all at risk of corruption.

Religious Perspectives

Professor Ernst Conradie, (Department of Religion and Theology, University of the Western Cape and Minister of the Uniting Reform Church of Southern Africa) shared a detailed critique of the many reasons why Christians, as Christians, should engage in earthkeeping. He also endorsed the importance that *all* religions should contribute to that which is bigger than any one religion, namely, the earth.

Rabbi Hillel Avidan In a written submission, the Liberal Jewish Perspective on the environment was explained. Environmental concern is concomitant with the cardinal belief in One Creator who is anxious to include humanity in an ongoing programme of planetary care.

Dr Dorie Moodley spoke on the Hindu perspective, saying that Hinduism believes that every individual carries dharma and karma. Dharma upholds evolution and when this process is intercepted by wrong-doing the power of dharma manifests in disorder. When this situation begins to lose its natural pattern then it endangers the fullness of life. While we require economic development for our well-being, social and appropriate sustainable development is just as important. It is in nobody's interest to destroy the earth's natural resources.

Roselyn Mazibuko (Bahá'í National Office of Social and Economic Development) represented the Bahá'í viewpoint. She listed the basic Bahá'í **principles**, stating that if all the people in the world apply them in their daily lives, the imbalances humans have created in the environment would become less severe. The pattern is very simple and world-embracing, yet adaptable to the local needs and conditions of each region and people. The Bahá'í community is working to bring about transformation in human values and understanding.

Mahomed Karodia presented a written paper and spoke on Islam and the environment. He affirmed that God is the creator of the universe and that we are trustees of that creation, with a duty to ensure that the earth's resources are not abused. There must be a strong link between *faith* and active social conscience. We also have a divine and social obligation to care for the environment. Natural resources are a gift to 'man' which must be used judiciously for benefit. 'Man' is given *authority* by Allah in the Quran, but this *right* must be engendered by an equal act of moral *responsibility* to co-exist with nature.

Peter Just commented on some of the Buddha's teachings emphasizing that all life, human, animal and plant, is precious. Just as a mirror has the inherent ability to reflect, so have all sentient beings Buddha nature within them, We also need to apply ourselves in a 'right' or appropriate manner with regard to our understanding, our thoughts, our speech, our actions, our livelihood, our effort, our mindfulness and our concentration. By just looking at the aspect of right livelihood we can already see that some professions are considered inappropriate or 'not right'. Usually these are the professions that revolve around the trade of flesh, chemicals and armaments or weapons. It is quite clear that all of these invariably also contribute to the deterioration of our living or the natural environment. To live right then, we should strive to be more prudent and conservative with our environment, than as extravagant and destructive as we have been.

'Ethical and Development Challenges'

Leanne Seeliger ((Environmental Ethics Unit, Philosophy Department, Stellenbosch University) tackled why ethics and morals should be brought into research and development including and involving all stakeholders. She said that research and development requires ethically acceptable and morally justifiable structures. Various causes of unethical behaviour, such as conflicts of interest, ineffective legal institutional frameworks and a lack of good governance and capacity are the sort of structural problems that ethical development faces.

Peter Croal (Calabash Programme) explained that 'Calabash' is a capacity building programme in Southern Africa to help local communities grapple with issues of rights and development. He gave his presentation on the importance of involving local people in decision making and public

participation. “As Mr Mandela said, community action and participation is fundamental to the success of all our efforts at reconstruction and development”. Many people however don’t know their rights, especially in rural communities, and the organization

Motsi Leballo (UNDP) spoke of sustainable development and the UNDP, which focuses on and finds the links between poverty, HIV/AIDS, and the environment. He stated that it is critical for there to be harmony between development and the environment. This is something faith based organizations and civil society can involve themselves in. They can play a crucial role engaging and informing government and communities at large.

Bishop Geoff Davies (Anglican Bishop and South African Council of Churches- SACC) spoke on ethics and economics, and how we tend to view the world and its resources from an anthropocentric perspective. We need to get away from thinking entirely of self gratification and making money, and consider that every creature - every animal, every plant – has a right to survive, and that their survival is important to God. He talked of the ethics of public and democratic participation: it is *unethical* not to involve local communities and the environment in development projects.

Professor Jacklyn Cock (Department of Sociology, WITS University) began her presentation on environmental justice by saying that the church is in a remarkably strong position to stand up for the environment because it has moral authority and historical tradition which gives it the capacity to reach the highest levels of policy and decision making in our society. At the same time it also has grass roots capacity. People trust the church for leadership, direction, and an ethical source of how to live. She stated that environmental justice does not only exist in game parks and nature reserves. We engage with nature every day in the water we drink, the food we eat and how we live our lives. These are ethical questions which need to be addressed when considering the place of the human species in the wider array of things.

Nirmala Nair (Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives - ZERI) then spoke on ‘shifting our paradigms’ – changing the way we think about sustainability and development. Solutions for development have to be found locally, with local expertise and local resources and through integrating local peoples’ knowledge-systems. One of the basic tenets of ‘ZERI’ is: ‘Earth cannot produce more – we must learn to do more with what Earth is producing’. We need to think out of the box to find local solutions to local – and global problems. She also said we should stop thinking in terms of solo-mentality – combine all authorities and talk to each other.

‘Education for Sustainable Development’

Shepherd Urenje (Southern African Development Community SADC – Environmental Education.) informed the conference that the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was declared in 2004. He noted that the economy, society and the environment are all intricately linked. Without all three, sustainability is not possible. He stressed that education for sustainable development is not possible without improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Kate Davies (Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa - EEASA) said that one of the goals of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainability is that environmental education should be expanded beyond the formal education sector into non-formal and adult learning. She noted how uncommon it is for faith groups to be actively involved in environmental activities in spite of there being strong moral and ethical reasons for us to care for creation. She shared some ideas about auditing the status on the environmental activities in faith communities and thoughts about an eco-congregation programme.

Allen Goddard (A Rocha) talked of his projects – including the Student’s Christian Organisation, and how through the SCO, students are introduced to the doctrine of Creation and Stewardship – and the importance of caring for what God has given us to look after. A Rocha South Africa tries to get alongside communities, schools and faith communities providing education to help people understand what is happening with regard to environmental and climate change and encourage them to take action. A Rocha aims to demonstrate the love of God in cross-cultural community conservation work.

Andrew Warmback (The Network for Earth-keeping Christian Communities in South Africa NECCSA) explained that NECCSA provides a network for local Christian congregations, communities, groups and organizations, as well as interested individuals, to engage with one another over environmental issues. The purpose of the Network is to stimulate a concern for the environment and more specifically for environmental justice amongst Christians in South Africa.

Summary of events after the conference

Official Launch of SAFCEI by Nobel Peace Laureate, Wangari Maathai at Delta Park in Johannesburg on 20 July 2005

The Conference elected a Steering Committee which has met six times.

The work it has undertaken includes:

- Developing the Vision, Aims and Objectives of SAFCEI;
- Registering as a Section 21 Company
- Entering into partnership with “Kerkinactie” of the Protestant Church of the Netherlands and working with Christian Aid who have promised to help put SAFCEI “on the radar screen”;
- Appointing an administrator and project leader for the Kerkinactie Climate Change programme in the Western Cape;
- Opening an office in the “Green Building” in Westlake Park, Cape Town, with Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA);
- Establishing partnerships and contact with the main environmental organizations of South Africa and with the government’s Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT);
- Attending environmental workshops and conferences and raising the profile of SAFCEI through the media – TV, radio and in the press.
- Building membership with Faith Communities. This is the most pressing issue – that Faith Communities recognize and take on their environmental responsibilities.

“Opening and Welcome”

The Reverend Desmond Lesejane,

*Director, Ecumenical Service for
Socio-economic transformation
(ESSET)*

Desmond Lesejane chaired the opening session and welcomed all participants.

The Reverend Dr. Molefe Tsele,

*General Secretary, South African
Council of Churches (SACC)*

Dear friends, I want to start by saying that the proposal to host this Environmental Convocation was endorsed by the Executive of the South African Council of Churches, following a proposal made by Bishop Geoff Davies, who is a member of the National Executive Council (NEC). We explored what it meant, and the wisdom that came from the NEC was that it is important that we do it, not only ecumenically – but from a broad faith base. That is why the intention was that we should be more alive to this issue as one that goes across all faith groups. So on behalf of the NEC, which saw the wisdom of supporting this proposal from Bishop Geoff; President Russel Botman, who is very passionate about this issue – and also I would say on behalf of the colleagues representing from the National Religious Leaders’ Forum (NRLF) – I think it’s really a great occasion that we are meeting at this moment.

I’ve been struggling to find a way of characterizing the issues that dominate our times, the 21st Century. There is no doubt that since 1917 the twentieth century has been dominated by ideological issues. After 1948, with the emergence of the United Nations and the International Bill of Human Rights, human rights became the dominant the issue. So you could say, rightly, that the issues of ideology and human rights dominated the twentieth century up to the fall of the Berlin Wall – which incidentally coincided with the end of Apartheid.

As we begin the twenty-first century, people say that the defining marks of the 21st Century were actually when the Twin Towers fell – and those defining marks are going to bring about two issues: one is the issue of religion and faith secondly the issue of morality. It is not accidental that the last American elections were either won or lost around the issue of morality. Of course morality is not different from the issue of faith because to a very large extent people are willing to get it wrong in terms of ideology – but they are not ready to get it wrong in terms of morality and faith. That is why it has been difficult for John Carey to actually shift the allegiance of Middle America on the issue of Bush. Middle America would say: “We are not sure whether John Carey will fix the economy or not. We think he has got good ideas but we are not sure – but one thing we are sure about is that he is wrong on issues of morality.” Therefore they then begin to go with George Bush in spite of knowing that it is a big risk as far as security, economy and other issues are concerned. The significant thing for America is the issue of race. For example, was it not a factor in the last elections? That is why the majority of African-American communities actually voted with George Bush because at least they could identify with his faith and morality agenda.

Now, why am I raising these issues? I am raising them because, for us in South Africa ten years after our democracy, we've again been dominated by the issue of ideology and to a very large extent, one can say human rights, as defined by race. We have reached an era, ten years later where we need to begin to work with issues of spirituality, morality. We should therefore not be surprised with the issue of homosexuality. I had a talk with Bishop Geoff about what is happening in the Anglican community which is a sign that here is the world Anglican Communion which has withstood very trying times across ideological divides of the Cold War – but on the issue of homosexuality they are really, really seriously shaken. Now of course we want to believe that they are going to survive but that is another issue.

Therefore there are new issues that are emerging – whether we see them or not. We believe that not only did they emerge from 1994 but certainly when the world gathered in Johannesburg in 2002 for the World Summit for Sustainable Development it began to be clear. It is significant that about a year before, there was a similar United Nations assembly in Durban on race. That assembly actually has not had as fundamental and lasting impact as the summit that came the following year on the environment – and yet many people would have thought that actually the issue of race in Durban should have been more serious than the issue on environment in Johannesburg.

So all these things are beginning to say that somehow the Spirit is leading us to the core issues and define who we should be and how we should give expression to our Faith in terms of the challenges of responding to the needs and stewardship of Creation. It is very interesting therefore, that as we begin this century one of the first Nobel Prize laureates to be honoured is a person who has excelled in the issue of environment. Of course it is also significant that that person comes from the African Continent where stereotypes tell us that actually environment is at the bottom of the agenda. Yet here is a person who has led this agenda on the African continent and becomes the Nobel Peace Prize winner amidst many people who have done a lot of things all over the world in terms of peace.

Therefore it seems Spirit is saying: “Look at this issue!” It is in that respect, therefore, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches gathered in Accra last year (2004). The Communion of the World Reformed Churches gathered in Accra and they began to wrestle with the issues of Economics, Economy and Environment and I want to refer you to a statement in paragraph five where they are say:

‘Reading the Signs of the Times: We have heard that creation continues to grown, in bondage, waiting for it’s liberation.’

This was a way of doing Liberation Theology – or Environmental Liberation Theology. That is why we are challenged by the cries of the people who suffer and by the woundedness of creation itself. We see a dramatic convergence between the suffering of the people and the damage done to creation – and the link between them. To me it was significant that it was in Accra where, when you went around, you could see poverty staring at you. These people were able to make a link between the environment and the poverty that they saw. The fusion of the agenda becomes significant.

Paragraph eight begins to spell out the signs. They mention that since 1989 one species disappeared each day and by 2000 one species was disappearing in every hour. They look at climate change, depletion of fish stocks, deforestation, soil erosion, loss of fresh water, desertification - all those things. The interesting thing is in the next line which says:

‘Communities are disrupted, lives are lost, coastal regions depleted’ and they say:
‘Pacific islands are threatened with inundation and storms increase’

So we are beginning to observe that life forms are themselves in danger. Paragraph eleven then went on to say:

'We recognize the enormity and complexity of the situation and we do not seek simple answers'

It is from this point of view that we gather here as people of Faith. We do not gather as people who think we KNOW we can get it right. It's very complex! There are no easy answers – it is something that we must wrestle with!

We debated at the SACC the issue of the Wild Coast N2 toll road – the development of the N2 – and as we talked with the SA National Roads Agency it became very clear that there are complex issues related to tourism. In the midst of all those problems it is important that we keep certain things clear.

So it is in that respect therefore that you gather from different faith groups to start this conference. From the introductions we have heard, it amazing how much resourcefulness and how much consciousness there is across the board. I think many people don't realise that this kind of 'wealth' already exists amongst us. There is a certain presence in the Church about the issue of creation and we are here to bring it together so that we can do something.

Let me conclude by saying many churches would have wanted to be here, and as Bishop Geoff told us – had it not been for the Arts and Reconciliation Conference starting in Pretoria tomorrow. The National Religious Leaders' working group meets tomorrow and there is the Men's Event starting in Durban tomorrow. As some of you are aware, some of us have tried to go to Zimbabwe – but we have not been allowed so far! There are quite a lot of things happening.

One thing that is very clear, however, is that we are gathered here as part of this new awakening, this new resurgence, this new social movement of faith communities around the issue of environment in order, firstly, to develop new strategies.

We need to develop strategies of 'how can we'. How can we begin to organize ourselves to put the environment agenda into our own denominations and our own institutions so that we know it is there? How do we best do this?

Secondly, how do we continue to network?

How do we make this thing not just end here at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre but to become an ongoing networking forum?

Thirdly, how does this network begin to take up particular advocacy issues so that we can begin to develop campaigns?

But most importantly for us as a spiritual base – how do we promote the spirituality of environmental issues in policy making and also in our lifestyles so that we can begin to really make it? For example it's great that we have now in government the tree planting days and so on but to which extent are they part of our Sundays? How do we – on an on-going basis- continue to say that Environmental issues are Poverty issues? Environmental issues are African issues. It is not just a Western issue and for that reason, therefore, it is our issue.

I just think that this is such an important moment in a very humble way in this place. I have no doubt that it will go a long way in shaping the agenda for the Ecumenical Movement – indeed for the All Africa Conference of Churches, and if we are very successful also for the World Council of Churches, and other ecumenical formations in the coming decade. Thank you very much.

I know this is not the time for speeches. I have just been asked to welcome you. One of my lecturers used to say that you would know what a person was going to say by the way they greeted their audience. When they say: “Ladies and Gentlemen”, you know that it is a formal speech and you can prepare yourself. When they say: “Friends”, you know that at the end of it, there is going to be an appeal and you’ve got to put your hands in your pockets! When they say: “Comrades”, you know that there is some political bias and that it’s going to be around ideology. When they say: “Brothers and Sisters”, you can prepare yourself that it must be a Methodist minister and you’ve got to prepare certain parts of your anatomy for the next twenty minutes. Therefore I like to bless you as *delegates* of this watershed and landmark conference.



I think it is very appropriate that I thank Bishop Davies and the co-ordinating committee - that is, his family - for all the emails and faxes that you have sent us. The fact that this has eventually come together is really, really, really great. Writers say that nations and people are the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the consequences of those lies. But if they tell themselves stories that are the truth, then they are their histories for life. I would ask what our stories are.

Our stories are about a bruised, and broken and bleeding earth, and our stories are about a consumer driven society, a world gone mad. Our stories are about individualism but I trust that as we meet here, very near the cradle of humanity, that we will share stories about how we can heal this land. That we will share stories about our rich diversity. That we will share stories of South Africans who are resilient people. For ours is a land of mystery and of legends. Ours is the land of storytelling around fires. Ours is a land of powerful struggles against great, great odds. We are people who can sing at midnight. And so, as we share our stories, I trust that we would ask the question: “How would we make this planet earth a sustainable living place for all God’s creatures.

To add to what Molefe has said, I trust that high on our agenda will be how we as people of faith, are going to achieve the millennium goals. In the Christian scripture there’s a passage that says:
“The whole of creation groans, waiting for the sons and daughters of God to reveal themselves.”

I want to say again, that you and I are the secret of God’s creation. We are the sons and daughters of almighty God, and there’s no doubt that to heal our planet, we need the spiritual resources of every single faith community.

Talking about stories, I will conclude with a story. This story is from across the pond, of Sherlock Holmes and his good friend Watson. They were going out to camp for a night and they pitched their tents. There they were, out camping for the night. Very early the next morning, Holmes got up and said “Watson! Watson! Look up! Look up! What do you see?” Watson looked up into the sky and he had to give an intelligent answer and he said: “Well, cosmologically, Venus is a line”. Holmes said, “No man, No! Look up! What, what do you see?”

Again Watson had to have one of those intelligent answers and he said “Theologically? The heavens declare Gods glory.”

Again Homes responded: No man! Look up! What do you see?

And he said: “Chronologically, its 5:30, and very soon the sun will be up”.

The exasperated Holmes responded: “No man, look again! Our tents are gone. Our tents have been stolen”!

We all started off by telling in which ‘tents’ we find ourselves in. I trust that as we discuss each aspect of the environment, that our tents will be gone, that we will be here, under Gods great canopy and that we would work passionately towards healing our planet earth. I’m glad to announce that on the last day we were trying to get the National Religious Leaders to spend the last day with us, so that they can share, and take into their various constituencies, the end result of this conference, but unfortunately, we have only been able to get the church leaders to be with us on Thursday, so I trust that some of my colleagues and friends will be here on Thursday to share with you.

In conclusion, if you go to the Memorial Gardens in King William’s Town, you will find the following inscription:

“It is better to die for an ideal that will live, than to live for an ideal that will die.”

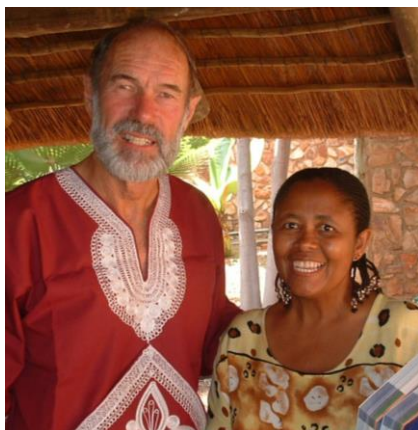
May we work together for an ideal that will live, even after we die. May God bless you.

Peter Croal

I’m calling on our ‘Root Guru’, our Spiritual Guide, to give us the faculties of tolerance, kindness and clarity of mind which will lead to wisdom and to guide us in these three days in our deliberations regarding our environment, ensuring that there is environmentalism and conservation where necessary, so that there will be resources for the future – so that our children and our children’s children will be able to also live comfortably and be able to sustain themselves – so that the world that we are living in becomes a better place, where there is greater acceptance and tolerance, where we can live in purity and can have regard and respect for all living beings. Amen.

Andrew Warmback

Heavenly Father we come to you this evening, we thank you for your presence. We thank you for leading us. Father as we’re gathered here, for the coming three days, we want to say that we have not taken good care of Mother earth. We’ve not taken good care of what you gave us to care for and we repent. We want to turn back to you and ask you to guide us as we lead our discussion, so that we may turn back to what you created, the glory that you created, so that our children and generations that will follow, may glorify your name, by seeing what you created. With this Father, we invite you to be with us as we go and sleep, so we may really focus on what we’re saying and doing in this time. We thank you for all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



“Where are we now?”

On Tuesday morning, participants were divided into groups, and had a few hours discussing where their congregation, their denomination and faith as a whole, stood on the environment, and what specific environmental and social problems and problems they were experiencing. The groups then reported back to the conference, identifying many varied and often common issues. These are summarised below.



Common complaints were the impacts of the mining industry, chemical pollution, mine dumps, and the oil processing. There was concern about smoke pollution and acid rain from coal mines, dust from old mine dumps and potential hazards from radiation waste from Pelindaba. These affect both the environment and people's health, causing problems like asthma, seizures, and other bronchial related illnesses.



In some areas agricultural land is being taken over for development. With profitability high on their list of priorities, developers seem to alienate or ignore traditional methods, and indigenous resources. There is an exploitation and abuse of the youth, which often leads to disillusionment, unrest and violence. Growing levels of poverty threatens social and environmental stability. There

were grave concerns over land rights and settlement. Often there are non-sustainable land reforms put in place. There is also a reduction in the numbers of small farmers and subsequent a loss of indigenous farming knowledge in the country.





There was also a concern over the unknown risks posed by Genetically Modified Organisms, and the impact this may have on biodiversity, of both crops and indigenous plants. A fear about the unknown and unpredictable impact of climate change was also brought up. There is wide scale destruction of natural and often endangered habitats like grasslands,

wetlands and forests. Wetlands are being filled to make way for roads, agriculture industry and housing. Development is taking place on ecologically sensitive land with no proper control and whole eco-systems are being destroyed. Littering continues to be a problem that is often blamed on the poor, although wealthier communities consume vastly more resources and generate unmanageable volumes of waste. A culture of consumerism can be blamed for many of our present environmental problems.

The lack of environmental knowledge amongst communities was also mentioned. This has led to the destruction of forests, over-harvesting of natural resources and pollution, because people destroy things without being aware of the consequences. A final comment emphasized the need for *action*, as opposed to all the *talking* that politicians indulge in. Community leaders needed to be raised out of their apathy and lack of interest in environmental issues because all life depends on healthy environments and healthy communities.

Many of the groups mentioned how they hoped that the conference would help them, as members of faiths, solve some of the issues that their communities were facing.



Tuesday, 15 March 2005

“Critical Environmental Issues”

Presentations:

Biodiversity and Extinction	John Anderson	Gondwana Alive
Natural Resources	Shaun Cozett	Dept. of Water Affairs and Forestry
Energy and Climate Change	Ellen Lorimer	SA-Climate Action Network SACAN
GMO's	Mariam Mayet	African Centre for Biodiversity

John Anderson

Gondwana Alive

Biodiversity and Extinction

I'm going to latch on to that theme 'Where Are We?' I wasn't here this morning, so I'm not exactly sure how that theme developed – but where are we? From a palaeontologist's point of view and from a geologist's point of view, we're actually in a very bad place! We are in the middle of the sixth extinction – and one of the problems with the sixth extinction is that if I ask an audience like this “has anybody ever heard of it?” Most of you probably haven't.



We share this planet with something like fifty million other species, but actually all are our family – we all have the same genetic make-up – we have the same DNA. We humans are essentially a ‘quilt-work’ of DNA of viruses and bacteria from three and a half billion years ago. We really are one family - we really are a part of nature which makes being in the middle of the sixth extinction (which is us causing the decimation of those fifty million other species) a serious place to be.

This, from a geologist and palaeontologist's perspective, is a part of our soul – it's the way I like to see our soul - as a part of nature. This is the last five hundred million years of earth history. These spindles on the right-hand side (of the diagram) are five hundred million years of the evolution of plants on earth. They are part of our family. They have just about the same genetic make-up as we have. If we destroy them we destroy ourselves - we destroy our soul. I think of our soul in that

sense. It is the sum total of life history that has gone through from three and a half billion years ago.

On the left-hand side (of the diagram) those red triangles are six global extinction events... Number five, the second-last up there, was sixty-five million years ago when the dinosaurs died out. They had lived for a hundred and fifty million years. A great asteroid hit the planet (as far as we know) and the ammonites and dinosaurs died out. About eighty per cent of all species on earth became extinct then.

Number six – the sixth extinction is at the very top. It is a completely different type of extinction. Instead of being caused by asteroids – instead of being caused by major eruptions of volcanoes or other geological events of various sorts it is being caused by one species escalating out of all proportion and occupying every corner of the planet.

Where are we? Where were we? On a small circle at the bottom of Africa at about a hundred and forty thousand years ago, we were essentially one small family of *homo-sapien-sapiens*. Now we have occupied the entire planet in the brief geological instant of a hundred and forty thousand years and we have caused havoc in those hundred and forty thousand years! We have essentially colonized the world three times. First as hunter-gatherers – and during that time in all continents other than Africa we destroyed most of the larger fauna by over-hunting it. The mammals of the world are just about all gone, other than those in Africa. Then from a second circle based in the Middle East from about ten thousand years ago we colonized the world again, as agriculturalists and when we started destroying ecosystems. Then finally, as industrialists, from the end of the Middle Ages, we have colonized the world a third time and we've truly caused havoc to the rest of the planet during that third colonization.

We can look at this a different way: a hundred and forty thousand years ago we were, at the bottom of Africa, one small family of *homo sapiens sapiens*. Since the printing press was invented in 1454 we've gone through all manner of revolutions and we are now here... are here... in a pretty, jolly serious place! Actually a very bad place. We seriously, seriously have to do something about it.

As a Gondwana Alive Society one of the things we are trying to do about it is to write an autobiography of the world. In our case it is about the Southern Continents. We have plotted out forty chapters of that autobiography but in the time available I can't possibly go into those. Essentially it is a history of our heritage: natural and cultural; of the evolution of plants and animals; of the evolution of us through those three and a half billion years. Essentially it is an autobiography in the sense that the earth is telling the story itself – the story is embedded in the corridors of the earth. Each of them tells a chapter of the story better than any other place could possibly do it.

For instance in South Africa, the 'Cradle of Life' to the 'Cradle of Humanity' - we are sitting over here right now. The Cradle of Life in the Barberton mountains is where the oldest known micro-organisms are found. It is from these that we were stitched together into a quilt-work. In fact if you were going to take a walk through geological time, the most comprehensive walk that you can possibly do is one through to Gauteng. We can walk from the Barberton mountains containing the oldest bacteria on earth to the Cradle of Humanity. By far the richest site is in Africa. It shows our evolution through various genera and species of hominid over two or three million years. There are a number of localities in Africa, where over the last seven million years we have evolved from the apes which have become chimps and gorillas. We diverged from them about seven million years ago in Central Africa and all the stages of evolution that have happened to us essentially since then, have happened in Africa. Good old Gauteng tells the latter half of that story better than anywhere else.

We wish to co-curate that heritage. The idea here, is to curate corridors as a solution to the sixth extinction. In getting to know these chapters of the biography of our soul, we will learn to want to preserve that heritage. We will wish to tell the world about that heritage and of course we would be doing it here – while other persons would be doing it along other corridors. It would be a global thing and it would involve everybody - the dignity of everybody in all fields of activity - and it would take full recognition of all other species that are trying to share this planet with us.

I have some Gondwana Alive booklets about a project that a group of scientists started in 1998 in Cape Town. Within it we have endorsements from several global leaders in the Sciences and Politics. On the back of the booklet we have excerpts from endorsements within. One is from Nelson Mandela. He says

“I endorse the ideals of Gondwana Alive because it approaches, as I see it, the very core of two concerns most dear to me – the children of today’s world and the children of tomorrow’s world.”

If we are essentially the children of thirty/forty/fifty years ago, we’ve got to hand over some kind of world to the children of the future and that is what that quote is about. We really have to find some way of stopping the sixth extinction and changing the way we do things.

The second endorsement is from Kofi Anan. He says:

“it is my hope that this book will reach out to all the people of the world and serve as a catalyst for action to steer us away from the dangerous course of ‘business as usual’.”

Of course it is ‘business as usual’ which is running the world at the present time which is exacerbating the sixth extinction and the sixth extinction is worse than it was yesterday. Tomorrow it will be worse than it is today and it is ‘business as usual’. All the structures that currently run the things on this planet – are ‘business as usual’. We simply have to find very serious ways of shifting away from ‘business as usual’.

Shaun Cozett

Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

Natural Resources

South Africa has a rich diversity of life sustained within its borders. I will look briefly at the range of life or the natural resources within the country and then at some of the threats and future of these resources. Finally, I will focus on one particular threat, which is invasive alien plants.

Let me start by telling a quick story- ‘One day there was a polar bear cub who went to his father and said: Dad, am I a polar bear? His father looked at him and said: “Well, you’re big, you have a white furry coat, of course you’re a polar bear!” He looked at his father strangely. Like all fathers, he didn’t know quite how to respond and said: “Go to your mother.” He went to his mother and said: “Mom, am I a polar bear?” She responded, “Well, you’ve got a big white furry coat, of course you’re a polar bear!” The young cub still wasn’t happy so she sent him to his grandfather. “Grandfather, am I a



polar bear?” “That’s a very interesting question,” the grandfather responded, “why do you ask?” “Because I’m cold!”

In South Africa we’re blessed with a great number of species. These are very diverse as our country has a wide variety of climates, weather patterns, soil patterns. Among the nations, we at the tip of Africa, are known as one of the richest in natural resources. The shoreline stretches from the border of Namibia in the west, with a cold Atlantic Ocean driving the coastal systems. The border of Mozambique in the east, to the hot Indian Ocean, supports our subtropical climate conditions on the east coast. All along, we have the rocky shoreline protecting our coasts from the raging ocean currents, and these are interspersed with beautiful white sandy beaches. Within the oceans, the myriad of life makes up a total of 60% of the global marine life.

On the land, which is predominantly semi-arid we find 4.6% of the world’s reptile species, 8.8% of the world’s bird species, 5.8% of the world’s mammal species, 7.5% of the plant species and of course the 7.5% includes the Swaziland Kingdom, which is regarded as a biodiversity hotspot. This area of approximately 42km² has more species of plant life than the entire United Kingdom. This, life, together with abundant minerals such as diamonds, gold and platinum, make up the natural resources of our country.

Given this diversity, it could be expected that we would take good care of our precious and invaluable resources. However, history has shown us that this is not the case. Excessive population growth over the centuries, but more specifically in the last 300 years, has led to urbanisation with increased demand for agricultural production and subsequently industrialisation in order to meet the demand for food, energy and commodities. In turn, this has led to habitat destruction, deforestation, coastal land degradation and over-harvesting of various resources - both in the ocean, on land and under the ground. Although providing food on a large scale, the agricultural production has also caused the removal of enlarged areas of indigenous vegetation and also the use of large quantities of water.

In coastal areas, communities have become dependant on fish and other seafood for their survival. The rate at which both subsistence and commercial fishing takes place has substantially decreased the amount of fish we have in our waters. Similarly numbers of land mammals have been reduced through slaughtering, culling and hunting for food and for recreation. Sadly too for trophies and animal materials such as ivory tusks. Large industries have been set up to mine resources of minerals which has contributed greatly to an economy based on resource extraction and sales. In the end we’re left with a legacy of large mine dumps, dwindling resources and an exploited workforce.

Because of this and because of population growth there has been an increase of the mobility both of people and species. Over the centuries, more than 8 000 species of plants were introduced to this country for various reasons including dune stabilisation, creating windbreaks, fodder, the tanning industry and of course for forestry. Of the more than 8 000 species, approximately 200 have become invasive. These invasive alien plants thrive in our ecosystems, by out-competing the indigenous vegetation for resources. These plants grow faster because they don’t have natural enemies and pests which control their numbers. The latest research suggests that the rate of spreading is around 8% per annum. It’s estimated that at present, approximately 10 million hectares of South Africa, equivalent to the size of Mpumalanga, are invaded by alien plants.

Aquatic weed such as water hyacinth, double in number every 10 days. In doing so, they reduce the amount of oxygen and nutrients in the water, killing off organisms that are sustained by that particular body of water. At the same time all of these plants use far more water than our indigenous plants. An adult Bluegum for example can use anything up to 10 000 litres of water per day. The

reduction in water, not only decreases stream flow, but it also increases the problems of water borne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea and dysentery.

The amount of wood produced by alien plants is also much greater than that of indigenous plants due to a more rapid growth rate. The alien plants also increase the risk of fire intensity when fires occur, and greatly increase the damage to property and indigenous flora and fauna. You may recall the devastating 1999 fire which swept through the Table Mountain slopes. It raged on for the better part of about 2 weeks and burned a total of 18 houses to the ground. Afterwards it was found that every single one of those properties had invasive alien plants on them. Research conducted by the Botany Department of the University of Cape Town has found that fynbos fires burn naturally every 12-15 years and emit $\pm 2000\text{kw}$ of power. Compared to that, fires involving invasive alien plants emit in the region of 50000kw of power. These fires cause great damage to the soil, often burning indigenous seed banks and leaving indigenous plants unable to re-generate without human intervention.

In order to deal with the problem, the government initiated the Working for Water Programme in 1995 for the purpose of bringing these problem plants under control. The program employs approximately 20 000 previously unemployed people every year. These people are employed for 24 months over a 5 year period which are the regulations as stipulated by the expanded public works programme. During this time they receive various kinds of training, including functional (which includes the operation of chainsaws and other mechanical instruments), social development, and business skills. Because of the hard work of our teams, Working for Water has managed over the last 10 years to release an accumulated amount of water, equivalent to a storage dam, back into the environment. Not all of this water that has been released has been for human consumption but it also contributes to the ecosystem functioning in other areas.

Lastly, a team in Mpumalanga, discovered a rare indigenous firefly on a wetland which had been cleared. The presence of this particular firefly is known to indicate wetland health. The presence of the firefly in this particular wetland indicated that life and proper functioning had returned after the wetland had been cleared and rehabilitated. Due to the success of the Working for Water Programme, we've also started similar programs in other areas such as the Working for Wetlands Programme which aims to restore ecosystem functioning and degraded wetlands, and Working on Fire, which aims to reduce the risk of veld and forest fire.

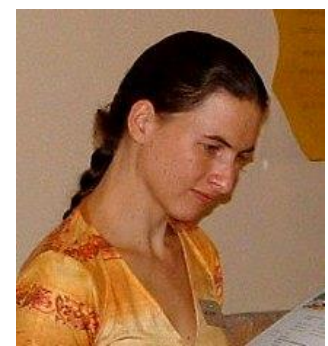
In conclusion, I briefly tried to show the richness of species in South Africa. I've also looked at the field of practice threatening the future of our resources and in particular invasive alien plants. My hope for our country and our world is that we will never have to acknowledge that famous native American saying in our country. It suggests that it is only when our rivers are dry and our ecosystems have stopped functioning that we will realise that money cannot buy everything'.

Ellen Lorimer

SA Climate Action Network

Climate Change

I work with the Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Project (SECCP) which is a project of Earthlife Africa in Johannesburg. I also speak on behalf of the South African Climate Action Network (SACAN). I shall be talking on both energy and climate change issues



together because they are interrelated. Part of our reason for needing to address climate change issues is because of our current energy situation.

It is interesting to analyse where we get our energy from and what our sources of energy are. We divide them into different categories.

One of them is *fossil fuels*, including: Oil which is what we use to produce petrol, diesel, LPG gas (bottled gas) and paraffin. Natural gas – is a fuel we don't have a lot of in South Africa, but we are starting to ship in and pipe from Mozambique. This can be used directly as a heat source, or to produce electricity. Coal, is very important for us in South Africa. Some people do use it directly to burn in their homes for heating, but most of it is used to produce electricity in our large coal fired power stations.

Another category is what I call '*unsustainable energy sources*', that is, those not from fossil fuels. There will be a discussion later on nuclear energy and on some of the problems associated with using it and why we consider it unsustainable. There are also problems with nuclear energy around environmental impact and human health. Large-scale hydro electricity generation involves the use of large dams for electricity production. There are certain criteria for sustainability with regard to large dams. These have been set down by the world commission of dams. Note that I put LARGE hydro in a separate category to SMALL scale hydro. Most of the concerns around large dams are the displacement of people and their environmental impact. Many people in South Africa still rely on firewood as a source of energy in their homes, this use of biomass is unsustainable where it is used at a faster rate than the wood is replaced. Obviously this is not sustainable as an energy source. It is damaging to our environment, particularly if we're harvesting indigenous wood from the wild as an energy source for industry.

A third energy category comes from *renewable sources*. These include biomass, small scale hydro, wind and solar power, both directly for heating water or for producing electricity using photovoltaic panels. There is potential in the future for developing ocean energy, using wave or tidal movement to drive turbines, and geothermal, using the heat of the earth. Renewable energy provides us with other options which we are not yet making maximum use of.

In South Africa we rely heavily on coal for our electricity production. We also get some of our electricity from nuclear energy and small amounts from other sources like hydro. In the transport sector we rely heavily on oil and oil products. There are many problems involved with relying on fossil fuels which relate both to our environment and to the inhabitants of our environment. The extraction and burning of fossil fuels produce excessive air, water and land pollution. Living in a despoiled environment will impact on your health and thus on your quality of life.

Another problem which is a little more obscure is that of access to energy services. There have been a number of campaigns, particularly around Johannesburg, where people are complaining the energy produced in South Africa is not reaching the majority of people. This has historical reasons, but is also around price and other kinds of access issues.

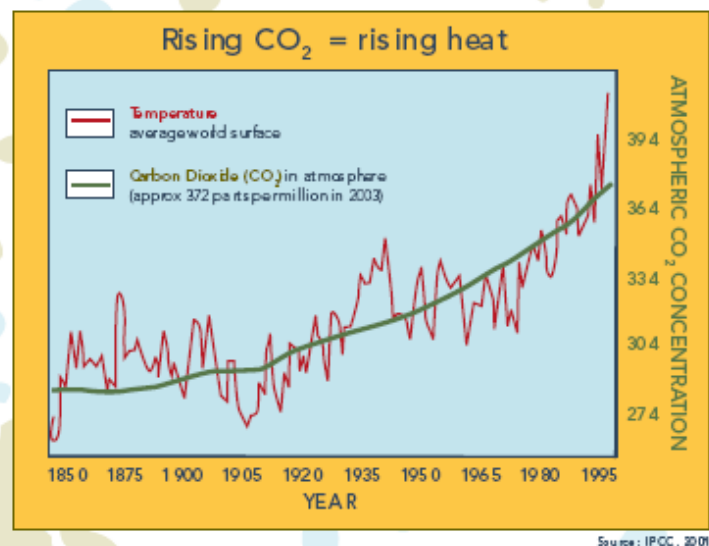
One of the ways of addressing some of these problems is through greater energy efficiency or energy conservation. Much energy in South Africa is wasted because of inefficient production processes. At the industry or manufacturing level there are a lot of inefficiencies related to energy use due in part to the fact that we have a cheap electricity source and industries don't value energy sufficiently. This encourages inefficient use as there is no incentive for industries and manufacturers to become more efficient.

Part of what we've been calling for is what we call "a just transition to sustainable energy" in such a way that we address people's needs first. This means improving access to modern energy services.

Part of the reason we need to address this issue is because of the problem of global **climate change**. Energy consumption, particularly from fossil fuels releases 'greenhouse gases'. The greenhouse effect is a natural system which occurs in our atmosphere. Some of the sun's energy that enters the atmosphere gets reflected immediately, but a lot of it comes through to the earth's surface and is trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gases. Although they occur naturally in the atmosphere, human activities have been responsible for increasing the number of the gases that increase global warming. Most of these emissions are carbon dioxide. Another major source of greenhouse gas is methane, which comes largely from landfills and agricultural processes.

Our natural vegetation acts as a safety net. Plants absorb more carbon dioxide than they emit, turning it into plant tissue. They therefore act as a buffer for us by absorbing the extra greenhouse gases. When we change our land-use practices and reduce the amount of forest or bush cover, for example, we are reducing the land's ability to counteract the greenhouse effect which will in turn impact on our climate system. Since the industrial revolution the amount of greenhouse gas emission has increased. With the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide and methane has followed an increase in the average global temperature. The last decade has been the hottest on record.

The impact of climate change varies from one region to another. Some regions will suffer from extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and hurricanes while some will suffer more generally from climate flux. As is usually the case with these problems, the poor are likely to suffer the consequences most because they are ill-equipped to deal with changing climate conditions and cannot move. Changing climate conditions will have serious negative implications for health and disease, particularly among impoverished people. Malaria areas for example are likely to expand with changes in precipitation and in temperature. The spread of malaria is largely unpredictable and so will have serious consequences.



Africa is extremely vulnerable to the consequences of drastic climate change. While some areas will experience heavier rains, much of the country, particularly in the west will become drier. This has serious implications for crop production. Temperature increase also threatens biodiversity. Studies show that some of South Africa's biomes will shift because of temperature and rainfall change. Where rainfall patterns change for example there will be a shift in the areas where those plants and animals are suited to live. With the changing rainfall patterns, the floral kingdom in the Western Cape, which depends on winter rainfall, will need to shift further south and of course further south we have the ocean, which leaves them with nowhere to go and the likelihood of extinction.

There is an international scientific panel on climate change (IPCC), which does much of the research behind this convention on climate change. South Africa is a member of this panel. There is also the Kyoto Protocol convention which specifies and attempts to implement how we should be approaching and tackling climate change. This covers the period until 2012 for industrialised nations. After 2012 we in South Africa we're likely to have projects under the Kyoto Protocol,

which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are intended to help us address our sustainable development problems.

I feel it is important, particularly in Southern Africa that we focus on how we can adapt to some of these changes, not only on an environmental level, but also on a social level. It is important that the public is made aware of and gains some understanding of the implications of climate change. Putting urgent political pressure on the government to adopt a policy towards the use of more sustainable energy in South Africa is also crucially important.

Earthlife Africa is a network of NGO's and CBO's inside Africa working on climate change issues. We are a regional branch which is part of an international network. We currently have around 80 organisational and some individual member. I invite some of the faith groupings to come and join us on working on climate change issues. We work mostly on policy issues with the government, but are likely to extend that and support our networks to do a range of other climate change work.

Mariam Mayet

African Centre for Biodiversity

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Thank you very much for inviting me to share some of the concerns that we have with genetic engineering in food and agriculture. As many of you will know, the science of this debate is extremely complex. I shall therefore highlight principally the socio-economic and corporate control issues pertaining to genetic engineering. I have- been working in this field for about 8 years and for the last 2 years with the African Centre for Biosafety. It is a public interest network that monitors GMO permits and keeps a check on industry and government in South Africa and the African continent. We have had tremendous support from faith based organisations and I want to thank all of you. It has been very encouraging.

I shall briefly touch on genetic engineering and what a GMO is and then discuss some of the contextual issues that require a critique of industrialised agriculture. GMO's are cause of great concern, particularly for Africa. GMO is short for a Genetically Modified Organism. In Latin America, they use the word 'transgenic'. They are a new genetic construct made in a laboratory. The new organism carries genetic material from another, unrelated organism or species that does not occur in nature. They are made by the utilisation of a new technology called genetic engineering. Industrial scientists like to fit GMO's into the framework of biotechnology. We believe this is not correct; biotechnology has been around for centuries, genetic engineering is something completely new.

It involves a set of laboratory techniques cutting genetic material from one species, replicating (cloning) it, re-joining to make a new genetic construct and then splicing it into the genome of another species. Sometimes 3 or 4 different genes – or transgenes –are transplanted by a vector into the recipient organism in order to create a species with altered characteristics from the naturally occurring parent stock. Terminator genes, which prevent the new organism from reproducing itself have also been developed.

The scientific paradigm within which our critique rests is that genetic engineering is based on a discredited scientific theory which suggests that one gene is responsible for the expression of one protein which is responsible for the behaviour of the plant or animal. We say this is discredited, because genes and protein interact in many different ways and on many different levels. There is

also a very complex behaviour or interaction between genes, proteins and the external environment. This is a far more complex system made by a higher order. Scientists are tampering with the building blocks of nature for which the scientific basis is very suspect.

To date there are only 4 commercially grown genetically modified food crops: soya, cotton (which is used as a food in some parts of the world), maize and canola. The genetic makeup has been altered in order to exhibit only two different characteristics – they are either insect pest resistant, or they can withstand large amounts of herbicides and are herbicide tolerant- or they are a combination of both. Eighty percent of all GMO's today are herbicide tolerant. This means that when a farmer buys GMO seed, a specific herbicide, to which it is tolerant, must be purchased with it.

All GMOs produced in the U.S.A. have to go through an approval system. However, there is controversy and criticism about the regulatory system pertaining to GMOs in America, because it is a self regulated industry. We have risk assessment documents from the F.D.A to Monsanto (the seed development and distribution company) which suggest that because Monsanto say the products are safe, the state is prepared to accept this certification. There are serious questions about the protocols used by the F.D.A, the E.P.A and the scientific enquiry around risk assessments for GMO foods. They are being viewed on an equal footing to conventional food. We believe feeding studies and toxicological testing are inadequate.

It is not possible to go into this in any great depth today but note must be taken that there is a great deal of controversy around the level of testing and safety regulations. For this reason, many countries around the world, including most in southern Africa except South Africa, have adopted the precautionary approach and have not accepted GMOs into their agricultural systems and have imposed restrictions on GM imports for food aid because they feel it is too risky, particularly to human health. This applies specifically to maize as it is a staple food in many countries.'

In the last 10 years since the introduction of GMO's in food and agriculture there has been very little, or no monitoring of their impact on human health. How can we believe GMO food is safe when it hasn't been tested? Safety can't even be monitored because there is no labelling of GM food. No-one knows how much people are consuming, over any given period of time.

We also need to take into consideration the environmental impacts of this new technology. Argentina, along with the U.S.A., has embraced farming with GMOs on a big scale. Weeds are becoming an increasing problem and farmers have to use a cocktail of herbicides to control them. In some instances, they have even resorted to using Paraquat - one of the dirty dozen pesticides! Monoculture agriculture and the growing of GMOs pose an incalculable risk and threat to natural biodiversity and indigenous varieties of seed.

Genetic engineering of food crops has emerged from the green revolution. It is industrialised agriculture that is concerned with increasing yields using mono-cultures on depleted soils against the odds of needing to control pests. The seed is being genetically engineered so that with it you have to buy the herbicide. GMO companies are concerned with making profits from increasing crop yields and locking farmers into buying patented herbicides. One of Monsanto's profit driving forces in the making of GMO's was the selling of roundup ready herbicide. To register a patent costs \$30 or \$40 million over a period of time. They have had to find markets for their herbicides and have also needed to deal with the pesticide trade market. Monsanto's roundup ready herbicide has now come off patent and China now produces a generic version which it sells to Argentina. The companies need to expand their markets to remain profitable.

Currently GMOs are grown by six countries. Most of the GMOs are grown in the U.S.A., Argentina, Canada, Australia (some) and South Africa. South Africa grows about 500 000 hectares,

an area that has remained constant for the past 3 years. However, this country has become a massive experimental dumping ground for the GM giants – massive, because of our bad legislation. We are importing millions of tons of GM maize from Argentina, mainly for the animal feed industry.

The big GMO companies, like Monsanto, who were responsible for making the defoliant, Agent Orange used during the Vietnam War, have bought up agro-chemical, biotechnology and seed companies. Over time, Monsanto has registered patents on transgenes and other constructs. This company now owns patents on much of what goes into the making of GMO's. Even new GMO's coming onto the market, through other companies are made under licence from Monsanto which now owns 98% of the GM market. Ninety percent of GMO's grown in the world are grown using Monsanto's patented genes.

Who benefits? If we look at the trade in GMOs, they are sold mainly as food aid and to feed the cows and pigs of the world. The same standard GMOs being fed to people suffering from famine in Sudan, and exported from Argentina to feed to the cows and pigs of Europe.

Where does that leave us? Much of Africa is giving GMO's a very cold shoulder. South Africa is not proving to be a success story for GMO's, even if the media portrays it as such. There is growing concern that the GMO testing that has been done has only happened in the USA where the regulatory system is dubious. There has been no testing in South Africa.

Agriculture in South Africa is in a crisis. Over a number of years, the consumer price of maize on the shelf has hardly changed. It has become harder for South Africa to sell maize because of cheap imports due to subsidies in the north which distort prices. Whatever maize is being grown, even by small scale farmers, can't compete with the low prices of these imports. Other problems stem from that fact that GMO maize produced here cannot be traded freely globally because of the bio-safety restrictions imposed by the EU and many African countries.

Tuesday, 15 March 2005

“Critical Eco-Justice Issues”

Environmental Justice	Victor Munnik	Environmental Monitoring Group
Nuclear	Mashile Phalane	Earthlife Africa
Economic Justice	Riaz Tayob	Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute -SEATINI
Gender and Food Security	Tiny Leshika	(Delayed – no written presentation)

Victor Munnik*Environmental Monitoring Group**Environmental Justice*

I'm very happy to be here, and I am very happy to see this movement, or institute, or mix of the two maturing. I am particularly happy to be in a place where we are able to combine our spiritual life and our spiritual quest with the quest for environmental justice. When I talk about environmental justice, I want to show how these 3 things are all the same thing. I am a practicing Buddhist but I'm not a Buddhist teacher, so I have to be quite careful what I say about Buddhism. Inside Buddhism there is a practice, what we call the 6 perfections – they are things like patience, effort, concentration and generosity. Buddhists have long lists inside every concept of 6 others and 12 others. Inside generosity there is a practice of protection. Protection is a form of generosity.



Activism is a form of generosity. That generosity of activism is sustained by the energy that you get from knowing that what you do is right. So when you are in an argument, you have the force of inner conviction. When you are overwhelmed, when you feel hopeless, when you feel that you are up against an international steel company that has only got a small interest in South Africa – which is actually a huge giant for the people that live next to it – then you have that inner conviction that you and your cause are actually stronger than what you are fighting.

If you look at the components of environmental justice, we see that environmental justice as a movement is a historical phenomenon. In Pietermaritzburg in 1992 we had the founding of the Environmental Justice Network Forum (EJNF) at the time of the Earth Summit. We invited speakers from all over the world. One of the speakers came from an urban social movement – basically a black American ghetto – and spoke to us about environmental justice. They also call it environmental racism. The basic point was that people saw that whenever there was a toxic waste dump, or wherever there was nuclear waste, wherever there was a dirty factory there were also black people, poor people, and powerless people residing there.

The second part of the environmental justice movement is that when these local struggles got to hear about each other, they started to team up and struggle together, and they started to see that there was a pattern to what's happening to them. So here's a good thing, but here's also something full of challenges, because as soon as so many people come together, and so many activists, people start to argue "what exactly is this pattern"? They ask who the enemy really is. Is it capitalism that is imposing all its externalities, all its costs on us as communities so that it can make a profit; or is it greed? Is it people who don't know how to run a steelworks properly, and don't care, and so they impose this on us? Or is it industrialism? Is it that we should live in a different way and produce the things we need for our life in a different way? Or is it patriarchy? Is it a way of thinking, that puts one gender above the other, and then starts that type of oppression? Or is it racism? Is it the white people from the north that colonised the earth and run it in a certain stupid way? And so you can go on... there are many possible explanations, and they can all be true. So I am very glad that we are in some ways such a mixed audience.

We all have come here, I assume, as people with spiritual influence and motivation, so we all have strongly held opinions, but we don't agree. We don't agree about the ultimate cause of being... I mean we can have really long discussions about all of these topics, yet we can also decide to work together. This is what happened more or less in the environmental justice movement. People said "Okay, we don't have to find the ultimate explanation. We don't have to agree about the theoretical analysis of the problem. We make a broad alliance, a rainbow alliance".

It has been beautifully captured in subsequently what has become a very big movement of activists at the World Social Forums, where their slogan is:

"solidarity in diversity, and diversity in solidarity."

So you take these two approaches, and you use them at the same time. People like it. We started saying that solidarity is a good thing. Diversity is also a good thing. In the German Green Party, for example, before it became part of the government, they were very diverse people. They had communists, they had "back to the land", people who were farmers who were definitely not communists, they had ecologists and they had feminists. They consequently had very robust internal debates and so when they went out of their debates and confronted other people, they were very well-rehearsed, and they knew how to defend their own positions, they knew what they could compromise, and they knew how to explain it.

Diversity thus becomes a positive and not a negative attribute. If you look at Agenda 21, the outcome of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, there was a conscious effort to identify all the different groups and the roles they could play. So there is a specific role for youth, for women, for NGO's, for scientists, for local governments. The implication is that we can work together as we are.

I want to end off by looking at this Environmental Justice approach. There was this distinction between a tactical alliance and a principled alliance. A principled alliance would be one working with people who ultimately have the same goal as you, so you are working together in one place after the other, and you grow together in the same direction. You don't have to watch each other, because you trust each other.

In a tactical alliance, you work together, but are ultimately going in a different direction. In this world of diversity and uncertainty, and maybe also humility, we don't actually know how the whole world works and we don't know what the consequences of our own actions will be. It is difficult to see the long term, but not impossible, because what you go back to then, is your own, can I say intuition – your own "gut feel" of whether you can work with somebody or not, something that goes maybe beyond the logical rational mind, but where the emotions come into play and so on. Emotions can also be very confused. So I want to stop at this point to encourage people to take this activism as a spiritual path, and see how we can do this together.

Mashile Phalane

Earthlife Africa

Anti-Nuclear Campaign

(A Power Point presentation)

What is Nuclear Energy?

- Energy from enriched uranium
- Uranium is a mineral
- Mined, milling, enriched and used as activated chemicals to generate electricity using a turbine
- Enriched uranium also used for nuclear weapons



- High level waste is radio-active for 240 000 years
- Spent fuel is part of the waste and remains radio-active - it can be used to make bombs

Campaign Background:

- Nuclear campaigns started early 1970's on the development of Koeberg Nuclear power
- Another campaign in 2000 for the construction of pebble-bed modular reactor (PBMR) in Cape Town
- Construction of fuel enrichment and smelter at Pelindaba near Pretoria

Support for the Campaign:

- Campaign is supported by COSATU; the Environmental Justice Network Forum; Earthlife; Peace and Justice Environmental Desk;
- Affected communities like Vaalputs (Northern Cape) and Atteridgeville (outside Pretoria)
- Pelinda Working Group in Diepsloot
- Academics

History of Nuclear Energy:

- Effects of Uranium were discovered in 18th Century
- Nuclear energy was researched in 1938 and developed to be used during the World War II
- 1945-46 nuclear bombs killed many people at Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- Cold war period many countries developed nuclear weapons

History of Nuclear Energy in South Africa:

- 1948 Atomic Energy Board was founded to sell, regulate, control and produce uranium
- Most gold mines have uranium – Welkon, Johannesburg and West Rand – as a by-product of gold
- AEB becomes UCOR, NUCOR, AEC and today is called NECSA
- During 1974, NUCOR develop six nuclear weapons to:
 - threaten the independency of African states like Angola and Mozambique
 - take power through military action
- The nuclear bombs were dismantled and stored at Pelindaba
- In 1974 Koeberg Nuclear station was built by Framatome

Development of Pebble Bed Modular Reactor:

- Retired AEC scientist was hired by IST to build nuclear reactors
- IST then brought German PBMR Model to South Africa
- In 2000 IST sold PBMR Model to ESKOM
- ESKOM form PBMR Company to pursue the project
- The funders are ESKOM (30%) and IDC (25%)

Nuclear Power Costs and Economics:

- Nuclear power industry in crisis:
 - Politics and economics of PW Reactors
 - No solution for nuclear waste
 - Fast breeder technology discredited
- International experience will HT Reactors:
 - Poor international record
 - Long construction overruns
 - Irregular performance record
 - Development largely abandoned:
 - USA, Germany, UK, France and Russia no longer pursuing
 - Japan – 30MW non-electric prototype
 - China – little indigenous development

- Economics of nuclear power – nuclear power and electricity liberalisation – cost structure of nuclear power, overhead cost
- Electricity is a risky business
- Monopoly situations gives rise to over-investment
- Liberalised markets do not allow risk, cost is passed on to consumers
- Risks minimised through proven technology
- Liberalisation turns away from nuclear power

Cost of PBMR:

- Feasibility study over R1,2 billion
- Estimated construction cost for the model is R10 billion which covers:
 - Overhead costs
 - Royalties for PBMR Technology
 - Cost of technology monthly/annually

Markets for PBMR

- ESKOM's assumption/rationale – Annually: 10 Units in South Africa, 20 Units for export
- There is little real investment in nuclear expansion – many European countries are committed to phasing it out. In the US there are no new orders after 1974. Asia is mostly committed to PWR's.
- Barrier to nuclear market considerable
- On world power markets PBMR competes with gas
- US safety licence is likely to be costly. In Germany there is no licence option.
- Innate conservatism of power markets militates against technology innovation

Health Impacts:

- Uranium radio-activity causes high exposure to death, blood cancer, gastro-intestinal disorders, bacterial infections, haemorrhaging, anaemia, loss of blood fluids, electrolyte imbalance, leukaemia and birth defects.
- Pelindaba: some workers have died as a result of exposure to radio-active chemicals; Hartebeestpoort dam water has been found to be contaminated with radio-activity; farmers in the area may have lost production because of soil and plant contamination; some of the current workers complain of illness.
- Koeberg, Cape Town: Ron Lockward was exposed to radio activity and has developed leukaemia; it is believed that the company has falsified medical records for the past 10 years; there are no emergency plans in Cape Town
- In Vaalputs: The community are concerned about the radio-active waste dump site. Concerned about radio-waste leaking and contaminating underground waters; loss of farming productivity; no emergency plans.

The Role of National Nuclear Regulator:

- It was mandated in NNR Act to protect people, property and environment against any radio-active damage or diseases
- NNR is an independent institution reporting to Minister of Minerals and Energy Affairs
- Is a 'daughter' of Nuclear Safety Council
- NSC is a 'daughter' of Atomic Energy Corporation as self regulator
- According to critics it is not independent
- Failure to monitor, protect and regulate radio-active exposures

Why Join our Campaign?

- To fight for environmental justice
- To strengthen our democracy
- To secure public funds

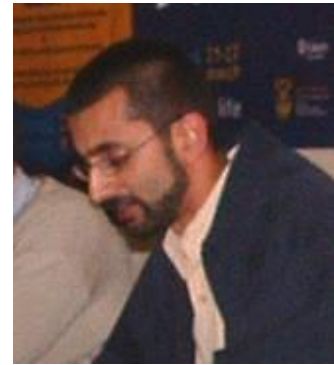
- To fight corruption
 - To develop alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and gas.
-

Riaz Tayob

*Southern and Eastern African Trade
Information and Negotiations Institute
SEATINI*

Economic Justice

It is really wonderful that this is an open gathering, and I want to start off with 3 provocative quotes that hopefully I can weave into my presentation, in what is no doubt the “graveyard shift” of this workshop today. There is a Buddhist saying, and I don’t know who it is attributed to, but it really catches me:



“the task before us is very urgent, so we must slow down.”

The task before us really requires hearts and minds, and I hope this conference can achieve some of its objectives. The second saying I want to use is from the Quran. And maybe I can link it to economics, and bring some inter-faith unity here:

“those who control their greed will prosper.”

And the final one that hopefully I can bring some light to in the presentation is

“one of the most gentle beings, Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, would turn the other cheek, no matter what insults were thrown at Him, or what challenges.

This gentle being walked into the temple, and threw the money-lenders out. And of course, one must give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s.

So the topic I have to address is economic justice and the institutions that actually rule the world. I’ll focus mainly on the World Trade Organisation, and will take some swipes at the World Bank and the IMF very briefly. When the world was colonised by the prevailing European powers, they generally took our resources, the resources of the people of the South, by holding a gun over our heads and forcing our people to dig the gold, which was promptly exported to their countries to fund the soldiers who would hold the guns over our heads, so we could dig the gold, so that they could export it... so that they could pay the soldiers, and the story goes on.

After World War II there was an agreement between the European powers. This agreement was supposed to be the International Trade Organisation (ITO) but due to American unilateralism, a phrase we are getting more and more familiar with, the ITO didn’t come to be. What survived was the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). GATT regulates the border duties that countries charge for imports into their countries. This was the primary reason for the wars. Wars are essentially about money and economics. So there was a need for regulation. Instead of wars, a diplomatic initiative resulted in the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade. South Africa, surprisingly, was a founder member.

So, international trade is based on one principle called non-discrimination. Technically it turns itself into what is called Most Favoured Nation Treatment i.e. if I am a country and I am giving a favour to one country, I must give it to all other countries. The second principle of Non-discrimination is

national treatment which says that if a product comes into my territory, I will treat it as a local product. Subscribing to GATT meant that countries that were essentially masters and servants or master and slaves went to a situation of non-discrimination. So, based on most favoured nation treatment and national treatment, everyone became my 'best friend'. The policy of the colonial powers was to forbid manufacturing in the developing countries or in their colonised countries. This situation continues today.

So it was no surprise that Gandhi, when he sat speaking to the vice-royal Briton, was weaving his own cloth. Britain had banned manufacturing of cloth, so that it would have to be imported into India from Manchester. Why? Because manufacturing brings economic development, and Britain's agenda was to under develop India, or to promote its destruction rather than its upliftment, for the benefit of the British economy.

In 1995 GATT became World Trade Organisation (WTO). There were a number of pluri-lateral agreements, but essentially it was about the trade of goods. The WTO touches every waking moment of our lives now. It has moved into non-goods issues. I will mention a few and then highlight the imbalances in the agreement. The agreement was negotiated by the rich countries over a period of 14 years.

In 1995, Morocco signed the agreements relating to the WTO. They had their documents for only two weeks before they actually signed the agreement. South Africa signed it while we were negotiating a very sensitive political transition. There was no public debate about our consent to the WTO agreements. The WTO technically covers everything from agriculture, services, intellectual property rights, goods trade, subsidies, and so on. It basically tells a country what it can and cannot do in terms of economic development. This in turn is all linked to the environment. In terms of agriculture, whatever we put forward in agriculture, whether it is organic farming or whatever, is an agreement that came down from the WTO. The agreement allows the average African to live on less than \$1 a day. It allows the average European cow to live on \$2 per day, and the average Japanese cow to live on \$4 per day.

When we talk about creating most favoured nation treatment and non-discrimination, I think the first port-of-call should be the discrimination between African people and European cows. Not that I have anything against cows, or European cows or even Japanese cows! There is nothing bestial about it. The philosophy of the agriculture agreement at the WTO is one that says "disarm and bomb", the same strategy that was used in Iraq. They disarmed them, completely, over a period of 10 years under Clinton, and then Bush went in and bombed them. Let me explain. The WTO allows Europeans to subsidise their farmers. These subsidies allow farmers to produce at low costs which reduce the price of their goods. They force us (the third world) to reduce our tariffs and our border taxes, so that when their goods come in, we can't tax them to compensate for the loss to our local production, because they can sell it for cheaper than it costs for us to produce it.

Africa has thus been forced to stop producing because the continent simply cannot compete with foreign producers who are subsidised. The WTO agreement has made the philosophy of "disarm and bomb" legal, and our South African government, I'm sorry to say, has been totally reckless. What is the point of giving black farmers land if they have to compete with subsidised European and American goods? You may as well give the land directly to the banks and save everyone the trouble. In South Africa, the price of cotton is sold at 40% less than the cost of production. Uganda has doubled production in coffee since 1980, but earns the same now as it did in 1980. This is what is coming; this is the preview of forthcoming attractions. This is an agreement that was signed in by an organisation that has supposed democratic credentials. The democratic credentials are what? One country, one vote. Why would countries agree to an agreement with such an imbalance if they had a meaningful vote?

I come to process issues. Services are now regulated. Things like waste, water collection, gambling, tourism, hospital services, dental services, everything. But the philosophy of the WTO in terms of regulating services is that you treat gambling the same way as you treat access to water and sanitation. So the same standards of necessity, the same standards apply to both. There is a moral problem with that. There is a real moral problem. In other venues I might not be able to make a moral argument, but in this conference, I certainly can. Gambling is materially different from water and sanitation or access to health services. This is what is being legalised.

Philosophically on services, what they are doing is they are ‘commodifying’ the common good. The underlying philosophy that they would have us believe, which in my view is pathological, that the collective self-interest or collective individual interest or collective greed of each person will lead to the common good, in the name of profit. There is something horribly wrong with this. Since services were liberalised in the WTO agenda, you would expect that we could export services. The only services we can export are our people. Only the developed rich countries have an export capacity. If I give you, for example, the doctor to population ratio per thousand, in America it is 2.8 doctors per thousand people. In Tanzania it is 0.04 and in Mozambique it is 0.01. Yet we signed an agreement that says it is OK for our doctors to go across because they are an export. They force us to treat scarce commodities as though they are not scarce.

On intellectual property rights: these are rights of patent and copyright. About 20 000 children die in Africa virtually every month of diarrhoea. Surprise, surprise, there is a cure for diarrhoea. These 20 000 deaths can be prevented, but they are not because of poor access to drugs, pharmaceutical drugs, in poor countries. People’s lives are sacrificed because of the immorality of the corporates. The corporates say you need to protect property rights via patents so that people will continue to innovate and discover new medicines. If you don’t give them the incentive to profit from their inventions, they will not innovate. As I recall, the wheel was not invented at the time when patent protection existed.

In terms of process, the negotiations of the WTO are really unfair. They have a process called “green room discussions”. “Green room discussions” are non-transparent discussions into which ministers are not allowed to take their advisers. This is the terrain in which international trade is actually unfolding.

The real problems that I want to raise are the motivators on why this is happening. The esteemed Jesus Christ kicked the money-lenders out of the temple. What has happened in corporate globalisation is that there is too much money. For example, in 1980, the total assets in the world were US\$12 trillion. In the year 2000, the total value for all assets in the world was US\$80 trillion. So that means there has been a 7 to 8-fold increase in the asset value of things. I haven’t noticed any new planets in the sky.

There is a prescription in Deuteronomy: *“thou cannot behold unto God if thou art behold unto a creditor.”* That is why we need a jubilee year every 50 years. But because we haven’t had a jubilee year, this stock of usurious wealth has just grown and grown. The Bible’s prescription of deflating the bubble every 50 years needs to be brought to the fore as an urgent necessity; otherwise this wealth that’s seeking returns is going to ‘commodify’ every aspect of our lives. It is going to totally corrupt our lives. We talk of a sex industry as if it’s normal. We talk of the trafficking of women as if it was normal and not slavery.

This stock of money is perverting our values, and that is why I was gladdened by the talk earlier that while the situation we face is so desperate, it is allowing – should encourage greater and greater

unity. So we need to bring back the jubilee year because the present system is going to tear down all the rainforests and everything that we know.

Most importantly, from the environment, it's going to tear down the nature of human kind. The nature of human kind as a social being, as a collective that cares and loves, needs an environment to achieve spiritual enlightenment. It does not need materialistic enlightenment that is based on a fetish of over-consumption, self-gratification and narcissism.

So to conclude, the money system is the central system that is the problem. Unless we tackle the money system, our value system, environmental system, production system and consumption system are all at risk of corruption.

Wednesday, 16 March 2005

"The Way Forward"

- Religious Perspectives

Presentations:

Theology for Earthkeeping	Prof. Ernst Conradie of	Department of Religion and Theology, University of the Western Cape and Minister of The Uniting Reformed Church Southern Africa.
Liberal Judaism	Rabbi Hillel Avidan	Chair, SA Association of Progressive Rabbis and representative of the Jewish Board of Deputies.
Hindu Perspective	Dr Dorie Moodley	Hindu Maha Sabha
Bahá'í Perspective	Roselyn Mazibuko	Bahá'í National Office of Social and Economic Development
Islam	Dr Mahomed Sayeed Karodia	Body of Muslim Theologians
Buddhist Perspective	Peter Just	Member of the Executive of the National Religious Leaders Forum - NRLF

Prof Ernst Conradie

*Department of Religion and Theology,
University of the Western Cape and
Minister of the Uniting Reformed Church of
Southern Africa*

Christian Perspective

“Why should Christians, as Christians, engage in Earthkeeping?”

I would take it that all of you are convinced that you should be engaged in Earthkeeping especially after a day such as yesterday. I hope that there would be very little doubt about that? But why should you be engaged in Earthkeeping in the first place? You will all of you have your own answers in this regard. I am also pretty sure that the answers you would be giving would be different from one another and sometimes even in conflict with one another. Some of you may be saying ‘well why worry about that, as long as everybody is convinced that we should be doing it, the reasons for doing so may differ. We can just enjoy the variety. Some people may even say that to achieve consensus on this may be impossible. It would be problematic because it will impose hegemony on everyone. I want to argue that it is nevertheless important to talk about this important question and I want to give you a few reasons why I feel this is the case.



Introduction: A lack of clarity

Is a rationale for Earthkeeping all that important?

Firstly one should not underestimate the impact of traditional piety on the environmental movement. There are I think at least four reasons from traditional piety that makes it very difficult for Christians to engage in Earthkeeping.

1. God’s transcendence: The notion that God is very high up and that God’s presence on earth is very difficult to identify so there is a tension between God’s presence and God’s transcendence.
2. Dualist anthropology: There are many Christians who work with what we call a dualist anthropology. The idea that human beings can be divided into two: the body, which stays behind, and the soul which goes up to heaven. That kind of dualism makes it very difficult for Christians to know why we should be involved in the earth. ‘Isn’t the soul more important than the body?’ many would argue.
3. Personalist reduction of the cosmic scope of salvation: Many people work with a notion of redemption, of being saved - That is entirely personalist. ‘It is me that will be saved – I will be safely in the arms of Jesus.’ People would say that they are saved *from* the earth – it’s not the earth itself that has to be saved. That has been a long standing legacy within Christianity.
4. Escapist eschatology: Many people continue to operate with an escapist eschatology – that is the proverbial ‘pie in the sky when you die.’ You will get this wonderful gift of heaven, one day.

For these four reasons think Christians have to think about the question: ‘Why should we be engaged in Earthkeeping?’ There are other reasons too. From philosophy, there are long standing

debates about what should be your basic underlying philosophy if you want to approach Earthkeeping in any way. I don't want to go into this but the technical names would be pragmatism, biocentrism, (focussing on life), ecocentrism, (focussing on the environment as a whole) and a variety of other radical approaches. I will return to some of them.

Within Christianity, there are many different ideas about why Christians should engage in Earthkeeping. I have collected a number of five or six typologies to at least get clarity. What are the main positions?' There are several of these typologies and to try to unravel them is rather complicated. Perhaps within this context are even more important, the debates on the relationship between Christian Earthkeeping and Earthkeeping in other religious traditions.

In 1967, an American historian, Lyn White published an article saying the root cause of the environmental crisis, should be laid at the door of Christianity. He said that Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt. I don't want to engage in this argument but for two or three decades, most people debated it and said that religion is part of the problem. Jaclyn Cock wrote a very interesting article in 1991 in which she indicated that most Christians or church leaders are not interested in the environmental issues and most environmental activist are not religious – at least not pertaining to the main line religious traditions.

The tide has turned. More and more people all over the world are recognising that if you want to change the habits of 6.2 billion people, you need to engage the worlds religions traditions. But how does Christian earthkeeping relate to earthkeeping in other religious traditions? There is a very serious dispute in this regard which should not be underestimated. I want to read to you something I wrote:

'Some regard Christian Earthkeeping at best as one particular manifestation of an environmental movement that may offer a contribution alongside many other religious traditions to retrieving the kind of ecological wisdom that we would need today.'

In short if you like, the earth is bigger than any individual religious tradition. Then there is a nice quote from Shaun McDonough, an Irish Catholic priest:

'There are no Catholic lakes, Protestant rivers or Muslim forests, we all share a common earth and in the face of a threat to the survival of the planet, we should unite our efforts and forget which institution should have precedence and other ecclesial niceties.'

The argument here is that all religions should contribute to that which is bigger than any one religion, namely, the earth. On the other hand, there are many people who would say that to be involved as Christians in Earthkeeping is one way of witnessing to the power of the Gospel and to the Christian God in the midst of a number of other religious traditions. The argument here if you want to simplify it, is that God is bigger than the earth and therefore to pretend that we belong to this one earth and that religion is one small part of the earth community is false because you have to understand the whole earth within the context of God. The question is then: Which God? And there the debate will start again.

Some will say there is this high God who is the God of all the religious traditions. Others would say No we believe in Allah or Yawe or in the triune God of Christianity. My only point here is that there are differences in this regard and they are not going to be resolved that easily. Moreover, we cannot evade this problem. If Christians are urged to engage in Earthkeeping in order to make a contribution to the collective effort to retrieve the generalised form of ecological wisdom, from the world's religious traditions, it will only be supported by the few who are already convinced of the need for Earthkeeping on other grounds. We will not be able to persuade Christians on internal

Christian grounds to be involved. If you want to persuade people, you will have to come up with other arguments otherwise you will speak to the old faithful who are already convinced.

I hope I have persuaded you to think about the question ‘why should Christians, as Christians engage in Earthkeeping?’

In the rest of my contribution, I will give you 16 reasons why this is the case. Each of these reasons could be a lecture on their own – in fact my paper which I prepared for this talk is 35 pages long and it is not finished so it will probably become 50 or 100! I don’t want to go into detail but I want to give you a sense of each of them so that you can see how they complement one another, but also how they differ from one another. In fact sometimes they are in conflict with one another. Don’t think you are in for an easy ride! I think you will recognise yourself in one of them at least. For me there are several are attractive, but be aware that some are in conflict with one another.

I have given a quote from the bible for each of them – not because I want to go into that but because I want to show you that Christians can find biblical support if they want to for each of these even though they are in conflict with one another. In Afrikaans they say: *‘Elke kette het sy lette’* – *‘Every heretic has a verse from scripture to quote’* and this is quite clear in this regard. Sometimes you have to adapt scripture to fit your own position!

I have arranged them into to groups. The first group is what we call Anthropocentric – they are interested in the environment because of people. The last group is less so – they are what we could call – non-anthropocentric. The first group is not necessarily Christian specific whereas the last group tends to be. Each of them has strengths and weaknesses.

1. ‘It is in our own best interests’ (egocentrism)

“Divide your means seven ways, or even eight, for you do not know what disaster may happen on earth” Ecclesiastes 11:2 (NRSV)

It is in our own best interests to care for the environment – it is obvious, you just need to think for yourself not only in terms of physical issues like health but even in terms of the economy. It doesn’t make sense to destroy your own resources so you need to be interested in resource conservation. In a quote often used: ‘We need to care for the environment or for the earth so that the earth can care for us.’

I call this egocentric because it is interested in the environment for ‘me’. There are many reasons why this doesn’t work out perfectly. Very often this kind of approach leads to the rationalisation of the use of resources because we need them now. It is seldom able to resist the tide of consumerist and aggressive economic activities.

2. ‘Simplicity is more rewarding than luxury.’

“Go, eat you bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has long ago approved what you do. Let your garments always be white, do not let oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, and all the days your vain life that are given you under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9:7

The second option is exactly the opposite. It says, instead of consumerism, and instead of continued economic growth, we need to retrieve the virtue of simplicity, we need to realise that to be simple is a gift. There is an old Shaker hymn in this regard. One can elaborate on the temple of consumerist society, all the excesses involved in that. I am sure all of you that are in the midst of the Johannesburg consumerist temple, desire that kind of simplicity and find it nice to be here at this retreat centre. The quote from Ecclesiastes illustrates this quite nicely.

There is another side to this which is not egocentric that says: 'We need to live simply so that others may simply live.' This is a quote from Charles Birch at one of the World Council's meetings. We need to live simply, especially the rich, so that the poor may simply live. There is a sense of simplicity - a demand for economic justice. The problem with this is that it remains egocentric. Why should we care for the environment? Because it is in our own interests. Except it is a very different answer from the first one because we will benefit from it spiritually, we will find peace of mind or spirituality.

3. 'We need to realise the value of wilderness areas.' - Nature conservation and wilderness preservation.

"They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9, NRSV)

In South Africa, there have been long standing debates on nature conservation. The Apartheid policies of the past were quite good for nature conservation in some respects, but devastating in other respects. There have been long standing debates about why we should have areas of nature conserved. There is now a very serious demand that nature conservation should take into consideration the interests of local people. There should be a symbiosis between land and people, especially people who used to occupy this land in former times. These are two contrasting positions that are sometimes supported from within the Christian context. One emphasises nature conservation for the sake of people. By contrast there are others who say, 'Don't get involved in nature conservation because eco-tourism is tainted by money.' Focus on maintaining wilderness areas where people are told 'Keep out, we need to protect these areas.' Why do we need these wilderness areas? There are many reasons. They are places where you can find food and medical resources in the future, and places of tranquillity; we need such places. There are a whole host of arguments. What I do want to say is that the logic for such pleas for wilderness areas remains anthropocentric. We need them because it is in our own interests – even if we don't recognise that. Maybe our long term interest – but it is in our own interest. There are people who say that we need to do this for the sake of the wilderness areas themselves but many would say it is ultimately in our own interest.

There is another problem with this plea for wilderness preservation. It will always be marginalised. You will never have 50% of the land kept for wilderness preservation. It will always be 5%, 2% or maybe you can push for 6%. It will always be marginal and it doesn't address the problem of the mainline economy and the impact of urbanisation and the demand for land for housing or agriculture on such wilderness areas. The problem is not the wilderness areas but the way in which the mainline economy marginalises those areas.

4. 'We need to think of our grandchildren' (The rights of future generations).

"...The Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments" Deuteronomy 5:9-10 (NRSV).

Our grandchildren have rights too – we need to protect the environment for their sake. We shouldn't use up all the resources now because we need to think of them. We shouldn't waste and pollute the environment in such a way that they will not be able to enjoy a sustainable life. For me this is always the core argument against nuclear waste. I think what will happen for 25 years we produce so many casks of nuclear waste – that in itself is bad but if we do this for 500 years, what will people think in 500 years about what we are doing in our interests? Five hundred years ago people in Europe and Africa left us with beautiful buildings. What will future generations think if we leave

them with nasty casks of radioactive waste bubbling and waiting to spill over and be abused for various reasons. We need to think of our grandchildren.

One of the values of this kind of argument is that it challenges consumerism that says that I want instant gratification of my demands and needs now. We need to think long term. Here, you protect the environment because it is in the interests of humans, not for its own sake – not myself but for my grandchildren and those who come after me. One of the problems of this argument is that it is very seldom entirely persuasive, especially when you are faced with poverty and shortages now. It always seems more expedient to ‘hunt for food now, even if it is in a game reserve, I can’t worry about it because I am hungry now.

5. ‘We need to consider the victims of environmental injustices’ (calls for eco-justice).

“Hear the word of the Lord you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring against you who live in that land: There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.” Hosea 4:1-3, (NRSV).

This is typically a human rights approach. In the South African Constitution, Section 6, I think, has a clause on environmental rights saying that each person in South Africa has a right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. This concern for the victims is born from the recognition that those people who are marginalised and oppressed in many other ways in society are typically also the victims of environmental degradation. These would include the poorest of the poor who live and work on the rubbish dumps and they suffer the consequences of a consumerist and throw away society. There is a movement in America called environmental racism which claims that the victims of environmental degradation are typically blacks, women, children, the elderly - environmental refugees, the list is long, We need to engage in environmental justice issues because we are concerned with justice and the human rights of other people.

There have been many documents and movements to recognise this. For example: In 1983, the World Council of Churches (WCC) formulated the notion of ‘justice, peace and the integrity of creation.’ They said that economic injustices (justice), peace (violent conflict) and the integrity of creation (environmental degradation) should form the heart of the social agenda of the church – and they go together. Very clearly these issues are linked with one another. Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF), has formulated a similar notion of environmental justice, saying that the way in which the affluent in their greed abuse the environment not only leads to environmental degradation but also leads to a situation where the poor have to suffer the consequences of the greed of others. For many this has been expressed in the notion of eco-justice where we say that economic and ecological justice cannot be separated from one another. We need to be involved in the one for the sake of the other. This is a movement away from an exclusive interest in human beings – but it is still part of the dominant rhetoric. We are interested in the environment, not for ourselves, not for our grandchildren but for those who are suffering the consequence of environmental degradation now.

6. ‘We need to move away from relationships of domination in the name of difference.’ (Eco-feminism).

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28, (NRSV)

A particular brand of eco-justice is the movement called eco-feminism. It is a very broad and diverse movement but I will focus on one aspect of it. We need to move away of relationships of

domination in the name of difference. Eco-feminists have argued that the domination of male patriarchs over women ‘housekeepers’, especially in the history of the western civilization, has been extrapolated towards the domination of human beings all over the earth. A distinction is made between human beings and animals. Humans have reasoning and emotion. There is heaven and the earth, God and the works, male and female. Can you see where males end up? Man on the side of God and females on the side of the earth. There is an underlying logic that once you make the distinction it allows you to dominate if you are in a position of power. Eco-feminists have said we need to unravel these interlocking dualisms – all linked with one another and supporting one another, and more constructively try to retrieve relationships of reciprocity, care, nurturing and mutuality if we want to address the problem. So we need to move away from relationships of domination in the name of difference

7. **‘Animals have rights too.’ (Animal rights).**

“Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” Matthew 6:26 (NRSV).

The argument here is that we should not only be interested in the environment for the sake of human beings. There is a distinct move away from anthropocentric reasons for why Christians should be engaged in earth keeping. The animal rights movement have argued that especially sentient animals – those that can feel – should be included because they are like us in many respects. We may think we are smarter than they are but animals can think, they have a degree of consciousness – maybe not self-consciousness -but they can suffer. 200 years ago Jeremy Bentham said the question is not whether they can think but whether they can suffer. If they can suffer, they have certain rights. As a result, animal rights activist have identified a whole range of issues that have to be addressed from the plight of chickens and calves on farms to experimentation with animals for cosmetic or medical purposes.

There are problems with this approach. Animals themselves do not honour these rights. Is this therefore an obligation that only applies to human beings? The other question – why some animals only? Typically animal activists would be interested in mammals – those that are sentient. Not malaria carrying mosquitoes that need to be swatted. It is the higher animals. This requires a sense of graded value with a hierarchy. If there is a hierarchy, who is at the top? Human beings, of course! Doesn’t a sense of anthropocentrism slip into this particular approach as well? Alternatively, you could say there should be equal rights. But then you are really in trouble because you can ask whether the HI virus have an equal right to exist compared to human beings.

8. **‘We have to show respect for all forms of life’ (Bio-centric approach)**

“You give breath and there is life. You let new life emerge from the soil.” Psalm 104:30

This approach is sometimes supported from Christian perspectives, most notably by Albert Schweitzer who coined the phrase, ‘reverence for life.’ He carried this in his own person life. Others, like Charles Birch, have called for the liberation of life. Paul Taylor has written a book called ‘Respect for Nature’ in which this kind of approach is embedded. What is attractive about this approach is that it does not work with a notion of rights. The language of rights can be tricky conceptually. Typically bio-centric approaches would say that we need to talk about the value of everything so. So, for example, even fleas add something to the ecosystem. If they have value, we need to recognise this as human and moral beings and therefore we have certain duties. This is a complex argument. Sometimes in bio-centric approaches, people would say that in all forms of life, people have an equal value. Alternatively they allow for graded values so higher forms of life have more intrinsic value than others. So chimpanzees would have more value than dogs because they are scarcer and more intelligent. A snake would have less value than a dog and a spider less than a snake. It doesn’t need to be like that but very often it is.

Bio-centric approaches have been severely criticised as being impractical. You can't protect every individual form of life. This is not the way in which ecosystems or the food chain operates – in the real world there is no way of escaping the fact that things eat one another. Some say the real problem is that it is too individualistic. It thinks of individual organisms. What we need to do is to think of whole ecosystems.

Also the notion of equal value has been widely criticised but if not this, there must be a hierarchy which has further problems. The revolutionary part of the Christianity is that every human being has dignity – that each has been created in the image of God and subsequently the notion of human rights requires equality. Every human being has equal dignity whether you are the queen or a poor peasant farmer. In real life it doesn't work like that, but that is the theory behind human rights. If you drop equality and say there is graded value then you are in conceptual trouble which cannot be easily resolved.

9. 'The land is more important than any one form of life' (Eco-centric approach).

"I brought you into a fertile land to enjoy its fruits and every good thing in it. But when you entered my land you defiled it and you made loathsome the home I gave you." Jer. 2:7 (REB).

There is a rich array of movements that recognise this approach. The indigenous African notions of the land, Native American notions of the land – the land is bigger than ourselves. Also in the Hebrew bible, there is a lot of emphasis on the theology of land. In philosophy, Aldo Leopold, a nature conservationist from America has often been linked to this approach. He formulated the famous principal that a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. We need to act in the interests of the whole biotic community. You can't think of the biotic community without the inanimate ingredients – water, air, soil, energy, minerals - that support life.

This is an attractive approach but there are a few problems – who is going to speak on behalf of the whole? Who knows the whole? We don't know the whole. Moreover, there is a danger that you could sacrifice the individual for the sake of the whole – the means justifies the end. Many of you would like the word holism but there is a problem. Do you know what the whole is all about? We don't know, we are human beings and we can't see the whole earth – not even from outer space. We see things from perspectives. Some people have even talked about environmental fascism, saying we sacrifice the individual for the sake of the whole. So on the basis of this argument, people who are senile or comatose or children with mental problems may be sacrificed for the sake of the whole because they don't contribute anything towards the ecosystem any longer. In fact they eat up resources which could have been given to the poor. So there are dangers here even though the approach is rather attractive.

10. 'We are all in this together.' (Cosmology, deep ecology, Gaia hypothesis).

When I look at the heavens, the moon and the stars, I wonder: What is a human being, a mortal being for whom the earth provides? An adaptation from Psalm 8:3

This approach is typical of a whole variety of movements. We are all in this together. That is why we need to protect the earth because we are protecting ourselves in the process. I have adapted this quote so that there is no reference to God. There is a nice quote illustrating the idea of deep ecology behind this: You can say I need to protect the rain forests and give all sorts of human reasons why you should do so or you could say: I am part of the rain forest, protecting myself. To take it a step further you could say that I am that part of the rain forest that recently started to think.

We are that part of it, we are not separate from nature, we are all in it together and that is why we need to care for the earth.

This is a complex set of factors. I remind you of the photographs from outer space. I am sure you have all seen and marvelled at them. Since we received these pictures 20 to 30 years ago, it has helped people realize how fragile and finite we are. How interconnected. There are no political boundaries. To see the earth like this has done something to our imagination. Someone once said that if the earth were much smaller than it is now, let's say a kilometre in diameter – somewhere in another place, people would have marvelled over it – tourists would come and be told not to touch because it is so incredibly beautiful. But because it is so big, we say why worry. Those pictures have done something to our moral imagination.

I now want to move to some more specifically Christian arguments. All the others can be supported from Christian perspectives as well if you want to but these that follow are formulated more in the language of the Christian tradition.

11. ‘God has given us the command to care for the earth.’ (Conventional approaches based on the notion of ‘responsible stewardship’).

“Be fruitful and multiply.... Subdue the earth and rule over it ...” Genesis 1:28.

We are stewards. I would guess that before you arrived at this conference, probably the majority of you had this as your core argument – an argument based on creation, on stewardship, on the divine command. It is a very persuasive argument but it also has a few problems. The notion of stewardship, many have argued, is too managerial. This is a management model that assumes that we are second in command. Feminists have argued that it is too andro-centric. It sounds as if it is a male thing to do. It assumes that we as human beings know how ecosystems operate. We don't really know. We are scratching on the surface. Of all the millions of species we have studied we have named about a million and studied very few of these properly. One of the underlying problems with the stewardship argument is that it doesn't have the imaginative moral vision that we need today. We need to see ourselves as part of nature. This idea still tends to separate humans from nature, creating a position of hierarchy.

For me personally, there are theological reasons that weigh even more. If you think of the word steward. What does it assume? One of two things: either the boss is away and we need to look after the business. But if we have a boss who is away – God – we have an absentee landlord for a God. That is hardly what we need! Alternatively, the boss is there and in charge resulting in a kind of hierarchy. It seems to me that the word stewardship comes from a bygone feudal age. We are living in a pluralist democracy. In SA we find it difficult to talk about kings. We have King Goodwill Zwelitini – but he is not in charge of our country. In the same way we do not have kings. We talk about the kingdom of God but we do not really know what a kingdom of God is supposed to be. A friend of mine, Bill Everett, wrote a book called ‘God's federal republic’ to make that point. So why do we talk about stewards if that no longer makes sense in our age? I will leave you with that – but just stress that this is a very powerful argument.

12. ‘The earth is a sacred gift to us from God’ (sacramental approaches).

“Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh, the whole earth is full of God's glory.”

For those of you who come from a Catholic or Anglican background, this twelfth argument may appeal. The earth is a sacred gift from God which we are entrusted with and we have therefore to protect it and call for a re-enchantment with nature. The Jewish-Christian tradition has been responsible for secularising nature, saying there has been this distinction between God on the one hand and nature on the other. In many other religious traditions, the earth is holy. Rivers,

mountains, streams forests, they are enchanted; the presence of the divine can be felt. Some Christians feel we need to retrieve a sense of this holiness.

In a book called *The Promise of Nature* by John Hauer, an American Catholic theologian, even though this approach is theologically very radical, moving away from ‘mainline’ Christianity, it remains curiously conservative in terms of its environmental ethos. It says that we need to go back as it were to those precious beginnings where everything was still beautiful and holy and where everyone lived in harmony with nature – the fact of the matter is that that was not true. There was never an age, historians tell us, when people did live in harmony with nature. The only difference is that there were less people and they didn’t have the tools that we have today. They destroyed nature not on the same scale. There was never a time that we lived in total symbiosis with nature. So it’s a bit of a romanticised vision – we are fighting a losing battle – it is not going to work to ‘sacrilise’ everything.

13. ‘The vision of a new earth encourages us to prepare this earth to be God’s dwelling place.’ (eschatological approaches).

“A voice cries out: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God’.” Isaiah 40:3; ‘See, the dwelling of God is now among humans, God will pitch camp among them.’ Revelations 21:3.

We can’t go back to Eden – what we have to do is hope for something different. The vision of a new earth encourages us to prepare this earth to be God’s dwelling place. One might ask: ‘What is your vision for the future? Where do you need to be going? We need to formulate a vision of the good society, a good society that has never been. Maybe the Jewish – Christian traditions gives us the concepts, the language that such a new earth is possible. The notion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation formulates something of that vision.

There are other approaches which not only talk about this beautiful society that we will have one day but formulates it in another language. I may add that I have written a thick book called ‘Hope for the earth’, trying to explore this particular option. There is one snag with this idea: even if we establish this utopia on earth sometime in the future, I think many of you would doubt whether this would actually happen. We know all too well from our South African experience that this new South Africa that was to come in 1994 did not come quite in the way we had wanted it to. It is more messy than we had hoped for and we have had to postpone our visions into the future. But even if it comes, what good would it do the rest of human history? Do we have to sacrifice all generations for the sake of that last generation that would finally enjoy the kingdom of God on earth? There is a problem here. Isn’t there justice for the victims of the past? What kind of justice? Maybe we need to retrieve something of a Christian notion of heaven in this regard but that in itself is a long story.

14. ‘We are members of God’s household.’ (oikos theology).

‘So then you are no longer strangers and aliens (paroikoi); you are citizens and members of the household (oikeioi) of God, built upon (epoikodomethentes) the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself the connerstone. In him the whole building (oikodome) is joined together and is built up (sunoikodomeisthe) as dwelling place (katoiketerion) for God through the spirit.’ Ephesians 2:19-22.

This is a different approach which tries to combine some of the ideas mentioned before. In my view this is probably the dominant kind of language at the moment in the ecumenical world, especially in the context of the WCC. It says we are members of God’s household – not the boss and not the stewards, but members. Together with all the other members, we have certain responsibilities and duties and we have to attend to. The notion of the household is very attractive. It is based on the Greek word, *oikos*, which is the root word, ecology – a discipline that investigates the logic, the

underlying principles according to which this planetary household is operating. Likewise, the economy comes from the same word, *oikos*. It is a format for the way in which we manage the human side of the household. So it thinks about the management of the house. Many people have said the problem that we have now is that the ecology and the economy is no longer in synchrony. The economy has to follow the rules of the ecology and not visa versa.

A German theologian has written a book on the Holy Spirit in which he talks about *oikodome* – he says our responsibility is one of building up the house. The quote from Ephesians 2 is his key text. You will see how often the word *oikos* is found in one or other form in this verse. Strangely enough, when people read this in church on Sunday, they would think of the church only. They would reduce the richness of this planetary household into saying this is only about the church. The notion of the household of God calls us to expand our visions towards a planetary household.

This has a few weaknesses, including the definition of the boundaries of this house. Normally when we talk about a house it has limits. It has people who are ‘in’ and people who are ‘not in’. It is a dilemma to know what it includes and excludes. There are also negative connotations about households, especially for people who haven’t grown up in a household or those who experience home as threatening – think of battered women, think of children – girls especially who have been violated. It is not an attractive image for many people.

In my own view it is vitally important that when we explain the reasons why Christians should be engaging earth keeping. We should not pick on one or other favourite verse in the bible that seems to deal with nature, with creation only. We should not to work with one metaphor - even the *oikos* metaphor, which I like very much. If we want to convince other Christians that they should be involved in Earthkeeping, we need to be able to relate calls to Earthkeeping to the heart of Christianity – which for my money and my life has to do with the Gospel, with redemption, with Christ and on top of that with the cross. If we are not able to do so, Earthkeeping will be marginalised. It will be a hobby for all of us here who are already convinced that we need to be doing it. We won’t be able to persuade others. For me this is a lifelong task – to formulate and reformulate the entire Christian doctrine, Christian faith, in such a way that it will become clear that when you say the word Christ, or Church, or the Holy Spirit, or redemption or baptism – that people will be able to think ‘earth’.

The final two options, I tried tentatively to do something based on two questions, namely:
What is God doing in the world? and
Who is this God who is doing something in the world?

15. Christians who are engaged in Earthkeeping confess themselves to be part of the history of the earth community which is shaped by the creative, hurt, corrective, redemptive and innovative love of God.’

The work of God: creation, providence, salvation, consummation.

The attempt here is to bring creation, providence, redemption and consummation all together in one. To make it clear that God’s love is for the whole earth community.

16. Christians who are engaged in earth keeping confess that this God has become known through the presence of God’s Spirit within the earth community, and most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ. On this basis, Christians trust that the origin, life and destiny of the whole earth community are in the hands of the triune God.

The person of God: Father, Son, Spirit.

Who is this God?

Rabbi Hillel Avidan

*Chair, SA Association of
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Liberal Jewish Perspective

“Where we stand on the environment?” (Written submission)

Threats of global destruction, through pollution and exhaustion of the earth’s precious resources, have pushed environmental issues towards the top of many a government agenda. Unless radical steps are taken to combat pollution and conserve natural resources, we may soon reach a point beyond which global annihilation is inevitable. Self interest alone demands that governments, industries, communities and individuals join in a struggle to halt and reverse all acts likely to endanger the survival of our planet.



For the Jew, ecological awareness should be prompted by more than self-interest, because Judaism has ever expressed profound concern for environmental well-being. Such a concern is a concomitant of the cardinal belief in One Creator who is anxious to include humanity in an ongoing programme of planetary care. The first chapter of Genesis (verse 26) grants humankind dominion over the rest of creation but that word ‘dominion’ cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of the verse or without reference to other Biblical and post-Biblical passages. The beginning of Genesis 1:26 tells that humanity was created in God’s image. We are therefore expected to image God in our dealings with the rest of creation – as God is just and merciful so should we be just and merciful.

‘The earth is God’s and all its fullness, the world and all who dwell in it’ (Psalm 24:1).

This theocentric view is reinforced by the regulations concerning the 50th year of Jubilee when all leased land reverted to its original owners who were themselves understood to hold the land in trust for God. *‘And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity* (i.e. the freehold shall not be sold) *for the land is Mine* (Leviticus 25:23). Such verses help the Jew to remember who is actually in charge. Acceptance of God as sovereign and humanity as servant encourages conservation of earthly resources, just as refusal to acknowledge God as *Adon Olam* (Sovereign of the Universe) leads to undisciplined exploitation of the earth and its riches. To clarify Jewish responsibility towards the earth and its flora and fauna, Biblical and post-Biblical legislation specifies a programme of action:

‘When you besiege a city... You shall not destroy its tress... You may cut from them but not destroy them. (Deuteronomy 20: 19-20)

From this prohibition were drawn many others which in sum total serve to prevent wanton destruction of anything useful to humanity. The judging of what is useful cannot exclude considerations of effect upon the environment because assaults against nature are also assaults against ourselves. Subsumed under the term *Bal tashchit* (you shall not destroy) are all measures likely to protect the environment.

God took Adam and placed him in a garden...to work it and to preserve it. (Genesis 2:15).

This verse entitles humans to work the earth, providing they also guard and conserve it. The command to let agricultural land lie fallow every seventh year (Leviticus 25:4) displays a sensitive

concern for the soil which is rarely to be found amongst modern agriculturalists. Obsessed with a desire to produce ever greater quantities of visually attractive foodstuffs (even in Europe where unwanted surpluses have been stored at enormous cost) the modern farmer exhausts soil and poisons crops with chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The consumer, human or animal, is likewise poisoned.

Modern consumer societies place enormous strains upon delicate environmental balances and the increasing incidence of ecological disasters should influence us to exercise greater restraint in our enjoyment of the earth's manifold riches. In a finite world, infinite appetites and aspirations are sorely misplaced. In our daily lives we must abandon habits which are injurious to the environment and adopt habits which conserve it. We are duty bound to persuade others to follow our example and to urge local, national and international authorities to do what is possible on behalf of the environment.

One of the greatest threats to planetary well-being is unbridled expansion of the human population which has already adversely affected the stability of most third world countries and added immeasurably to social confusion and breakdown in those countries, such as ours, which enjoy relative economic prosperity. Traditionally, Jewish teachers have cited Genesis 1:28 '*...be fertile and increase and fill the earth...*' as an argument against birth control but now that the earth has been filled with teeming humanity it might be argued that the commandment to increase no longer applies, though there remains an obligation to reproduce sufficiently to avoid extinction of our species. While certainly wishing to avoid coercion, and poignantly aware of declining Jewish numbers, Liberal Judaism nevertheless encourages voluntary family limitation. A smaller population will obviously use less of the earth's finite resources to satisfy its basic needs.

The stance of Liberal Judaism on environmental issues is essentially the same as that of other form of Judaism and indeed Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jewish leaders have all played their part in relating Jewish teaching to current ecological concerns. However, when we consider the degree to which our founders emphasised ethics, it is justifiable for us to assert that Liberal Jews have a special responsibility to serve in the vanguard of every moral struggle. Ideally we should stand at the very forefront of those who campaign for a healthier environment and at the very least work in concert with others who care about the future of our planet. *And God saw all which had been made and behold it was very good* (Genesis 1:31). The earth is very good and with the assistance of responsible humans it will remain so.

Dr. Dorie Moodley

Hindu Maha Sabha

Hindu Perspective

Today the individual is threatened by a world created by himself. The person is faced with the conversion of the mind of naturalism, to a dogmatic secularism and an opposition to a belief in the transcendent. He has advanced into science and technology and in the process has separated himself from the Divine. Today the whole modern world reveals the crises brought by living in a society which is determined by science and technology. Today, as a result of scientific advancement, our health and individualism is under scrutiny.

Much of humanity has turned to science-based technology as a source of fulfilment and hope. Technology has offered power, control and



even the prospects of overcoming our helplessness and dependency. Such large scale technology contributes to the concentration of economic and political power. However it has brought neither the personal fulfilment nor the social well-being it had aspired to achieve. It seems to stand out as a power beyond our control threatening our entire existence on a scale that is unimaginable.

Apart from the economic and social impact on the individual, toxic chemicals, deforestation, soil erosion and multiple forms of pollution together with continued population growth are severely damaging the environment. Our planet is in crisis and so is humanity. Computers, automation and genetic engineering offer the prospect of altering the structure and behaviour of human beings and living plants only to exacerbate unknown miseries. Most of us are not getting the best out of life because of the blind spots, created by science and technology, prevent us from reaching our goals.

Human health is directly dependent on a thriving natural environment. Equally the earth's environment is totally dependent on the health of other species and plants. So everything is connected in nature and any change in one thing has a chain reaction. Therefore all the concerns that are placed before us must be examined in this context.

Here is a Hindu scripture comment on poverty:

'Because of poverty, do not commit an evil act to satisfy your want, for such conduct will surely bring back again poverty and misery to you'.

Hinduism maintains that lack of respect to the universal elements would have harmful effects on the planet. Hindu philosophers are of the opinion that this universe was created by God and belongs to God. Thus, all life has an intrinsic value that is related to God. The Divine as given humanity a special duty to develop the natural world and take care of the biolife on the planet. No one should tamper with 'this switch of life' as it would result in the increase of certain diseases and contribute to new ones. The scientists are not guardians of our morality. Hinduism believes that every individual carries dharma and karma for his salvation. Dharma upholds evolution and when this process is intercepted by wrong-doing then the power of dharma becomes weak and manifest in disorder. When this situation begins to lose its natural pattern then it endangers the fullness of life.

It is becoming apparent that humanity has lost the battle of equanimity with science and technology. Human civilization is increasingly being governed by science that is on the ascendancy and religion and morality relegated to the periphery. Today, all living organisms are being equated to economic commodities which debase the dignity of nature and the natural life process. Under this scenario we are in a decisive moment in history and in Hinduism it is referred to as the Kali Yuga era.

Hinduism maintains that the universe is cyclical and such it is controlled by time. There are four epochs and the present is the final epoch. This era which began in 3102 BC would continue for many thousands of years. Hinduism maintains that all the iniquities that we have discussed and experience in virtually all parts of the world are due to this era where all forms of immoral activities are entrenched. The Kali Yuga corresponds to the beginning of the Modern Age and a lack of faith in the Divine. All miracles, yogic powers and occult practices are now being doubted by man in this age. It is an age where man is more engrossed in his material affairs and forgets the higher side of his godly half of the human soul. Thus materialism in Kali Yuga is the religion of Kali Yuga.

A second aspect of this Yuga is that man is more interested in his body and not his soul. In other words he ignores his higher side of creation. The consequences are what we see today – nation tries to destroy nation; man tries to kill man; brother cheats his brother; human race domination. Every individual is preoccupied as to how to make a living and not how to live. The rise and fall in man, William Shakespeare says

'there is a tide in human affairs which caught at its flood would lead us to heights of fortune and succes'.

History is nothing but human behaviour. If he can control his body and mind then he can control the future. To control nature you have to be above nature. The purpose of human life and organic life is a continuous, spiritual evolution and Yoga is the means for transformation of the mind. While we require economic development for our well-being, social and sustainable development is just as important if we do not want to destroy the earth's natural resources.

In conclusion I will read a quotation taken from one of the Hindu scriptures

'But if you will not wage this righteous warfare, then forfeiting your own duty and honour, you will incur sin'.

Roselyn Mazibuko

*Bahá'í National Office of Social
and Economic Development*

Bahá'í Perspective

"The environment and human values"

"The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."

- Bahá'u'lláh

"If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation."

- Bahá'u'lláh



The Basic Illness

The obvious causes of our current environmental symptoms should not conceal the nature of the basic illness. No single analysis of the problem of the human environment has exposed the root of the difficulties facing the world today: that the social structures of the world and the systems of values on which they were built cannot meet the new human needs.

Man has developed a new relationship to both his natural environment and his fellows. The radical transformation of his physical environment by science and technology during the last century has given him the power to control and modify natural forces. It has eliminated physical barriers to world unity; but it has created at the same time complex and divisive social relationships. We are consequently allowed the alternatives of either regressing to a primitive level of technology, or fulfilling the potential of a united world.

To achieve the latter - a world civilization - we must recreate our societies and their values.

Aware of the interdependence of the major elements of the world ecosystem — an interdependence evident also at the social, economic, and political levels — we are beginning to see that integration of life on the planet requires unified action on a scale we have not yet achieved. Partial solutions seem only to prolong the difficulties; yet we hesitate to adopt a new and workable system of values for the world. For until there is unity at the most fundamental level that of human values — social problems, simple or complex, will remain unresolved.

The Foundation of Human Values

Strangely, religion, which has traditionally been the area of human experience most centrally concerned with human values and the definition of man's purpose, is seldom considered in the search for solutions to current world problems such as those of the human environment. Yet religion (in the broadest sense) has not been static: new teachers, new movements have come many times in human history, providing new social and cultural directions for man. The major religions in particular have succeeded, at least for a time, in unifying many disparate elements into a common social force based on a common set of values.

Today our need is similar. A lack of understanding or agreement between men at the most basic level — their goals and purposes — undermines attempts at comprehensive and long-range solutions to specific world problems, whether environmental, political, economic, or social.

Man's predicament was foreseen over 100 years ago by Bahá'u'lláh, a Persian exile and prisoner and Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. Through His writings, which Bahá'ís believe have divine authority and power, He gave mankind a plan for achieving the human understanding and world order necessary to reform and unify human society. Many of the principles established by Bahá'u'lláh have immediate application to the problems of the human environment. In fact, the great majority of current world difficulties can be traced to our failure to observe the spiritual and moral standards and to apply the social concepts set down by Bahá'u'lláh, some of which are outlined below.

BAHA'I PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

An Ever-Advancing Civilization for all the peoples of the world with a reorientation to the quality of life that comes from an emphasis on spiritual values.

Harmony of Science and Religion, of material and spiritual values which deal with complementary aspects of man's needs.

Oneness of Mankind, involving the recognition that all men are brothers, and that prejudices of race, religion, class, sex, and nation must be abolished.

Unity in Diversity, accepting the differences among men and societies as assets, and uniting individuality with social responsibility.

World Order, including a world government representing all nations and peoples, capable of maintaining world peace and providing leadership for a world society.

A World Economy, with resources developed for the good of all, and an emphasis on renewable resources.

Social Justice, establishing equal rights and privileges for all people and the commitment of each individual to the welfare of his fellow man.

Universal Education for world understanding, based on the rational and independent investigation of truth, and leading to a sense of joint responsibility for the family of man.

Moderation in all things, including the material development of civilization.

As the people of the world are taught these principles and apply them in their daily lives, the imbalances in the human environment will diminish. The pattern is very simple and world-embracing, yet adaptable to the local needs and conditions of each region and people.

Already the world-wide Bahá'í community, including every major race, class, creed, and culture, and established in over 50,000 centres around the globe, is working to bring about this basic transformation in human values and understanding. Indeed, Baha'ís today demonstrate the practicability of this approach. As the Teachings of Baha'u'llah change the lives of people from all parts of the globe, uniting those from less developed and more developed regions in service to the human race, Bahá'í communities are making a positive contribution in creating both a world unified in its diversity and an environment promising justice and fulfilment for the whole of mankind.

A quote from Baha'i Writings:

"In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and inter-change of thought were well-nigh impossible.

Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindred's of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one.... In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent.

For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day.

Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century.

Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century — the century of light — has been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man."

Mohammed Sayeed Karodia

Body of Muslim Theologians

Islamic Perspective

Dr Karodia provided copies of paper he had written for the conference entitled: *"Islam and the environment within the context of globalization."* In it, he stressed the role of religion and culture in transformation. He believes that the tenets of religion advocate total respect for living and non-living things. The paper clarifies Islam's position on the environment. The Holy Quran categorically states that man is a 'Kalifah' (representative) of Allah in this world and should accordingly protect and preserve the environment. A number of verses from the divine book of the Muslims, the Holy Quran, which refer to natural phenomena are analysed and used to substantiate the role of humans in conserving, preserving and caring for the natural environment which was given to humans as a gift. In return, they must be the custodians and care-givers. A call is made to 'return to basics' with a view to achieving the ordained role of Muslims vis-à-vis their purpose on earth with reference to the natural environment.



Dr Karodia spoke briefly on the Islamic perspective of the environment:

I will try and highlight some of the main issues and I think you will recognise that there's not substantial difference between the Islamic approach and Christian church.

The first thing we need to understand is God who is the universal creator. Because He is the creator of the entire universe, so the creatures from this universe that are all part of creation, are held hostage. Humans have been empowered to use what has been created for their benefit, but as trustees. A trustee is someone who doesn't own things as a right but has the duty to be responsible for their proper management. Man, as a trustee has the duty to ensure that the rights he enjoys to the earth's resources are not abused, observing certain moral obligations.

There is a very strong principle in the Holy Quran about wastage and excess use which is totally discouraged. You should use to the extent that you need. There is a delicate balance between use and abuse. So the whole issue of responsibility is very important. There must be a strong link between *faith* and active social conscience.

Then also there are other responsibilities- which are divided into two categories. One is called **divine obligation**, and the other is **social obligation**, to care and respect for the environment. Natural resources are a gift to man which must be used judiciously.. Man is given *authority* by Allah in the Quran, but this *right* must be engendered with an equal act of moral *responsibility* to co-exist with nature.

When you pray, the place of worship must be clean. You need to keep your environment clean and you must have good personal hygiene. Before you pray, you have to do personal ablutions. You have to keep yourself and your environment clean. Then there is also the issue of mental health. Prayer, for all people, is very important in maintaining mental health.

There is then the whole area of economic empowerment and inheritance. The economy is one of the greatest challenges to sustainable development and mechanisms used to redistribute wealth. We need to redistribute wealth so that it does not get concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. In Islam, a strong emphasis is also placed on education. It spells out that one educated person is better than a thousand ignorant worshippers. It is that kind of balance that is necessary today, if we are going to be serious about sustainable development.

Another important issue is peace. Some countries are involved in fights, between factions and different groups. In the Holy Quran there is a very clear mandate that if any two groups are involved in conflict, there must be a person to mediate. Harmony must be established because peace is important. Without peace, we will have no environment.

Finally there is the whole issue of corruption. There's not only a moral obligation to honest, but there is also a legal obligation. In Islam there are laws about what you can and can't do. There are also penalties for violating the law. It's not simply a moral conscience - moral conscience is one part of it, but there are also strict laws and rules which regulate behaviour.

From an Islamic perspective, all these are key elements: education, personal environment, hygiene, mental hygiene, peace and trustworthiness play a role in our responsibility for the world around us.

Peter Just

*Member of the Executive of the
National Religious Leaders
Forum - NRLF*

Buddhist Perspective

According to the Buddha's teachings, all life, human plant and animal, is precious. All sentient beings have Buddha nature within them, just like a mirror has the inherent ability to reflect. When the surface of the mirror is clouded over by dust and dirt, then it will not reflect any image. But with the right causes and conditions it can once again reflect. Once it has been wiped clean, the inherent ability to reflect is once again restored. We too all have that ability to shine within us – though for many it has just not yet been realised. We all may attain enlightenment in this one lifetime. Even though plants may not necessarily have the ability to become enlightened, we should treat all forms of life with due regard and respect.



In order to be able to practise and to develop ourselves properly, we also need the right causes and conditions. Sometimes we have to create those causes and sometimes we have to ensure that the right conditions exist for the causes to be able to manifest themselves. The environment within which we exist is part and parcel of those causes and conditions. Although the environment can mean far more than just the physical aspects around us, we invariably think of the environment as the natural resources that surround us.

That natural environment consists of the five elements which are generally recognised as being present in all phenomena, including the makeup of the human body. We consist primarily of liquid (water), solid (earth), heat (fire), wind (air) and space or ether. Though the proportion of this makeup may vary, essentially all of the elements are necessary for a proper balance. Just as the human body consists of roughly 70% water, so our planet is approximately 70% water. This amount of water never increases or decreases, since we are living in a 'closed' system. However, the nature and purity (usability) of the water can change. The more we pollute it or allow it to become polluted, the less potable or usable it becomes.

Every living being requires a certain environment to grow, from the tiniest microbe, whether plankton or bacteria, to the largest mammal. Whether mentally the most developed and sentient being or simply an amoeba, all life is dependant on the correct environment in which to be able to thrive. Some bacteria cannot live and multiply outside of the human (or other living beings) body, and some can only do so when not being in that body. Likewise we human beings require a certain amount of water (moisture), the right amount of warmth (temperature), light (energy), food (nutrition), atmospheric pressure, gravitational pull, rest, mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual stimulation, in order to grow and develop optimally.

This can only be achieved under the right causes, conditions and in the correct environment. So we have to ensure that we have such an environment at our disposal. This is also why it is so important that we become aware of our environment, and what we, or allowing others to do to it. According to some sacred teachings the human being is the custodian of all that s/he perceives. Looking back, we have a pretty poor track record of custodianship! Note how many plants and animals have been allowed to become extinct and how many more are on the endangered list? They are not on the endangered list due to their own reckless behaviour, but because their human 'custodian' has not been looking after them as they were supposed to. That is so sad!

According to the Buddhist teachings we need to apply ourselves in a 'right' or appropriate manner with regard to our understanding, our thoughts, our speech, our actions, our livelihood, our effort, our mindfulness and our concentration. That is the Fourth Noble Truth, of the Noble Eightfold Path. In applying ourselves while treading this path, we also need to be tolerant and patient, compassionate, generous, and very importantly we must at all times apply wisdom! Considering right livelihoods, we can already see that some professions are considered inappropriate or 'not right'. Usually these are the professions that revolve around the trade of flesh, chemicals, and armaments or weapons. It should be obvious that all of these invariably contribute to the deterioration of our living or the natural environment.

The question should then arise why this is so, when essentially there is nothing wrong with the 'keeping' of live beings, provided they are not harmed. Nor is there anything wrong with weapons; they can serve a useful purpose if they are used purely as tools, for self-defence and not for destructive purposes. In an ideal world we would of course not require any such armaments or weapons, but we do not live in such a world. Explosives and chemicals can be beneficial in medicine or for road or other construction purposes, but nowadays we mostly abuse them.

In Buddhism we refer to mind-poisons. In their original form they were three, namely *ignorance* and *delusion* (*stupidity*), *anger* and *hatred*, and *greed*. In 'modern' times another two were added, and they are *jealousy*, and *pride*. It might be difficult to understand stupidity, because even though the humans are supposed to have the highest developed form of consciousness, we do not generally to display such qualities.

One needs to understand what is meant by ignorance and delusion. Ignorance is not having had access to the information, or not being able to understand anything about it, and delusion is having had access to the information, but not having understood it correctly. If we then take into consideration that we are essentially living in a material world, then the whole aspect of greed comes into play.

If we do not stop and begin to look around at what we are doing to our world, to the earth and the mountains, the rivers, streams and dams, the air which we all breathe, the plants and trees that provide us with oxygen, shade, and which also help prevent the soil from washing away when it rains, then we may soon find that we no longer have an environment appropriate for being able to survive in, let alone live, grow, and develop in. This is not a matter of each for themselves, and god for us all. This 'desecration' of our world is being done individually as well as collectively. It is high time we all took a stand on this matter, and began practising what we are preaching.

All sacred or religious teachings advocate to abstinence from harming all living beings, or to not kill or commit murder. All religions uphold the sanctity of life. Some may only focus on human life, which is better than nothing, but other aspects come into play which advise against the wanton slaying of beasts and birds and bees and butterflies, and also plants and trees,. This all is the sum of our environment.

Do we really, absolutely and totally have to mine all the gold, platinum, sapphires, pearls, titanium, on and on and on? Do all diamonds and rubies, and emeralds have to be surfaced for the pleasure of the human creature? Do we really believe that the day will come when we will sit back and say now we have a balance between our needs, and our means of provisions or means of providing? No, that is not going to happen in my lifetime! So why then does it continue to be done unabated? Quite simply it is because we are allowing it to be done. That is all that there is to it, we are simply playing ostrich. What I don't see can't hurt me! How preposterous is that? Even though you cannot see gravity and may not believe in gravity, if you step off the side of a multi-storey building, you will have a one-time very brief experience of the existence of gravity!

Greed is a colossal problem in the sense of wanton destruction. Everybody wants to be able to live, to earn an income and to be able to provide for their family. But very few people earn as much as they need in order to be able to live comfortably. Because of ignorance, delusion and greed, we do not stop when we have enough. Most human beings believe that they have to continue amassing material things, be it money, material objects or food. True, we should make provision for a rainy day, but that does not mean that the rainy day will bring the next great flood. Invariably people live to eat, instead of eating to live.

Modern society promotes and encourages this behaviour. Advertising and marketing have become so skilled, that they have us believe that what we have is insufficient, or else that if we do not have it yet, we must get it. They say you will never know what you had until you loose it, and likewise you never know what you are missing until you encounter it. At the end of the day it is all about wanting you have, and not about having what you want.

Our environment with all of its natural resources is to a great extent limited. We live in an enclosed, finite sphere. Only so many things are able to regenerate themselves. Most living beings are able to adapt and change with changing conditions, but that requires time and does not apply to all. So to be on the safe side we should be prudent and conservative with our environment.

“Ethical and Development Challenges as a Way Forward”

Presentations:

Ethical concerns in environmental decision making	Leanne Seeliger	Environmental Ethics Unit Philosophy Department Stellenbosch University
Public Participation	Peter Croal	Calabash
Sustainable Development Possibilities	Motsi Leballo	UN Development Programme
Ethics and Economics	Geoff Davies	SACC
Environmental Justice	Prof. Jacklyn Cock	Department of Sociology, WITS University
Paradigm Shift	Nirmala Nair	Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives - ZERI

Leanne Seeliger

*Environmental Ethics Unit, Philosophy
Department, Stellenbosch University*

An Opinion Survey of Ethical Concerns in Environmental Decision-Making in Cape Town and surrounds. Conducted by the Unit for Environmental Ethics

We embarked on this research following complaints that there was a general lack of ethical behaviour in environmental decision-making. Everyone was complaining about everyone else. Government officials, researchers, consultants, and activists, were all flinging mud at each other.

Many issues surfaced in the survey. Public participation was one of them. NGO's were blamed for deliberately delaying responses to the public participation processes. Another issue was language barriers because English wasn't a first language for many public participation participants. While translators could be found, the technical nature of the language within public participation processes made the language inaccessible. One of the suggestions that came up was



the need for some kind of capacity building within the community before a development went ahead so that communities could more effectively engage with the process. That was met with some sort of concern by developers who simply said “oh another tax – another stumbling block!”

Another major concern was that people came to the public participation meetings with their own agendas. People didn't have a common idea about what sustainable development was in a particular project and this led to mud-slinging. There was very little resolution and sustainable development did not happen!

There is also the problem of competency and capacity, in that activists were often ignorant about many things in a development process as well as environmental impact assessors. There is a certification board of environmental assessment practitioners in South Africa and they do have a code of conduct but it appears that not all consultants are aware of that code and not all consultants are accredited. The report confirmed that there was a need to confirm accredited consultants and to sift the good from the bad so that not everyone was tarred with the same brush. Similarly with developers.

What came out of the opinion survey was that people are really quite confused about what ‘ethics’ is. They think it's only about personal beliefs – about ‘right and wrong’. They didn't seem to understand that it is actually about people valuing the environment in different ways and that there are different positions. These different positions to a large extent determine how you interpret laws and how you interpret what sustainable development is. The research indicated that we should start looking at what is an ethically acceptable choice and how to morally justify these choices. From a faith perspective, this is a way of articulating your values derived from your faith in the public arena. By engaging in values and value analysis, we are able to speak about our faith concerns in a secular way.

Our overall finding from the study was that unethical behaviour in the Cape Town area (and I can't extrapolate further than that, and I can't even say it was all over Cape Town, as this was from our sample group) was not so much a lack of personal integrity or malicious intent, but rather that the causes that I mentioned before - conflicts of interest, ineffective legal institutional frameworks, a lack of good governance and capacity – those were the sort of structural ethical problems that made it difficult for individuals who had good intentions to carry them through in the government departments and in the development process.

This is not to say that individuals are let off the hook – there are individuals who use the smoke screen that is created by the difficult institutional framework to take their chances and cut their corners – and they do that. However, by and large, the problem did appear to be, from our finding in the Cape Town area, a structural one.

Finally, there is no easy way out. I don't think there is any logarithm or one value system, or one process that is going to help us to define sustainable development for all time and for all places. It is a matter of weighing priorities and value systems and working it out together.

Public Participation

Thank you very much Bishop Geoff for your invitation and for your fellowship and hospitality. I'm going to run through a whole bunch of slides on this project called CALABASH, which is how to involve local people in decision making. I hope to maybe have one minute for a play in which you will all take ...



This is a programme that is funded by the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). I am seconded by a CIDA to run it, based in Windhoek. I've been there for two years to help SADC countries grapple with the issue of public participation. What is it all about? There are many, many problems with public participation and many, many good things about it. The key problem is that many stakeholders have got some serious issues with public participation. If you look at governments today – they have few resources, many competing interests and huge challenges, like AIDS. Indeed, there are many issues that governments face. NGO's are sometimes better organized and funded, they can be very sophisticated and quite a strong ally, or quite a strong block to your developments.

The Public? Well, they can be mobilized are sometimes very willing to act. Many, especially in rural communities, don't know their rights, I think you are well familiar with that. The key point is: once the public is on your side development does generally go faster. What about industry? It is under so much pressure but needs the social licence to operate – and today they don't get that without public participation.

“Fundamental to the success of all our efforts at reconstruction and development is community action and participation”
Nelson Mandela

If we look at the laws and policies from Agenda 21, there are 80 references to public participation. There are SADC policies; there are ISO (International Standards Organization) policies; Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and are so many things about public participation in legislation, in policy, from a local to international level. However the key point is that local people don't know about their rights to participate and that's what CALABASH is trying to address.

So objectives for public participation are really just to get the social license to operate in a community and without that terrible things can happen. Nigeria has experienced factories being burned to the ground, pipelines being blown up, because the communities are rejecting imposed development.

So the participants in public participation are all of us, depending on the nature of the project – and in particular women and children, they cannot be forgotten. Access to the public is a challenge today and many, many public participation programmes forget about literacy issues or forget about what people are doing for a living when they are called to public participation. Maybe they are fishing at the time, maybe they are farming. It could be the wrong time to get to the meetings. Maybe it's flood time and people can't get off the properties or their communities to the cities (and vice versa) and maybe the people actually need to be compensated for coming to these meetings because they're taking time away from their income generating activities. Therefore they need a few Rand or whatever to participate in the meetings. All these things affect public participation. But the benefit is generating the social license to operate in a community.

Now what about the issues from the Public? They call public participation one of the last of the blood sports because you never know what is going to happen. The first lesson of public participation is that the crudest and most improper form of public participation is a meeting. These are some of the issues that the public raise: “Can I get a job on this project?”; “who’s coming to our community?”; “will clearing the vegetation endanger rare species?” All questions coming from different stakeholder groups – from farmers, from NGO’s, conservationists, whatever.

There are all sorts of issues about deeper values within communities. Concerns may be: “Where will I graze my cattle?”; “Will workers upset my village?”; “No – not in my back yard!” (‘NIMBY’ is an expression that possibly you have heard); “What about tracks on the veld?”; “Will you cut my locks?”; “Do you respect us?”

Here is an example: these are three potential hydro lines in a rural area. It could be here, it could be Namibia, it could be anywhere. Three different possibilities: there’s a kraal in the middle of one of the lines. What would be the issues for that community if a developer said “Okay, here’s where we’re going to put the lines”? (Just to give you a sense of it - if you’re a rural person and you looked at that picture. What if there is a wealthy lawyer lurking in this community?” You are going to be raising many different archetypal issues other than cattle grazing. There are many, many issues when engaging the public.

Here is another scenario. You can do a brilliant public participation programme and involve the community, get their support and then once the boot’s hit the ground with whoever’s on the end of the shovel doing the digging or building the power line, all sorts of problems can happen.

In another case the company that was putting a power line in didn’t ask permission from the land owners and just cut the locks to get onto the property to do the surveying. Cattle wandered all over the place. There’s follow-up that is needed with communities. Most developers take the public participation to project approval and then forget about it! In reality, public participation only starts once the project is initiated. Thereafter there are power plays within communities themselves.

CALABASH is a capacity building programme in Southern Africa for the SADC region, to help local communities grapple with these issues of rights. We’ve developed a handbook, based on what works in the region, specific to SADC and in there are techniques that communities can use themselves for public participation, based on the experiences of case studies from the SADC region, including mines, harbours, ports and so on. (www.saiea.com).

Now the Play ... have I got one minute for a play? Pretend I am the president of a corporation that is going to build a highway and these are the engineers. Now last year, Mr. Mayor, came to me and said “I would like to build a highway through the centre of the community.” It’s a beautiful community with trees and you guys are all very good farmers and fishermen and he said to me “Mr. Developer would you build a highway right down the middle of the community because I want to drive my brand new car down the middle of that community.”

Now this is the situation: this is the first and only public meeting for this development and you’ve all been invited as community members to come and hear about this project. The environmental assessment has been written and approved and the Developer is now going to say, “Last year Mr. Mayor came to me and said: ‘Could you design a highway that would go straight down the middle of your community, through your mango fields, over swamps and the places where you fish’ - and I’d like to tell you that this project has been approved and I’m going to tell you now that the construction is starting tomorrow. Are there any questions?” How do you feel?

Sustainable Development Possibilities

Thank you for this opportunity to make this presentation on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme here in South Africa. I will break our presentation up into three components: our global mission, our programme in South Africa and sustainable development possibilities through this institution that you are currently discussing during this conference.

In terms of UNDP and our global mission: we in the UNDP are known as ‘the knowledge network’ because unlike other United Nations agencies (like UNICEF which deals with children, WHO deals with health etc.) The UNDP is a network of offices in 166 countries which focuses in the following areas:

1. Poverty. The poverty programmes we look at are very much entrenched in the components of the Millennium Development Goals which were formulated in 2000 by all the members of the United Nations participated in.
2. Environment – and in particular we work very strongly with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of which the Small Grants Programme is a component. We have supported the holding of this conference.
3. Then we look at good governance which focuses on assisting countries that we are operating in, identifying local governance procedures that will assist in service delivery to beneficiary communities.
4. Millennium Development Goals. We are the global managers of the MDG’s and we assist countries in establishing a score-card for the millennium development goals. An example of one of the goals is halving poverty by 2015 globally. We are currently assisting the government of South Africa in developing a score-card that would be utilised in all 9 provinces in order to measure the achieving of this goal.
5. HIV and AIDS. Our HIV and AIDS programme, is a fairly large component of the work we do. We are engaging with the government of South Africa on behalf of international donor partners. One of our key programmes at the moment is a R90,000,000 one funded by the Danish government focusing in KwazuluNatal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Free State. It is geared to engaging members at community level, through civil society movements and faith-based organisations. The programme is around capacity building and participatory processes, so that local people **themselves** are involved in the whole debate and the issues around de-stigmatization, anti-retrovirals and nutrition.

In terms of this conference – we want to know how sustainable development can impact on the daily lives of our communities and what role faith-based organisations, particularly in a South African context can play.

1. The first thing that we thought about which is critical is that the issue of sustainable development is everyone’s way of life. It impacts on everybody. If, as Peter said, you have your ‘fat-cat’ lawyer in a particular community who’s built a wonderful retreat that he or she goes to over the weekend and that fat-cat lawyer’s bore hole is utilising the majority of the water resource of that community, it’s going to impact on that community. Then when he goes away he’ll find that people break into his property so that they can get water, so that they can water their plants, so that they can have water to cook and to wash with. So it is critical that **all** of us within a community understand that the issue of sustainable development impacts on all our lives – and how we manage and utilise our natural resource base impacts on every one of us.

2. One of the speakers this morning mentioned that the Church has the moral high ground and this should not only be around the issues of religion, around the issues of faith but it should also be on **other** issues in society, within our community. Sustainable development is one of the key issues from the position that faith based organisations have within the community. That is a good platform and a good launching place from which to engage community members, to engage government (at local, provincial and national levels) as to the needs and imperatives are for ordinary beneficiaries on the ground in terms of sustainable development.

3. A critical element for us is that we need to harmonize the Environment and Development because if you get developers that are putting wall-to-wall golf estates along the southern Cape coast, what is the impact on that environment? I'm sure some of you saw a particular episode on '50-50' where there was a gentleman who was doing nature walks along the coast bringing international tourists and informing them about the wonderful floral kingdom in this country. That bio-diversity is unique to South Africa. With wall-to-wall privatisation of the coast, ordinary people, whether they are citizens or international visitors, cannot no longer enjoy that natural fauna, cannot learn about it, cannot understand what impact and what role it plays within our society. So it is critical that there has to be harmonization between development and the environment. This is something that faith based organizations and civil society have the opportunity to drive and to really involve themselves in, informing government and informing communities at large on the importance of this issue.

4. Another element is that the earth is a gift. It belongs to no one. We are just custodians for a brief period, in the greater scheme of things, whilst we are here. We are just custodians of the particular patch that we're on. It is our responsibility to leave the earth and its resources to succeeding generations. We need to ensure that they can say with pride, "This is what our people did!". Not to say "Oh my goodness, these guys destroyed everything and have left us rubbish!"

It is important that when we engage with natural resource management we think about succeeding generations. We can't just put down bore holes and we give everybody 12,000 litres a day without considering the future and succeeding generations? We must always remember that balance - that we are just custodians whilst we're here and we need consider what we do for the sake of future generations.

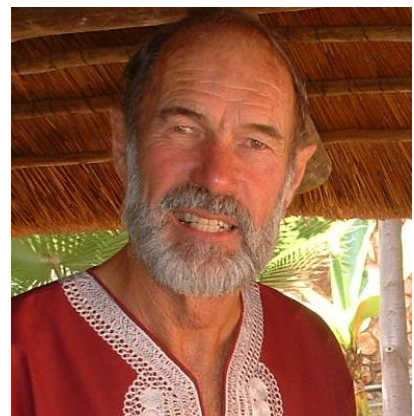
Bishop Geoffrey Davies

Anglican Bishop & SACC

Ethics and Economics

I want to highlight some of the very important issues which have been coming out this morning. Some time ago, I met Margaret Legum, who comes to our church and whose book, "*It doesn't have to be like this*" is at the back. I asked her if we could start a little committee to talk about ethics. Margaret's response was "Absolutely! We won't get our economics right until we get our ethics and values right." And where do values lie but in the religious community. If we are not concerned about values, what are we concerned about?

There are two crucial areas that I think we need to be looking at: Ethics and Economics.



Our present economic system is based on whether something is profitable. Can we make money out of it? That is the deciding factor in our present neo-liberal economic structure – and anything goes! I am told that even here at Hartbeespoort there was a bird sanctuary next to the lake and that is gone because the developers could make money with a housing estate. A nearby mountain sanctuary is disappearing because developers are putting up costly houses. There is no consideration for the creatures and the unique ecosystem that exists here because people can make money. We've got to face that fact that we have, largely, substituted God for money. Money decides – and we are paying the consequences.

We are told clearly, we cannot worship God and Money. If we do not worship God, we worship money. We have got to change our value system if we are to get onto the right path. As a Christian, but from my understanding, we could say **all** religions, I know that there must be **justice** in our dealings, one with another. In the Old Testament, for the Jews, there is a clear call for establishing justice and economic justice – and what is our present system today? It's grossly unjust and we know the inequalities existing between North and South – existing in South Africa. I believe we, the Faith communities, have to stand up and say: "Now enough is enough!" But we've got to recognize that within our own communities – there are even theologies about the 'Prosperity Cult' and "God is blessing you."

I know, having being a Diocesan Bishop, that even some of my own clergy would say "Well, we've got to get money; we've got to raise money." Money becomes the prime objective. They have got to get their stipend at the end of the month. They have got to raise money for the church. We have allowed money to become the dominant factor in our lives.

We really need to be looking at a clear calling for economic justice. We need to be developing a code of ethics and I think that in some of the papers that you've had handed out – particularly the Earth Charter – you find it is an overarching theme.

Look at the Earth Charter:

*Respect and care for the community of life;
Ecological integrity;
Social and economic justice;
Democracy, non-violence and peace.*

Look at the recently released US National Council of Churches' statement. It says:

Guiding Norms for Church and Society:

*Justice - creating right relationships, both social and ecological
Sustainability - living within the bounds of planetary capacities indefinitely – not 'sustainable development' but sustainable **living**
Bio-responsibility – extending the covenant of justice to include all other life forms as beloved creatures of God
Humility – recognizing, as an antidote to arrogance, the limits of human knowledge
Generosity – sharing Earth's riches to promote and defend the common good
Frugality – restraining economic production and consumption for the sake of eco-justice
Solidarity – acknowledging that we are increasingly bound together as a global community
Compassion – sharing the joys and sufferings of all Earth's members and making them our own.*

I believe we need to be looking for a contemporary Ten Commandments, one that is saying **how we** must all be living together. At the back of the little book called “*Save our Future*” is a list of suggestions of steps you can take – ‘*Do’s* and *Don’ts*’. These are some ethical guidelines we, as people of faith, need to develop.

I want to highlight a few points that have come out of the conference. Yesterday, John Anderson from Gondwana Alive talked about **litigation** and I think I just need to unpack that a bit. Gondwana Alive is exploring the fact that our constitution says that we have the right to a healthy environment. They now want to ask the South African Government to go to the International Court to protect bio-diversity because our healthy environment is threatened by our present lifestyle.

There is a South African lawyer – Cormac Cullinan – who has written a book called ‘*Wild Law*’. If you can get hold of it, **do!** Cormac is saying that not only is it ethics but it is legislation that is now needed to protect the whole of creation. He is saying that it is not just you and I who have a right to exist but that it is all of creation. That 500 year old tree has got a right to exist. The river has got a right to continue its course to the sea. The salmon or the eels have a right to come up that river that they’ve come up for millennia. At the moment there is no protection and right.

Now you may say “*But Bishop Geoff, all of creation – the plants and animals - are for **our** benefit*” This comes out of what Ernst Conradie was talking about this morning. A lot of the discussion I’ve heard is ‘anthropocentric’ – we consider ourselves, as humans, first. Everything is for **our human** benefit. However, until we consider the **whole**, we are going to suffer the consequences.

We had dearly hoped that Professor Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Laureate, was going to be with us and she said that she’d wanted to but the date clashed with another commitment. Apparently she is outstanding when it comes to Creation. She says,

*“You Christians always look at the 6th day, when God created people. You don’t consider that God spent the first 5 days creating everything else! Did that not matter? Didn’t God declare all of that **good** in itself?”*

So we have got to get away from the thinking that we are only concerned with ourselves. In fact, if you consider it, every creature has this basic instinct - every animal, every plant – to survive. Their survival is important to God.

I want to make two more points...

Following Professor Ernst Conradie’s very important message, I want to make the comment that long ago I heard the phrase “*People are right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny.*” Affirm what you believe, but don’t deny somebody else’s belief. There are a variety of ways that we all come to be good Earthkeepers and public participation is an essential part. Thank you, Peter Croal, for your presentation. It is clear we are **not** always having public participation in our beloved new democracy. We have had to go to court - ‘we’ being Biowatch – to obtain basic information about GMOs from the Department of Agriculture. We also had to go to court to ensure democratic participation for the pebble-bed reactor (PBMR) because the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEAT) had given the go-ahead before there had been full public participation.

GMOs: You can argue for or against GMOs – but I believe I have a right to know if I am eating GMO food and to have that choice. We don’t have that choice in South Africa and the Department of Agriculture has refused to give that information. They don’t tell us where GMO crops are planted, how much is planted and they refuse to allow it to be labelled. We label organic food, but we don’t label GMOs. It is extraordinary! We had to go to court to get that information. It is our right to know.

A more disturbing factor is that with both GMOs and now the PBMR at Eskom, it is the multi-national corporations who are dictating the position. They are the people in control because there are vast sums of money in it! In Agri-Business – agricultural business – the seed companies in South Africa have been bought out by Monsanto. We are becoming enslaved to multi-national corporations. They want to control food production in the world. (There is a useful DVD on GMOs that you can obtain from SAFeAGE called “*The future of food.*”)

Who is benefiting – the multi-nationals or the people? The people know what is good for them and that is why it is so important that we have ethical guidelines from the faith communities, public participation and democracy. I hope that we can consider this in this conference.

Prof. Jacklyn Cock

*Department of Sociology,
WITS University*

Environmental Justice

I am only going to make two points.

The first is that I want to give you a sense of crisis. The second is that I believe there needs to be an enormous mobilization to address this crisis and I think it has to be led by the Christian church. I say that for the reason that 70% of South Africans are Christian and the Christian church is in a remarkably strong position because it has more moral authority, a historical tradition, and the capacity to reach up into the highest levels of policy making and decision making in our society. At the same time it also has grass roots capacity. A study was done a little while ago which asked people which organisation they trusted the most. The vast majority of people said the church. They trusted the church in the sense that they looked to it for leadership, direction and an ethical source of how to live. The church was cited far more frequently than other organizations to which people belonged such as political parties or trade unions. So I think the Christian church is in a unique position to address the deepening crisis.

“SA is experiencing a deep social crisis. This crisis has the potential to reverse the democratic gains made since 1994.” Zola Skweyiya

These are just some of the indicators of this crisis.

SOCIAL CRISIS:	
Inequality – growing wage gap:	R10 to R10 000 a day
Violence:	HIV/AIDS, 32 daily gun deaths, rape & escalating violent crime.
Homelessness:	At least 3 million housing units needed.
Environmental degradation:	Pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, biodiversity loss, alien plant infestation, climate change and global warming
Poverty:	Half of all South African households
Social disintegration:	Divorce rate 50%
Unemployment:	49% in the Eastern Cape
Chaotic society:	Secular system – the silent generation

I believe that since 1994 this crisis has deepened. Thirty gun deaths a day fades into insignificance when you compare it to what is now estimated to be 600 deaths a day due AIDS related illnesses.

Environmental degradation is clearly an indicator of the crisis. Climate and global warming is a serious challenge to those committed to earth-keeping. The main producers of greenhouse gases are the 'over-developed' countries of the north, particularly the Americans who produce 38% of greenhouse gases and who refuse to sign the Kyoto Protocol which is trying to limit the production of those substances which threaten the lives of all of us. The people who pay the worst price are of course the people who are living in the poor countries in South Asia, Latin America and Africa.

I want to make a linkage between two indicators of crisis here. The one is Social inequality and the other is environmental degradation. When I talk about R10 and R10 000 a day, I am talking of a flawed figure. The R10 a day comes from someone I spoke to in the Eastern Cape recently, who works on a chicory farm, weeding. She is paid R10 for a 12 hour day doing hard physical labour. When I talk about R10 000 a day, that is a gross underestimate because those of you who live in Gauteng, will have seen the headlines story in the Star recently which told us about what South Africa's top executives are earning. The next time you go shopping at Edgars, remember that the head of it earned R42million in 2004. The head of Nedcor earned R36 million. The head of a furniture company earned R36 million, and the head of MTN earns R19 million in 1 year!

Inequalities are growing and deepening. Deepening social inequality between and in different countries and increasing environmental degradation are due to one process. It is a process that is often distorted in the media – the way people often distort the animal rights movement. It is distorted by being called the anti-globalization movement. I know very few people who are against globalization but many people who are against 'corporate globalization'. The way globalization is being driven by corporations who are solely concerned about profits and who are increasingly pursuing profits through the commoditization of natural resources, turning natural resources into commodities which can be bought and sold.

A classic example of that is what is happening to water. In the Gauteng region, but also in many parts of South Africa, water, a basic right in terms of our constitution and a basic need for all forms of life, is, through the imposition of pre-paid water meters, being turned into a commodity that can be bought and sold.

A classic example of this corporate globalization process is ISCOR, which is now part of Natal Steel, the largest steel producer in the world. It is a company that operated in 14 different countries, and employs 165 000 people throughout the world. Victor Munnik and I are involved in a little group that is struggling against ISCOR to try and get compensation for people who have suffered terrible health damages – cancers, various forms of kidney failure and lots of livelihoods affected through ISCOR's pollution of the ground water around Vanderbyl Park. Clearly this is a David and Goliath struggle; we are up against something that is very powerful. This is part of this process of corporate globalization which is deepening inequality and environmental degradation throughout the world.

What are the key concepts that we can use to mobilize people in this David and Goliath struggle, the struggle that involves confronting powerful individuals? The notion of sustainable development is very flawed. The concept says nothing about justice. The concept views nature simply as a store of resources that are to be used for our own benefit. The concept of sustainable development leaves the market open to exploit natural resources as well as people. It is tied to neo-liberalism which is part of GEAR, which is part of this notion that the state must have a very minimal role in development – we must leave the market to determine how production and distribution occurs. It is a flawed notion.

So is the notion of environmental justice flawed. It's flawed because many of the people involved in struggles like those against ISCOR do not define themselves as environmentalists. This is because environmentalism is something of a contaminated notion because of our Apartheid policies and also because of the way the mainstream environmental movement came to focus on the conservation of threatened plants, animals and wilderness areas in a way that neglected and disregarded people's needs. The outcome is a much splintered picture - splintered between greens and browns, people in the environmental justice movement. That latter group would certainly be the position I feel closest to. They tend to focus on pollution issues, issues of waste, the citing of toxic waste dumps, pollution of the air and water, genetically modified food. There is a neglect of biodiversity, which are the issues that the green strand focuses on. So the result is a fragmented and splintered understanding which is reflected in different groupings. The animal liberation movement, many of whom are equally concerned with the welfare of people as of animals and are certainly wanting to expose the cruelties involved in the system of mass production which feeds a consumer society, would be part of that.

How do we resolve this splintered, fragmented picture? This is where the church has a crucial role to play and where the institute could be crucially important in forging a new understanding that is ethically based and which is anchored in the notion that we are part of a web of life, that we are part of nature. That nature is not something that exists only in game parks and nature reserves. We engage with nature every day in the water we drink, the food we eat and how we live our lives. These are ethical questions which are deeply subversive because they raise uncomfortable notions about the place of the human species in the wider array of things.

Nirmala Nair

*Zero Emissions Research
and Initiatives - ZERI*

Paradigm Shift

I am from a global network called 'Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives' (ZERI) and I'm making all efforts to bring that to the Southern African sector, based in Cape Town. It is a global network of scientists, concerned activists, some government people and educators across the world. We have about 50 countries in the world at the moment using some of our systems-based process. Quite a lot of us are at loggerheads with the concept of sustainable development because we really are not sure whose development we are talking about. So, whose sustainability are we talking about? It's quite a challenging problem and we don't really believe that we can find solutions in a big, global format and bring it to every corner of the world and say we are running a sustainable development programme.



Solutions have to be found locally, with local expertise and local resources and through integrating local peoples' knowledge-systems into finding solutions. So, in fact, some of our motive is working with nature in meeting the basic needs of all. We also believe that in order to work with nature we've got to really work in synergy with 5 kingdoms – that's: algae, bacteria, fungi, plants and animals. So it is a synergetic interaction between 5 kingdoms that really create local solutions for local needs. This means the solutions that we do find in the Eastern Cape might not be appropriate for the Northern Cape or the North West. It is very, very contextualised. We are also very worried that Africa, and South Africa in particular, is becoming a dump house of obsolete Western technology. Where else to find a market other than Africa and Asia and South America?

So we are really becoming a dumping ground. Because we in the third world are desperate to accelerate growth, and develop our nations and our GDP, quite a lot of us think that this is the answer.

We have some basic tenets that guide us: 'Earth cannot produce more – we must learn to do more with what Earth is producing'. That's one of our primary tenets. We also believe that we cannot actually go back up in the Himalayas and in the caves and wear orange robes and go and sit there. We have to be realistic. There is science and there is technology but is it necessary to play into the hands of obsolete technology? Or can we not challenge the scientific communities and the technological communities to adapt science and technology to the service of humanity?

So these last few days I think we have focused quite a lot on the crises and the problems. Can we move to solutions? Are there solutions? Yes, there are solutions. To find them requires that we think outside of the box. How can you change from your existing comfort zones, get out of the box and challenge our own mind-set, our own thinking paradigm to really find local solutions that work for all. Local solutions rooted in science that works for humanity and not for business and not the research institutions or big governments with vested interests.

We've got to get **out** of the box, we've got to change the form completely and we've got to start searching for local solutions that are rooted in science – and science is there to serve us as humanity – not the business and not the research institutions or big governments with vested interests. Our solutions are based on what is locally available – I've gone through that.

What we are also realizing is as several sub-systems change – such as environmental and cultural contributions, so we will there be a change in the mix of technologies – and that is what quite a lot of us, with this top-down imposition, do not take into consideration. We've got to have a mix of subsistence-based **social** technologies, not just science and technologies. Some of our cases are from Colombia.

I love this case (on slide) because with coffee, there are one million farmers around the world and so the coffee prices are always plummeting. Seattle Coffee House can get three dollars a cup just for adding hot water to the coffee (or tea) – but the farmers who grow the coffee – or tea for that matter – make hardly anything. In Colombia the coffee farmers are almost on the verge of suicide. They don't want to sell their farms, they don't want to move out, but they have to exist. Some of the scientists working there got together with the farmers and they discovered that you can actually use all the waste from the coffee. It can be made to grow shitake mushroom, which brings them far more money than a kilo of coffee! So the coffee farmers in Colombia are now producing shitake mushrooms and they have all the natural plants around that area safeguarding the coffee plants without having to use chemicals or pesticides. This means their whole core business of coffee has been diversified.

That is another of our mottos – diversify and you automatically bring in resilience. The more diverse your system, the more resilient, the more tolerant that system is to any external kind of risk. So you are not so dependent on your coffee as your core primary product, your income is coming from shitake, coming from camomile tea and peppermint and lemon verbena and all those things that are growing in-between the coffee to save them money from pesticides or having to buy from the Monsantos, their big brother who is around permitting the coffee farmers.

Then the other one is rice farmers and spirulina. The same problem, rice is also plummeting, so thanks to the so-called Development Programme by all these agri-business corporations, rice farmers were also struggling to survive. They decided they would grow spirulina algae on those high PH alkaline waters standing there not being used. They grow spirulina and malnutrition went

down and school children's health shot up. They decided they would not sell the spirulina to the American market, they would have spirulina cakes for the children around that community. Only if there was surplus would they sell it.

And then, the water hyacinth - our friend from Zimbabwe who is using water hyacinth, elephant grass, all kinds of ways to grow mushrooms. She challenges the whole of Africa – that we can wipe out food insecurity – we don't have to have poverty issues if we change our mind-set and look at all the resources that are being wasted because we are being trained to think in a particular way, trained to live in a particular way. We've been conditioned to think that **this** is development – only if you flush the toilet – 12 litres of water! Why? Why do we have to flush the toilet? I come from a place in Kerala where we don't have flush toilets.

We have a Chinese scientist living with me who is 82 years old. I took him to the N2 corridor meeting and he asked why all the houses needed to have a flush toilet. They could have 'digestives'. From those digestives in China they produce all kinds of poly-culture including fish, rice, fruits and flowers. Why are we not doing that? Because we've been trained to believe that we have to have flush toilets and yet we talk about conservation of water and dig bore holes. When you dig bore holes... I spent all my morning worship time this morning with my friend here, Shawn Cozette, talking about water affairs ... if we stop thinking in terms of solo-mentality: Land can do something, Agriculture can do something, Water can do something – they don't talk to one another! But we talk about sustainability.

We've got to think in terms of our children as well. If our children are really exposed to a certain way of thinking from a very young age, then there is no way they will be talking and thinking like us. They won't be looking at the alternatives that we are looking at. I want to quickly read a story – because we have story books for children that are being translated into Southern African languages – and hopefully we'll be able to take them to schools.

This story is about energy and it's about a whale. There's a baby whale with a seagull and he asks: "How can you fly so far away from the land?"

"Oh it's easy, I have wings and when I'm tired I just hang in the air against the wind, rest and then fly."

"But don't you fall down?"

"No, I don't fall down I have wings – I fly."

"But isn't there gravity? This magnet from the earth, which pulls you down to the ground?" asked the baby whale.

"Well, that's a good point but not completely true, if I close my wings I drop like a stone but if I keep them open, energy from the wind will support me."

"How sad I don't have wings. I'd like to fly", said the baby whale.

"But you don't need wings, you can swim – and you have great heart."

"Well all of us have heart – and you have a small heart – but I don't even have a small wing, I can't fly even a little bit."

"Whales have the biggest hearts in the world. You are so big and so strong and you are so kind."

"Oh well, it's true my mom says my heart will do a great job as long as I eat well. I'll be able to grow as big as my dad."

"How big is your heart?"

"I don't know. My mom says soon I'll pump 200 litres with each heart-beat. My dad pumps 1,000 litres per beat."

"You are so big and so strong! You don't eat meat, fruits or veggies?"

"Well most of us eat tasty krill, which give us a lot of energy and we can grow and make electricity."

“You’re joking! I know you talk to each other from North Pole to the South Pole and you sing together – but electricity – impossible!” says the seagull.

“What do you think makes the heart beat? It’s an electric shock.”

“What? Electricity makes your heart beat?”

“Yes, any heart. Any heart makes electricity – and then we have these two elements in our body which react, make an electrical impulse and then our muscles contract and so they pump the blood.”

“So I can fly and you can make electricity and you can power the lighthouse!”

Any child who grows up listening to this story will never be ‘buying’ fossil fuel as the only solution. In Brazil and in Japan there are children sitting listening to this story. In Brazil we have had 200,000 children going through the ZERI Education Initiative workshop. They sit with rotten egg shells, banana peels, mix them together and they produce electricity. They can see their little toys jingling and they know “we can make electricity in a very simple way”. But the scientists who have invested and the petrochemical business which has invested – will make sure we stay enslaved to petrochemicals and fossil fuels – and that’s disturbing. Thank you!

Wednesday, 16 March 2005

“Opportunities for Learning for Sustainable Development”

Presentations:

UN Decade of Education for Sustainability - UNDESD

Shepherd Urenje

SADC & EEASA
Environmental
Education Association
of Southern Africa

UNDESD Practical Applications
for faith communities

Kate Davies

EEASA

A Rocha

Allen Goddard

Students’ Christian
Organization & SA
Evangelical Seminary

NECCSA

Andrew Warmback

UN Decade of Education for Sustainability

The Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA), and the place where I work, at the Wildlife and Environment Society (WESSA) headquarters in Howick, deals with environmental education. We look at education as a response to environmental risks and crises, mainly within the 14 SADC countries in the region.



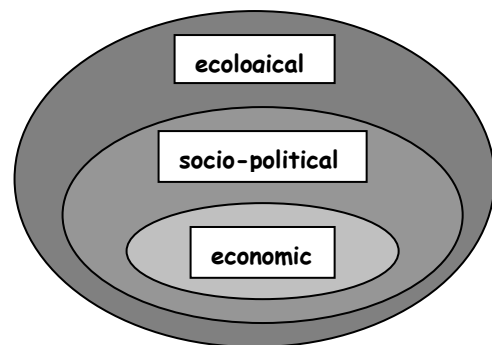
We struggle with ‘education for ‘sustainable development’ because we have conflicting issues if we put ‘sustainable’ and ‘development’ together. There are more than 300 definitions for ‘sustainable development’; all of them depend on the context. We would like view environmental education as education for ‘**sustainability**’.

The ecological aspect deals with resources, fragile ecosystems and life support systems; then we have Society which includes people and their politics, social institutions, participation, democracy, human rights and social justice; thirdly, we have the Economy which relates to people and involves the limits to growth and the impact of economic activity on the environment and inequalities. When considering the three aspects we treat the ecological component to be foundational.

2004 has been declared by the United Nations as the start of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD).

What are the expectations for the next decade?

Address environmental issues and risks and questions of sustainability; promote human rights and equity; promote peace and human security; address health risks and HIV/AIDS; conserve water, energy and other natural resources; address climate change, rural transformation, sustainable urbanization and poverty. That is quite a handful! This is in fact everything! This is why we need to concentrate on what is happening where we are.



A lot of people will ask: “What is different in the DESD from what we have been doing already?” The answer is: “Not much”. However, what the world is saying now is that we have talked enough. Let us dedicate the 10 years till 2014 to action. Let us see what we have been talking about actually happening. What is the contribution of education as far as sustainability is concerned? We cannot have healthy people in unhealthy surroundings and we cannot have sustainable environments in a poverty stricken economy. That is what Southern Africa is like. We have got people who are very poor. To expect to achieve sustainability in this kind of situation is next to impossible.

In Southern Africa we have been ahead of our time in many ways. We have had a model of environmental education processes that was developed in the early nineties. It explains the way we view environmental education, or education for sustainability, in the SADC region. We have always taken into consideration the link between the biophysical environment at the bottom, our economy, and our society. Decisions are made about the environment from political platforms and they affect the society and the economy, which is a driving force. We have had this model for over 10 years. It is only in recent years that the world has begun to link social and economic concerns, to be part of education for sustainable development.

One of the goals of education for sustainable development is to ‘improve the quality of teaching and learning’. We have seen that most of our schools are continuing as if nothing has happened. We all know that things are not right! But what schools are doing is that they continue in the same old way as if nothing has happened. In most instances this is not their fault. How can we expect the teaching that is taking place in the schools to change when we are not taking action?

The Education for Sustainable Document highlights the following 5 things: Water (and Sanitation), Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity (WEHAB). While not mentioning other issues like poverty, it does not mean that they are not important.

How should we educate for sustainable development? We should be able to address sustainability questions in context. We need an interdisciplinary and holistic approach, but holism is another problem. We must have value based education, critical thinking and problem solving, active learning, participatory decision making and locally relevant issues. The biggest problem here is that we cannot expect to create awareness today. People are aware. They know what is happening and we have talked enough. What is lacking here is critical thinking and problem solving.

Inter-generational Equity talks about the fact that we have borrowed from future generations. Do we have the intention to pay them back? Do our actions show that we want to pay back what we have borrowed? Is it unfair not to educate children for a world where poverty and injustice is prevalent? That is the world we are looking at. Are we doing enough to prepare these children for that kind of environment? This is what we need to look at.

All national educational policies have an environmental clause but we lack the commitment to follow through. The idea of sustainable development is not an easy one. Sustainable development’s ‘green’ agenda is nature preservation. It’s social and economic agenda: can suggest that the resources are there to support our needs and wants. If they are not there supporting our life, then we don’t need them. Sustainable Development’s radical political and ethical agenda of transformation: is another extreme! Lastly, there is an agenda of ‘Sustaining Development’ – this is where our problem lies. An agenda of sustaining development is not possible because development thrives on resources and resources are not infinite. Issues of sustainable development are contested and have to be taken in context – they have to be debated so that we know what they mean – especially where we are coming from.

We should begin by integrating education for sustainable development into local schools, youth and community groups. We cannot achieve anything globally if we haven’t started from where we are coming from. What are we already doing? We are already learning about risk and sustainability issues, we are re-orienting curricula, we are teaching professional development and we are trying to involve people in active learning. These are some of the things that are already happening in Southern Africa. We are already strengthening local and cultural values and mobilising prior knowledge into the education system and improving our schools and the school environment. We are also engaging in addressing food security, issues through school guidance and learning. We are also involved in working more closely with parents and members of the community to improve the quality of education.

However, we have many big questions – questions like: can we strengthen and build these initiatives? How are we going to sustain them? How can we make them more viable?

The many challenges that we have got for Southern Africa are unforeseen and unpredictable. The Impact of GMOs, industrial accidents resulting from technology failures, unforeseen side-effects of drugs and greenhouse gases add further to those of poverty, biodiversity loss, land degradation and many others. We are looking at a situation where people need to be actively involved regardless of the perspective they come from.

Kate Davies

*Environmental Education Association
of Southern Africa EEASA*

***The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable
Development: Eco-congregations, a practical
application in faith communities***

One of the visions of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) is that sustainability education is expanded and moved beyond the formal education sector into non-formal, and particularly adult education and learning. There have been a number of comments during our discussions in the past few days about how well placed Faith groups are to become part of an effective environmental education network because they have the structure in place and grassroots support in every community.



In a country like ours where so many people have been disadvantaged by the dysfunctional apartheid education system, faith groups can play a very crucial role in education for sustainable living. Learning to care for creation has the potential to make people's faith more relevant and real. Getting involved in sustainability education can provide faith communities with opportunities to undertake transforming practical activities that can lead to a rejuvenated relationship with creation and the world around us.

If this could be enriching and rewarding, why hasn't it happened. Why has sustainability education been so slow to 'catch on' in faith communities? Most clergy (and I am talking from a Christian perspective) have had no environmental training and in my experience, many leaders are already stretched and would rather not add anything more to their already busy parish agenda. 'This environment thing' has the potential of getting a bit out of hand. I believe it presents an opportunity for democratic transformation and participation in congregations so that laity, the people in the pews, are given opportunities take new and rewarding responsibilities. It should not necessarily be something more for the leadership to 'control'.

Who and how might we respond? I want to suggest a simple process. First, agree that something needs to be done! Then do an audit to establish the existing level of environmental awareness and action taking place in your faith community. You will probably be surprised how many congregations are already doing things **about, in and for** the environment without realising it. (For example: growing indigenous plants, recycling office paper, celebrating environmental days, going on retreats in natural, tranquil settings, saving energy and water.)

I have developed a simple DRAFT Environmental audit sheet for congregations. The purpose is to help see, at a glance, where your faith community presently stands with regard to the environment. There are questions that may not be applicable to some congregations which can be left out. There should also be space for other issues that I have not considered. Please add these.

This audit is intended to be a helpful starting point in order to highlight areas where good things are happening and areas where things need to happen. Areas where there is room for action and activities that can involve people who didn't think they had any special gift to offer.

This audit shows that environmental responsibility does not have to be the ‘burden’ of one or a handful of already over-worked and committed people. Environmental responsibility becomes infused into every aspect of congregational life, bringing new meaning and relevance.

I suggest the following simple process

1. Agree that something needs to be done about caring for creation!
2. Do an environmental audit in your congregation with a group of members participating.
3. Develop an environmental management policy, which might include a simple vision statement.
4. Formulate action plans.
5. Integrate these into the daily running of the congregation, delegating different responsibilities to different members - share the load!
6. Start implementing actions in manageable bites – they don’t all have to be earth changing!
7. At a later management meeting (six months or a year later), redo the audit to see where improvements have taken place - a form of evaluation.
8. Update the action plan.
9. Celebrate success!

Some of you may know of the ‘Eco-schools’ programme in South Africa, the ‘Eco-Congregation’ Programme in Britain or the ‘Greening Congregation Movement’ in the USA. I would like to propose that we start our own Southern African Faith Community Eco-Congregation movement. This could be a network that would enable us to share our stories and celebrate the journey that we are taking to bring about environmental awareness and creation care in our unique Southern African context. It would also be an opportunity for us to honour what we have and share in common as people of faith rather than highlight what divides us.

*Since the conference, I have published a draft “**Creation Care**” booklet which outlines practical ways of exploring and responding to environmental issues through faith communities. It is hoped that this will provide simple ideas to help local congregations bring the environment onto their agenda. (kated@safcei.org.za)*

Useful References:

Rainbow over the Land. 2000. Conradie & Field – Useful and accessible information for Christian congregations.

God’s Gift: The Earth our home. 2003. Britton & Linder – Diakonia Council of Churches (Durban)

Creation Care 2006 Davies – kated@safcei.org.za

www.ecocongregation.org – The Eco-Congregation programme based in the UK.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

NAME OF FAITH COMMUNITY: _____

Use this checklist to examine the key environmental issues, concerns and priority areas of your local faith community.

(0=Don't know, 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Often, 5=Always)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. I think the environment (natural, social, economic and political) should play a role in the life of my faith community. (1=no... 5=definitely)						
2. a. Are there environmental policies & resolutions at a national/denominational level?						
b. Are these policies/resolutions acted upon at a national or denominational level?						
c. Are there environmental policies & resolutions at a local level?						
d. Are these policies/resolutions acted upon at a local level?						
3. Is there ever any focus on the environment during worship?						
4. Are special environmental liturgies ever used or special days ever celebrated? (e.g. harvest festival, world environment day.)						
5. Are books, resources & information about environmental issues & responsibility ever made available?						
6. Do home and study groups ever consider creation and environmental themes?						
7. Resources: Does your faith community have a resource use management policy (grounds, buildings, water, electricity, office paper etc.)?						
8. Land:						
a. Is the land owned by my faith community managed in an environmentally responsible way?						
b. Is the land used for: burial growing vegetables recreation quiet meditation a colourful & attractive community garden community celebrations other _____						
c. Have indigenous & drought resistant plants been planted?						
d. Have invasive plants been removed from the property?						
e. Has the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides been eliminated?						

	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Buildings:						
a. Are these well maintained?						
b. Are they used for: worship only or for Education (e.g. crèche, adult education) Social support meetings (e.g. HIV/AIDS, Alcohol Anonymous, food kitchens etc.) Community celebrations (e.g. weddings) Rented out to make money Other_____						
c. Is crockery used for functions in preference to disposable, throw away cups and plates?						
d. Where possible, are premises used as a recycling depot?						
10. Office:						
a. Where possible, is paper recycled?						
b. Where possible, is recycled paper used?						
c. Are steps taken to reduce paper use & junk mail?						
d. Have funds been invested in institutions that have a good social & eco-justice record?						
11. Water: Is there an effort to save & use water wisely?						
12. Energy / electricity: Is there an effort to use this wisely?						
13. Transport: Where possible is an effort made to reduce costs, fuel and exhaust emissions by, for example, sharing lifts?						
14. Visits to natural places: Do we ever do things together in unspoilt & beautiful places in nature?						
15. Youth:						
a. Do the young people go on adventure outings in nature together?						
b. Do the young people take part in environmental activities in the community?						
16. Children: Is environmental awareness, responsibility & enjoyment taught to children as part of their faith & moral education?						
17. Do members ever participate in environmental, spiritual retreats?						
18. Public Ministry:						
a. Is an ecologically sustainable lifestyle actively promoted by the faith community.						
b. Does the faith leadership advocate for, speak about, & where possible take action for ecological & socio- economic justice at local, national or global levels?						

This is a draft audit has been compiled from a various sources with assistance from friends and colleagues. Your help in piloting it in your faith community and your comments, alterations and additions would be welcomed.

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Allen Goddard

*Students' Christian Organization &
SA Evangelical Seminary*

A ROCHA

I wonder if you've noticed that there's a qualitative difference between 'PowerPoint' and the good old overhead projector! There is also an environmental difference. It's more sustainable to use these transparencies... less electricity; less time on the internet finding things... maybe I should go back to newsprint.



I'd like to thank Bishop Geoff for this opportunity. I want to give 3 quick free 'ads': firstly to Pierre Naude who is working with young people in Mpumalanga Province doing wonderful and exciting environmental education work.

Father Athanacious Akunda has a wonderful programme in Yeoville, Johannesburg His church has designed seminars for young people who are battling with drugs and alcohol, and the church is getting very involved in inviting young people off the streets to come and learn about what the Bible says about these issues. The church is trying to do something about that in Yeoville, which is a very challenging environmental context to be working in.

Alex and Pumela from Kagiso are doing the most amazing work with children – children as young as 2 and 3 who are abandoned on the streets in Kagiso. They have gathered them together because it is an environment of crime against children. They have provided safety, food and a programme for these little kids. They have got the most wonderful photographs.

I wear two hats – like every other Post-Modern person in this world! I work for the Student's Christian Organization and I work for A Rocha South Africa. My work involves theological education. I teach at the Evangelical Seminary of South Africa. Young interns who want to give a year of their lives to go into ministry - on a programme called STEM – the Short Term Experience in Ministry. We are applying theology to the real context that students are facing in South Africa and as part of the STEM training, we take students on a 'Creation Stewardship' course in the Karlkloof mist belt forests of Kwazulu Natal.

It is a 7-day course which is fully accredited by the University of Kwazulu Natal. The students are introduced to the doctrine of Creation – to the doctrine of Stewardship – and the importance of caring for what God has given. They bring the stories of their own lives to the course. Then we teach them a whole range of skills – outdoor leadership skills, bush guiding skills (with trainers from the National Botanical Institute). They learn how to introduce other people to Creation in a non-threatening way because many young Zulu people from urban contexts are actually frightened of going into the forest.

The second half of the course takes these young, newly trained accredited students back into the townships where they are encouraged to share what they know with younger kids. We work with Grade 8's from Sobantu and Edendale townships who have never had any kind of bush experience before. We take them to a nearby municipal game reserve for three nights The young interns lead them in a little Creation Stewardship course – which translates as 'Live in Creation' (or 'Creation Alive'). It is a series of bush walks. It's an integrated programme with life skills, outdoor

leadership games and it gives young students from entry level township high schools an opportunity of a lifetime to learn about the creation. We also integrate art into the programme.

This is a partnership between SEO and A Rocha South Africa. We use these camps as opportunities to assess our interns to see what they've learned, how they've integrated their skills and how they are going to carry what they have learned **back** to the areas they come from across the whole sub-continent. This year we have interns from Namibia as well as South Africa.

A Rocha South Africa wants to take seriously the incredible changes that we are going to be living through in the next 50 years. We want to get alongside communities - to help faith communities, to help schools understand what is happening and to encourage them to take action.

One of our other projects is a riverine rehabilitation project in the heart of Pietermaritzburg where schools, the Medi-clinic and neighbours from a range of cultures and religious backgrounds, have put money together to employ workers to deal with alien invasive species. The workers will be planting indigenous plants and then we will be researching the recovery of the banks. We are planning to provide training for the manual workers to become guides so they can lead school children and groups into our inner city conservancy in years to come.

A Rocha is a Portuguese word that means 'The Rock'. The organization operates in 15 countries around the world. We have 5 'C's'.

We are first of all **Christian**, taking seriously the bible as God's revelation. We believe that Christians need to discover that you cannot think about Christ without Creation – and you cannot think about Creation without Christ. In the Christian tradition those two go hand in hand.

We promote **Community** – we live in community so our workers will actually be staying with us where we live and we invite people to come and share in the experience of Christian community. Just because we're Christian and we believe in the scriptures as God's revelation doesn't mean however that we don't work with other faiths. All over the world and in Pietermaritzburg we are working hand in hand with Muslims and people of other faiths because we share the common goal of saving the Creation.

Then we believe in **Co-operation**. We co-operate with WESSA and any other organisation or group that shares our goals.

We are involved with real **Conservation**. All the work that we do is documented and scientifically validated. We do not embark on projects that don't link in to scientific conservation and for that reason A Rocha has been admitted to and welcomed as a member of the IUCN (International Conservation Union).

Finally, we are **cross-cultural** in all the work that we do because of the world that we live in. The first other full-time It is important that we can demonstrate that white and black, people from different backgrounds, can really come together and demonstrate the love of God in cross-cultural Community Conservation work.

Andrew Warmback

NECCSA – Network of Earthkeeping Christian Communities

We are not 'The Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa' the Network of Earthkeeping Christian Communities in South Africa.

In May 2002, a few months before the World Summit on Sustainable Development, a few Christians got together to form a network, primarily to share information about Christian Environmental Issues. We then formalized that in the form of a constitution. It is a network and not an organization, primarily an information sharing vehicle.



This is its vision and aim:

NECCSA provides a network for local Christian congregations, communities, groups and organizations, as well as interested individuals, to engage with one another in environmental concerns. The purpose of the Network is to stimulate a concern for the environment and more specifically for environmental justice amongst Christians in South Africa. 'It will provide a communication network to share information, visions, stories, resources and creative suggestions with one another in order to support, encourage and inspire others to address environmental concerns effectively and from within a Christian orientation.'

We encourage or invite people to become members. The expectations of membership are the following:

1. To celebrate Environment Sunday on an annual basis – that is the Sunday nearest to the 5th June (that the UN recognizes as World Environment Day).
2. To include environmental concerns and programmes for Christian education.
3. To cultivate environmental sensitivity in the management of Church land and Church property.
4. To seek to live in harmony with the totality of God's creation and to encourage others to do so too.

Membership comes in three categories: Groups, individual – or associate membership (for those outside South Africa or those who don't share a Christian orientation). Membership fees are at least R20 per annum! The good news is that you can be on the e-mail network for free – and the vast majority of people sign up in that category. But joining as a member helps to express, in a way, your commitment to the things I said before.

We put previous newsletters on the website www.neccsa.org.za (they come out about every month) as well as statements from Christian Church organizations. There are a number of people here who are on the network. There are a number of people here who have been involved in leadership of the organization (Ernst, Bishop Geoff, Leanne and others). We'd like to take the step of putting everyone on the e-mail network. We are particularly looking for what we call 'correspondents', those who, from your particular neck of the woods, are aware of positive things that are happening and would like to share those with other people. Everyone is invited to contribute stories that can then be shared in the newsletter. We are also looking for people as correspondents who are willing to redistribute the newsletter to others. We have once or twice a year produced a printed paper version. We probably do this again soon after this conference but we tend to rely mostly on e-mail for communication.

“If an Environmental Organisation is agreed to, what should be it's Vision, Aims, and Objectives?”

Bishop Geoff Davies

The purpose of an Environment Institute

What we are dealing with is a calling from God. I'm sure many here feel as if God has called them to care for the environment. I have a desperate passion to fulfil what I believe is God's calling for us to take on responsibility for the environment. I have felt this for many years and for long I have wanted to be more involved in promoting the “Church and the Environment”.

For seventeen years as a Diocesan bishop of one of the most impoverished Dioceses in South Africa, in the Transkei, I tried to raise environmental awareness amongst the clergy and in the Diocese. My wife Kate was involved in a Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Education Programme. Both of these programmes can be used by churches and faith groups and are extremely important and helpful. To establish greater awareness among the clergy is of vital importance.

When I forsook my Diocese, God opened the opportunity to be involved full-time in the church and the environment. Again God created the opportunity when I met Eddy Russell from the UNDP who wanted to partner and cooperate with faith communities in environmental care. The vision that came about was that we should establish something like an Institute, not to do the work of the churches but to motivate, inspire, encourage, equip and provide resources and training material for the churches and faith groups of South Africa.

We cannot do the work for the faith communities. There is too much to be done. We know that the SACC did a lot of the work during the Apartheid struggle that the churches should have been doing. People said they would let the SACC do the work. What we need to do now is to help and encourage the faith communities recognise that care for the environment is central to their faith, and that it is the responsibility and the work of all faith communities to be involved in the environment. We want to help them to discover that, to do that and to equip and enable them to fulfil that. The institute would be a centre from where people would come to address synods and conferences to encourage and inspire faith groups.

The UNDP suggested that having had a national gathering of the churches and faith groups of South Africa, we would have a mandate to seek further funding to establish a really worthwhile institute, with lots of people involved in this challenging, exciting and important work.

The question of the representivity has been raised. We wrote to the SACC member churches, non-member churches and religions of South Africa, asking each to send two representatives to this conference. Unfortunately there was little response from the non-SACC churches. We need to say we have the mandate and representation of those of us gathered here. At the same time, I have had enough experience in the church to know that even when you establish something officially, if the

churches don't want to support it they won't! So we need to say we **have** gathered together, we have a very broad representation, probably over 30 faith groups from around South Africa, and to say: "We, gathered together at Hartbeespoort, have agreed on the need to establish an institute, that we want to take this forward and that we hope that the churches and all religions of South Africa would be involved and participate in it. We know the seriousness and urgency of the position.

We had hoped that the National Religious Leader's Forum (NRLF) would be able to meet here to receive a report from us. We need to agree on a broad direction and general objectives for this institute. Out of the remaining resources from the Small Grants Programme, we could then call together a Committee, elected by ourselves, who could come together and work out in greater detail the objectives for this institute. We have got this opportunity, God has provided it for us and I think we need to take it and move ahead.

Environmental organizations are excited that faith communities are, at long last they believe, becoming involved in environmental issues. We should be involved because environmental responsibility is integral to our respective faiths. The sooner we realize that, and start acting on it, the better.

Discussion

Wednesday, 16 March 2005

"Structure of the Proposed Environmental Institute"

Groups reported back on Wednesday evening on what they thought the aims and objectives of the proposed Environmental Institution should be.

It was decided that a steering committee should be elected to formulate the vision and objectives and to get the institute on its feet.

The conference appointed Bishop Geoff Davies as the coordinator of the new Institute and the name of "South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute" was agreed to. (The Steering Committee subsequently agreed that it should be "Southern". The Environment does not know national boundaries.)

The conference agreed, after an extensive discussion, on the following declaration and media release:

HARTBEESSPOORT DECLARATION

We, the delegates to the South African Council of Churches Environment Conference meeting at Hartbeespoort, March 14-17, 2005, agree that nation-wide and global environmental degradation is one of the most urgent moral concerns of our century.

We note with dismay:

1. The destruction of our ecosystems;
2. The ever widening gap between excessive wealth and abject poverty;
3. The injustices of the global economy that are a direct cause of contemporary socio-economic problems and environmental destruction;
4. The rampant consumerism that is eroding our spiritual values and threatening God's creation;
5. The underhanded promotion of Genetically Modified Organisms and the monopoly of trans-national corporations in food production;
6. The destruction of biodiversity and degradation of habitats through monoculture agriculture and forestry;
7. The devastating impact of global warming and climate change;
8. The long term consequences of the use of nuclear energy and fossil fuels.

We believe that faith based communities have a significant role to play in the nurturing and protection of God's creation. We call on religious leaders 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.

We call on our government, and the governments of the world, to establish a just economic system, favouring people before profits.

We affirm our responsibility towards God's creation because of our love for the Creator and in obedience to the scriptural imperative to love our neighbour which must include future generations.

We ask all South African faith groups to support the establishment and development of a South African Faith Communities' Environmental Institute to promote the care and nurturing of all of God's Creation.

17th March 2005

MEDIA RELEASE

We are representatives of the faith communities in South Africa. Meeting at the South African Council of Churches' Environmental Conference at Hartbeespoort from March 14-17, 2005, we agree that nation-wide and world-wide environmental degradation is one of the most urgent moral concerns of our century.

We have shared stories of the poverty, insecurity, unsanitary conditions, polluted environment and lack of water of many of our people.

We have observed the increasing destruction of natural habitats, leading to the extinction of thousands of species.

We have noted with alarm our declining sea and fresh water resources, erosion of our soil, destruction of our indigenous forests and other habitats and the potential devastation of climate change.

We have heard with alarm the long-term dangers of nuclear energy and pollution from coal fired power stations.

We have also listened to signs of hope, of communities' struggles against environmental abuse and their courage in fostering life in the face of adversity.

We have realized that much social and environmental destruction is a result of our grossly unjust and immoral economic system.

We find that we have moved from the worship of God to the worship of money and the "god" of profit.

The present economic system with its inequalities, unfair trade practices, agricultural subsidies and WTO regulations favour the already wealthy. It is the cause of massive suffering and poverty among people and the destruction of our natural environment.

We believe the faith communities have a grave responsibility to ensure the establishment of justice in our dealings with one another, particularly in our economic system.

We therefore call on our faith communities to place environmental care and justice at the forefront of their agenda. We believe it is integral to our faith response.

We call on our government and the governments of the world to establish a just economic system favouring people before profits.

We don't believe water should be privatised.

We call for control of food production to be in the hands of our people, rejecting its manipulation by multinational corporations. We therefore appeal for transparency, and a moratorium on the further use of GMO seeds and crops, applying the precautionary principle.

We call for full public participation in environmental decision making. For example, we should not have to resort to courts of law to be heard over GMO's and the pebble bed nuclear reactor.

We call for the rapid development of renewable energy production so that, with urgency, we may reduce our dependence on costly and polluting coal, oil and nuclear energy.

We make this call because we seek to be obedient to the commandment to love God and our neighbour. We believe our neighbour includes all of creation and future generations. The future of our children is jeopardised by our present consumer based, energy intensive way of life.

We call on all South African faith communities to support the establishment and development of a South African Faith Communities' Environmental Institute to promote the care and nurturing of all of God's Creation.

We have joined together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery: We commit ourselves to the healing of the earth and the renewal of life.

17th March 2005

CALL TO COMMITMENT

On the last day participants symbolised their commitment to the environment as they place pebbles together during the closing worship, and joined in the 'Call to Commitment', taken from the *United Nations Environmental Sabbath Programme*.



We join with the earth and with each other
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other
To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

We join with the earth and with each other
To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars

We join with the earth and with each other
To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children

We join together as many and diverse
expressions of one loving mystery: for the
healing of the earth and the renewal of life.

17th March 2005



National Conference

Follow up on SAFCEI

Steering Committee

The Conference appointed a Steering Committee.

The following were elected or have been co-opted as members:

Rabbi Hillel Avidan (Jewish - SA
Association of Progressive Rabbis)

The Revd. Sue Brittion (Anglican)

Mr John Clarke (Roman Catholic and Save
the Wild Coast-SWC)

Prof. Ernst Conradie (UWC and United
Reformed Church),

Mr. Shaun Cozett (DWAF),

Bishop Geoffrey Davies (Anglican/SACC),

Ms.Kate Davies (EEASA)

The Revd. Glynis Goyns (Uniting
Presbyterian Church)

The Revd. Tim Gray (Anglican)

Mr.Peter Just (NRLF & Buddhist)

Dr. Mohamed S Karodia (Council of
Muslim Theologians)

Archbishop Seraphim Kykkotis (Greek
Orthodox),

Ms.Roselyn Mazibuko (Bahá'í)

Dr Dorie Moodley (Hindu Maha Sabha),

The Revd. Craig Morrison (UCCSA)

The Revd. Pierre Naude (NECCSA
/Methodist)

Dr Lucas Ngoetjana (KZN Christian
Council),

Ms.Leanne Seeliger (University of
Stellenbosch)

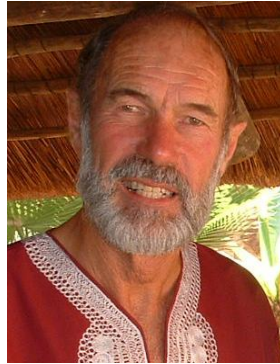
Mr. Dave Rushworth (Hoedspruit
Community Church),

The Revd. Andrew Warmback (NECCSA
Anglican),

At the August 2006 Steering Committee meeting, following registration as a Section 21 Company, the Management Committee was formed from members of the Steering Committee, as legally required

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

G. Davies (Executive Director)



H. Avidan



S. Cozett



P Just



G Goyns



M Karodia



C Morrison



OTHER MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE:

R Mazibuko



Archbishop Kykkotis



A Warmback



G. Mokudu



D Rushworth,



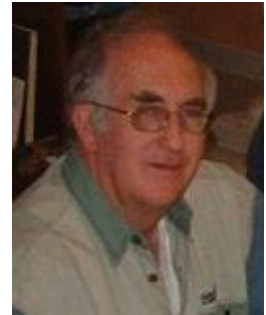
D Moodley,



S Britton,



T Gray



P Naude,



L Seeliger,



E Conradie



K Davies,



J Clarke



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
<u>2005</u>		
26 th to 28 th May	Koinonia, Botha's Hill, Durban	Developed the Vision, Aims and Objectives & Plan of Action
20 th to 21 st July	St. Francis, Parkview, Johannesburg	Following the Launch of SAFCEI by Prof. Wangari Maathai
12 th to 13 th October	St. Francis, Parkview, Johannesburg	Developed Articles and Memo for Section 21 Registration
<u>2006</u>		
24 th to 25 th April	St. John the Baptist, Pinetown, Durban	Developed functioning of SAFCEI communication, funding and projects to be involved in
21 st to 23 rd August	Dravida Community Hall and Jewish Progressive Congregation, Durban	Appointment of Management Committee
27 th to 29 th Nov.	Greek Orthodox Church, Sophiatown, Johannesburg	Prepared for AGM and Climate Change. Held a public meeting

Steering Committee meeting
Koinonia, Botha's Hill, Durban
26th to 28th May



Lunch in Dorie Moodley's home
During 21st to 23rd August Steering
Committee meeting in Durban

The Committee's work

The Steering Committee has drawn up the Vision, Aim and Objectives of SAFCEI, (attached in Appendix). It has also agreed on the Articles and Memorandum of Association for Registration as a Section 21 Company, opened a bank account in the name of SAFCEI, with three authorised signatures, & a Post Office Box. It has appointed Shaun Cozett and Paul Tyler to form a Finance sub-committee and Dave Douglas as Auditor. We are extremely grateful to them for their work.

SAFCEI WORK AND PROJECTS

In September 2006 Kerkinactie, of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, entered into partnership with SAFCEI on a Climate Change project, initially in the Western Cape, but working nationally from this year. This has enabled SAFCEI to appoint an Administrator, Di Mellon, and Western Cape Project leader, The Revd. Ab IJzerman. It also enabled SAFCEI to acquire office space in the "Green Building" in Westlake, Cape Town, with Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA). It was a great advance moving the office out of Bishop Geoff's home!

The production of environmental education and resources materials should play an important part in the work of SAFCEI. An start has been made with the production of a significant handbook "*Creation Care – Practical ways of exploring and responding to environmental issues through faith communities*" by Kate Davies. She was also largely instrumental in producing a "Climate Change" leaflet for faith communities.

At this point I would like to pay tribute to and thank my wife Kate for the amazing support she has given to me and to the work of getting SAFCEI off the ground. She and my daughter Thandi were largely responsible for organizing the national conference and the production of this report. Thanks are also due to Rebecca Murdoch, Frances Davies, Nola Collins, Liz Turner and Claire Mollatt who assisted with transcribing tapes and other aspects of the report.

LINKS TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Apart from the Kerkinactie climate change pilot project in the Western Cape, SAFCEI works with Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA), Sustaining the Wild Coast (SWC), WWF-SA, the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), SAFeAGE, (which is involved in GMO issues) South African Climate Action Network (SACAN), Earthlife Africa and "Gondwana Alive – *Stemming the Sixth Great Extinction*".

Bishop Geoff Davies, is on the Board of the South African Climate Action Network (SACAN) and Sustaining the Wild Coast (SWC) and he has been asked to serve on the Western Cape Provincial Climate Change Committee.

SAFCEI's modus operandi is to work through existing environmental and faith structures and networks to accomplish its objectives. The establishment and strengthening of links with other organisations is a central focus of SAFCEI's work. The following religious organisations are included: South African Council of Churches, Provincial Councils of Churches, mainline Christian Denominations, National Religious Leaders' Forum, Muslim Judicial Council, Jewish Board of Deputies, SA Hindu Maha Sabha and the various other smaller faith communities in Southern Africa.

SAFCEI is also linked to a number of networks: Bishop Geoff is deputy Chairperson of NECCSA (Network of Earthkeeping Christian Communities in South Africa), the Africa representative for ACEN (Anglican Communion Environmental Network) & a member of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa Environment Network. SAFCEI is an Environmental Learning Forum partner.

SAFCEI also distributes information, e-mailing important environmental information for local religious institutions and, for example, NECCSA Update.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS AT WHICH SAFCEI HAS BEEN REPRESENTED

SA Government's Climate Change Conference, Gallagher Estate, October 2005

"God and Creation – *Mobilizing the Faithful to Celebrate and Care for God's Creation*", at the Brackenhurst Environmental Centre, Tigoni, Kenya, 8-11 March, 2006

"Creation and Mission" workshop organized by the John Knox Centre, Geneva, 17-21 September, 2006

Goedgedacht Social Development Forum Discussions on "Sustainable Energy" and "Climate Change" in July and October, 2006 (Statement attached in Appendix)

United Nations Climate Change Conference, Nairobi, 6-17 November, 2006

Bishop Geoff has also preached in various churches, participated in radio and TV programmes and written newspaper articles.

Andrew Warmback has written:

"SAFCEI also has a significant symbolic value – the only inter-faith environment organization in a context where there is an increasing growth in interfaith awareness and co-operation. Those on the Management and Steering Committees reflect in themselves a considerable level of engagement in environmental issues, who through SAFCEI have, in turn been strengthened in their commitment to the environment."

At a recent meeting with the Director General of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), SAFCEI was included alongside the major environmental organizations of South Africa, so that SAFCEI and the Faith Communities are becoming recognized as important players in the struggle to care for creation.

Thanks

As the Director, I want to extend a note of great gratitude to all the members of the Steering Committee. They have shown enormous dedication and commitment, attending lengthy meetings with no financial reward, but fulfilled in the knowledge that we are seeking to be obedient to the God we believe has called us to care for this amazing world. The way we have all, of the main faiths of South Africa, been able to work together has been of enormous encouragement. But it has not only been working together. We have been enriched and grateful for the learning and the abundant goodwill we have experienced. We are an example to the rest of the world! We, of such diverse faith, race, culture, language, can get on so well – why can't the rest of the world follow our example? It is in the meeting, in the contact and sharing, on the exchange of ideas, in the eating together, that we see each other as fellow human beings, rejoicing in the wonderful variety God has brought into this world. There is accepted recognition that, in the wise words of Professor Maathai, we need to uphold democracy and the equitable and sustainable distribution of natural resources if we want to find peace. It is our prayer in SAFCEI that the various faiths of our country will be able to see this, so that we may indeed dwell in the peace that our creator wishes, not only for us, but for all of creation.

A new Management Committee will be elected at the first Annual General Meeting

Official Launch of SAFCEI

by **Prof. Wangari Maathai**

at Delta Park, 20 July 2005

Bishop Geoff Davies with
2004 Nobel Peace Laureate,
Prof. Wangari Maathai,
at the launch of SAFCEI.



Archbishop Seraphim Kykkotis,
Peter Just and Dorie Moodley
with Bishop Geoff and
Prof Maathai, planting a
Wild Peach at the launch



SAFCEI is launched!
Delta Park,
Johannesburg,
20 July 2005



Welcome by Mr Don Macey,

Chairman of Delta Park

Mr Norman Bloom had the vision to convert this building at Delta Park, Johannesburg, into a thriving environmental education centre, and so it is rather appropriate that this Institute should be launched here. I am excited about this Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute, where the various faith communities come together in a spirit of community and environment.

I've had a look at my environmental dairy today and it is appropriate that the statement for today is "poor people and their rights". Poverty is a lack of power. Poverty alleviation should therefore address situations in which people have few opportunities in life. Rather than thinking of the poor as needy persons wanting handouts, recognise their basic human rights to common resources. They need the help of those who are privileged to be able to uplift themselves.

I think I'm not wrong in saying that the idea of our initiative at the Delta Environmental Centre and the new Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute is to do that kind of thing, to help, particularly poor, underprivileged people to realise and reach their potential, and their dignity. And I think we have a tremendous role in the environment to do that. We are very blessed in South Africa. It is rated as the third most biologically diverse country in the world. With less than 1% of the global land surface this country harvests some 10% of global plant, bird and fresh water diversity and some 6% of reptile diversity. South Africa is truly environmentally amazing. Let's resolve to keep it that way.

Delta Environmental Centre edits the "Enviro-teach" magazine, which goes to every school in the country. We've just launched an issue on "Financial literacy and Sustainable Living". We're very excited about this initiative. We feel a bond with you in what you are doing in this initiative, Bishop Geoff, and we wish you every success, and if we can help, please feel free. Partnerships are what the world is all about today. We're in a global environment, and we must work together and join together, in faith and in the belief we're involved in a worthwhile cause, in God's work. It's a joy for us to welcome you. We also welcome Professor Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt movement in Kenya.

I want to give you some background to today's gathering. I am delighted to hear, Don Macey that you have talked about the importance of partnerships, because I think that is what the basis of this is about. It is partnerships between the faith communities and environmental organisations – something that has been sadly lacking in the past. We, and I talk from the Christian perspective – must say that we have singularly failed in the past to take on environmental concerns and issues. We have had some very well intentioned and competent environmentalists who have been involved, so the faith communities have largely left environmental issues to others. It really is time that we began to work together in partnership.

This initiative is very special because not only is it linking faith communities but it is also linking environmental organisations. And when I say faith communities, I mean that. We started initially from the SACC saying we must get the church denominations of South Africa together and involved. We then felt we couldn't leave it at that because we all breathe the same air, and drink the same water and we need to be tackling this issue together. Through the wonderful workings that happen with the Lord, I met Eddy Russell from the United Nations Development Programme who said that he wanted to get the Faith Communities involved. He suggested that we apply to the GEF Small Grants Programme to hold a national conference. This we did in March. At that conference of about 80 people, we agreed overwhelmingly that we should establish an Environment Institute for the Faith Communities to try to get this issue onto their agenda.

We have now taken the opportunity of Professor Wangari's presence in South Africa to ask her to launch this initiative and we are very excited about this. It is so important, in this day and age, that we are able to come together as the different religions, and we have the major religions of South Africa joining in this initiative. The challenge is to get the different faith communities involved and recognising that the care of the environment is central to the work of religious communities. This is going to be the hard work. Talking as a Christian, I really think that God told us in the very first chapter of the Bible to look after the world that God brought into being. We need to bring onto the Church's agenda that this is not just another justice issue, but that it is central to our faith. I know that other religions are realising this as well. We have with us Dr. Dorie Moodley from Durban who, as a Hindu also brings this perspective to us. We are committed to motivating the Faith Communities so that they will see that this is an issue central to their agenda.

You will have received a copy of the NECCSA/SAFCEI newsletter. It comes under the banner of the Network for Earthkeeping Christian Communities and under SAFCEI for the other religions. We have also printed the Aim and Objectives. Please fill in the forms if you want to be part of the emailing on our network. We then want you to write your commitment from your paper onto one of the pennants which we will fly at future celebrations, as a reminder of the wishes and commitments of today.

Professor Wangari Maathai had a major international event last night, for those of you who heard about it, when she delivered the third Nelson Mandela lecture. She was greeted with a double standing ovation. Last night she was addressing government leaders and the international community. Tomorrow she will be addressing the academic community when she gives the Vice Chancellor's lecture at the University of Cape Town.

Today, Professor Wangari, you are among civil society. We hope that you are going to be relaxed and feel free with us. At the end of the programme, we are going to ask you to sign one of the pennants and then officially launch SAFCEI and then to do a thing we know you are very good at – plant a tree!

Welcome friends and welcome particularly to Wangari Maathai. I have the honour and privilege to introduce her to you. Most of you know her – so I won't go into her CV. She was one of the first women scientists in East Africa to have high academic degrees. She was the first professor in East Africa for veterinary medicine and that made her prominent in her own right, but what really made her known worldwide was her courageous stand against environmental destruction in her home country of Kenya when the then President, Daniel Arap Moi, wanted to carve off a prime piece of the central park of Nairobi to build offices. She virtually single-handedly organised the resistance against this. I can tell you the park is still intact thanks to the activism and courageous intervention of Wangari Maathai. I think that made her think a lot!

She was very much appalled by the poverty of rural women in Kenya and whenever she was interviewing them in her trials to look at the vet situation in Kenya she found one of the main points of destruction in their areas was the forest encroachment by corporations, by civil servants who carved themselves slices out of the valuable Kenyan forests and that led to the fact that people had less and less trees. So she started two things. One is often forgotten. She started the tree planting through the so called "Greenbelt Movement" which is very famous now all over the world and which has done wonderful things for the environment. But she said it wasn't good enough only to plant trees. We also need to protect those which have been growing naturally. She has been at the forefront of forest protection.

I feel very privileged that I was with her when a number of senior civil servants in Kenya were trying to encroach on one of the last remaining nature reserves just behind the offices of the United Nations Environmental Programme in Nairobi. We were planting trees. We were approached by the Kenyan police in full battle gear. It was a threatening thing. You can imagine that at that stage Wangari stood up on a small mound and said "Isn't it lovely that the police even come here to protect the forests!"

I think that was her message. She was trying to build bridges and bring everyone on board. It is not something she can do alone. It is not something that a group like us here can do alone. We must embrace everyone to bring us all on board. I think that is her message. We need to be working together. We need to fight for the environment and this means we need to fight for democratic rule. Given the fact that democracy has finally arrived in Kenya, she has been made the Vice-Minister of the Environment. That is something we are incredibly proud of – that we have somebody like her in such high office. Then came a number of awards and finally the Nobel Peace prize last year. She is the first African woman to receive that prize. For that alone we are thankful.

Finally and on a very personal note, Wangari is no stranger to this place. She was here in 2002 when we were here in Johannesburg, celebrating the WSSD. She helped us, the Heinrich Bohl Foundation, with which I am associated, to launch a book which is called "The Jo'burg Memo". It was a memo which tries to reconcile the need for development of the South with the needs for preserving our natural resources. The subtitle is "*Fairness in a fragile world*". I think that is a motto which could be written over Wangari's lifetime. I would like to donate this book as a gift for the library for your new Institute. Thank you.

Your Grace, distinguished guests and friends, it is a great pleasure to be here, for the second time, because when we launched “*The Jo’burg memo*” we were here and it is a beautiful setting for those of us who care about the environment. Bishop, I am very happy to be part of this initiative at this time. As you know we are here because we came to celebrate the birthday of Madiba and we had the privilege of giving the third Mandela lecture series which is going to be an annual event. It is intended to be a forum for serious dialogue on various issues about Africa. I am very happy to be here and happy that you saw it fit for us to come here and launch this initiative.

I want to commend you very highly for thinking about this initiative and for coming together. I must say that for people of faith, you are right on mark, because the people of faith are really the ones who should be in the forefront! In Kenya, I have tried very hard to bring on board Bishops and I hope that Bishop Davies – you can come to Kenya and help me mobilize the Bishops and the faithful in Kenya – because I have been trying to tell them to work with me through Genesis. Genesis is the book for the environmentalists. It tells us how this planet was created. When you go through Genesis you see that every day God was creating something. We should go back and read that book day by day to see how God created this and created that and see where you would be if God had not been so infinitely wise to wait until the last day to create us. Because if God had created us a day earlier, we would not have survived on this planet. Because he created all the elements, the atmosphere, the water, the trees, the species, and he separated the waters.

The other day I read that book and realised that if he had created us on Tuesday, there was nowhere to stand! Because he had not yet separated land from water so there would have been nothing. So in a very serious note, I think the people of faith ought to be in the forefront for the protection of the environment because we would be protecting God’s creation. This is very much within our faith.

There was a time when the people of faith in Kenya felt that their job was not about the planet earth. Their job is about heaven. Now there is no planet called heaven! They still have to discover that planet. Some people think that heaven is right here. If you read the book of Revelation, Bishop, there is a place where it says that everything shall be converted and there shall be a New Jerusalem. That New Jerusalem shall have peace. Sometimes I think maybe the New Jerusalem shall be this planet earth converted according to Revelation.

I say to myself, wouldn’t it be terrible if by the time the New Jerusalem comes, so much has been destroyed on this planet. In any case, when you go through Genesis and you listen to the words of God, every time he/she created he/she always said it was GOOD at the end of it. When we look at the environment and we look at the rivers when it rains, I see that water is not clean. It is silted, it is full of top, fertile soil which is supposed to be in the fields, for farmers – but now it is in the rivers being transported to the lakes and the oceans and I know then if God were to look at that with me, he would say “NOT GOOD!”

If he was to go and look at our dump sites, especially in poor communities where we go and we dump our waste and we don’t inform anybody, so nobody knows that we have dumped pollution in their neighbourhoods. Long after they start suffering from diseases, the effects of that pollution, that’s when we discover “Oh my God! What has been happening here?” So if God was to speak to us – especially through us people of faith - he/she would say: “NOT GOOD!”

If we had to visit our mountains, our forested mountains - and I understand that here in South Africa you are doing something which I like, but which people in Kenya don't like – that is you are trying to remove a lot of foreign species from the forested mountains, especially in watershed areas. Foreign species, especially the eucalyptus and the pines in our parts of the world, kill all the other species. Many of the plantations of these monocultures are literally deserts or dead forests; because you have the individual trees but they have killed everything else in the forest. So although they look very good and they are very beautiful, and they are useful in the timber and building industry, and in the furniture industry, they are killing all the other species. So if we allow them to continue taking over our forests, one day we shall just have them and nothing else.

So I have been persuading our governments to remove these plantations from our forested mountains because we need the biodiversity and we need these mountains as natural forests, because the way God created those natural forests, they are able to receive water, to conserve water, to recycle water so that we can continue to have rainfall. When you remove the natural system, the rainfall pattern changes and rivers dry up because there is not enough water going into the ground to feed our underground reserves. When you remove the natural forests, water doesn't go into the ground, it runs off and that is why in many parts where this has happened, you have floods. These floods – sometimes you hear they wash away both people and their farms. Then we are very sad because thousands of people get killed and we bring them to you pastors and you preach to us and you say: “God has given and God has taken away.”

Now sometimes I want to talk on behalf of God and say “God did do that!” God gave but we were not able to manage properly so that now we have allowed the destruction of life. The biggest problem we have is that many people do not make these linkages to see how these destroyed forests, destroyed lands eventually lead to poverty, sometimes to lack of water, sometimes to lead to our inability to produce enough food for ourselves so we may starve. Sometimes when the resources become very degraded or when the resources disappear altogether we start fighting for the little that is left and so we have conflict. We don't call those conflicts ‘resource based conflicts’, we call them inter-tribal conflicts, regional conflicts, tribal conflicts, but quite often when you look deep into them, they are resource based conflicts. It is because the resources have become very degraded or they have become depleted, so we are fighting over what is left.

It is our capacity to make these linkages that will help us to design the right policies in our parliaments and will help us understand why we need to preserve our resources and to manage these resources very responsibly, very accountably and to share these resources equitably. If we don't share these resources equitably, and this is true of Kenya - I always like to use my country because it has many of the problems that we face – what happens is that we end up with a few people who are rich and a large number of people who are poor. Unfortunately when you live in countries like that, you have to protect yourselves with burglar proofing, with guns and sometimes you may even have internal conflict.

I use for an example, the conflict in Darfur. We are all concerned about that conflict. Although there are very many other issues that touch on that conflict in the region, one of the basic reasons is environmental degradation. Here on one side we have pastoral communities and on the other we have farming communities, and the pastoral communities tend to overstock their areas as they keep too many animals. If the government tries to say you can only keep so many animals, politicians say it is a right for me to keep as many animals as I want. Or sometimes the government may have to intervene and educate – because you don't want to misuse a lot of power, you want to work with people who understand – where groups like us become very important because we educate people so they can understand that you can only keep so many animals on your land without causing overgrazing, overstocking and eventually, desertification.

When that happens, a group that may feel very powerful because they are in power will invade a farming community and decide they can graze their animals where it is green. We see that in Kenya, sometimes people literally walk into other people's farms, into ranches, demanding that because our ancestors lived there, this is our land and our animals are dying, so we must graze them on this land – and we get conflicts and we get tension. You know what happens, sometimes when politicians are threatened? They love to capture and galvanize people around issues like this in order to appear as if it's not me who is in danger, it is you. This is your land and we must legally claim it or we have a right to go and graze our animals there – and so we have conflict.

It is partly because of these linkages that the Norwegian Nobel Committee decided that it is very important for us now, at this time in our human progress, to understand the linkage between managing our resources properly, responsibly, accountably, sustainably - sharing them equitably - and living in peace, and recognising that you can't do that if you live in a country where you have a dictator in place. You have to have democratic space where rule of law is respected, rights are respected. Those of you came last night to the Mandela lecture will have heard President Clinton explain that democracy is not only about the majority ruling. It is also about the minority rights and respecting the rights and the space of the minorities. It is therefore very important for us to understand that we cannot live in peace if we do not create democratic space. I like to call it space because people interpret democracy in very different ways, as you know, but we all understand space to be an opportunity to be creative, to be productive, to be respected, to do our work with dignity and where we are not punished because we happen to have different political opinions or we want to identify with different politicians – other than those who are in power.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee also wanted to say that we have to work for the three pillars of Peace, Democracy and Environmental Sustainability simultaneously. You cannot decide you'll work for democracy and later you will work for peace or you'll work for sustainable management of resources and later you will work for democracy. You have to work for them consciously and simultaneously. It is because of that we need to encourage dialogue, encourage the capacity to listen to each other, and the willingness to give each other space and especially that dialogue. That dialogue will not happen if you don't have democratic space, so that you can have freedom of the press, you can have freedom of religion, you can have freedom to assemble, to articulate your issues without fearing that in the evening you will end up in jail.

This understanding, this holistic understanding is extremely important. So I think that the people of faith have the best opportunity of promoting this philosophy, this new thinking. I think that the Norwegian Nobel Committee did it consciously. I didn't campaign for this prize and I was never interviewed for this prize. Nobody ever told me about it. I was going about my business when they called me and said you have won this thing. I said "No I don't know, where is it?" And therefore I know that they must have deliberated for a long time and they must have made a deliberate decision that the time has come for us to make the linkage between these three – which I call the three pillars of any stable state.

Some of you may have seen reference to my comparing the three pillars to a traditional African stool. I have been saying that when you look at a traditional African stool – when the leg and the seat are made from one log - if you do not make them from one log, you have never seen one that is made from different logs! A traditional one – you take a log and you chisel out - and as you are chiselling the legs, you are chiselling the seat. The three legs can be compared to the three pillars and the seat can be compared to the space and the milieu in which we develop. We want to be in the seat. We want to be part of who are on the seat, but we want to sit there or to operate from there, feeling stable. Therefore we must have those three legs strongly grounded. If you have only two legs, you can't sit very comfortably. If you have only one leg you are likely to fall and if you have

no leg, then you are definitely a failed state. And we have quite a few of them; we have had for some time, right here in our region.

So this is a very new thinking - we need to embrace it, we need to think about it. You are just on track as the people of faith.

To conclude, your Grace, there can be no better people than the people of faith to say “Yes, we must protect this wonderful creation, this wonderful planet earth!” God created many planets, but this one is so special and we, the human species, understand that. I don’t know whether all the other species understand that. Sometimes I ask them – “Do you understand what it means to be on this planet?” They don’t respond, but I know what we think, or what we should appreciate – that it is a very special planet and that all the species that we live with, we need. If you go back to the book of Genesis you will see that we need them. All these species would live quite comfortably without us – but we cannot live one day without them. When you appreciate that, you will fight for them, you will protect them, you will nurture them, you will give them space to be, even if you don’t know their names, or you don’t know what they do. They might not look very nice, but don’t bother them, they are there for a purpose from whoever made them. Your Grace, I think that is sometimes very humbling for us human species because we think we are very important – but try to close your nose and your mouth and you will realise how much you need these fellows.

Sometime ago I was in Japan attending the expo 2000. As I was going through the stands, I remember landing at one that said that everybody needs ten trees to absorb the carbon dioxide we exhale. So I would like to argue: We are going to plant one tree here, but it is only one tree. There are about 200 of us here. We should be planting 2000 trees to take care of the carbon dioxide we are exhaling, not to mention the carbon dioxide that is being exhaled by your car exhausts! So we need to do something – so we can plant trees. I know some of the organisations here are very much involved in planting trees.

Some of us are also involved in recycling and that is also very important. The campaign: “Reduce, Re-use, (Repair), and Recycle”, in Japan is known as ‘Mutainai’. I have been trying to share that concept with the rest of the world. It is a very nice name: “*Mutainai*”. It is a Buddhist concept which encourages people to use resources with respect. That is very typical of the eastern religions – use the resources with respect. It is doing very well in Japan. I should have brought my t-shirt with ‘Mutainai’ written on it! To try to encourage the three ‘R’s campaign which is common here, I am sure, and common in the western world.

The other thing we could do, especially those of us who go to the markets: I understand that here you don’t use plastic bags – or if you do, you use biodegradable plastic. In Kenya we are fighting that companies produce biodegradable plastics, but it would also be very good to use baskets. Our people are used to making baskets. In a way we are losing that skill because we no longer make those baskets. Let’s buy those baskets, let’s use them in shops. That way we do not waste plastic – and if we do use plastic, we use thick plastic which we can recycle. Therefore we also want to call upon the corporate world, the business community, to be responsible to the environment and not to only think of extracting resources but also putting back into the environment. One thing they can do, especially here in Africa, is to stop dumping cheap plastics on us because they are destroying our environment.

Just to clarify - The Three R’s are:

REDUCE – especially important for industrialised countries which are ‘throw away’ societies!

REUSE – Reuse what you can.

RECYCLE – That means if you can use it again, recycle it! A lot of paper can be recycled.

Recently I was talking to Dr Klaus Toffler, the executive director of UNEP and he suggested that we add the word “REPAIR”.

Because the campaign is known as the three R’s, I combine the REPAIR and REUSE. In poor countries, people are repairing and reusing all the time – out of poverty rather than out of the conscious decision to protect the environment. I was very happy when I was in Japan and saw that the Prime Minister of Japan was keen about Mutainai. He said he had been trying to promote the three ‘R’s’, using the word Mutainai. I understand the campaign is doing very well in Japan, but they are not doing it out of poverty. They are the second strongest economy in the world. They are doing it out of a conscious effort to protect the environment. That is what we need to have, a conscious effort to protect the environment.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has another ‘R’ – Revolution! I think he knows how to create a revolution. I think the only way we can use that word is to create a revolution in the continent for the protection of the environment! Just imagine, for example, what I have been trying to tell the Bishops in Kenya: I have tried to make my minister in Kenya - I have had two ministers since I went into government - to convince the President to declare a national tree planting day that has nothing to do with when he is available to plant a tree – because when we tie tree planting with the availability of the President, only he plants a tree!

So with those words – I can say a few – because I have said quite a few words! I am really delighted to be part of this initiative. I will definitely carry this message to the Bishops in Kenya. I am sure we’ll be in touch with you Bishop so that we can become a global – or at least a regional - network here in Africa to encourage our people of faith to not just talk about heaven but help God protect what he created. Thank you very much!

Appendices

SAFCEI Vision, Mission, Aims and Objectives

Issues and activities SAFCEI is involved in

How to become involved

Membership application

Goedgedacht Climate Change Statement

Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth. (13 August 2001). World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 24th General Council. Document GC 23-e: Accra, Ghana.

God's Earth is Sacred: An Open Letter to Church and Society in the United States. (March 2005). News from the US National Council of Churches.

The Assisi Declarations

The Earth Charter. (March 2000). Rio de Janeiro.



SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES' ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE

Coordinator: Bishop Geoff Davies

Telefax: (+27) 021 702 3622

Email: coordinator@safcei.org.za

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

In March 2005 the Faith Communities of South Africa met together in a national conference to consider the state of the natural environment and environmental justice. There was overwhelming agreement that there needed to be action and a conviction that the faith communities should be involved in environmental care.

It was therefore unanimously agreed to establish the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI).

Its purpose would be to raise awareness and encourage action by the faith communities to care for the natural environment and promote eco-justice – that is ecological and economic justice.

In July of 2005 Nobel Peace Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai, officially launched SAFCEI at a widely representative gathering at the Delta Park Environment Centre, Johannesburg.

www.safcei.org.za

OBJECTIVES

In the spirit of our respective faiths, through collaboration, networking, research & action, our objectives are to:

1. raise environmental awareness
2. engage in formulating policy & ethical guidelines within our faith communities
3. facilitate environmental responsibility & action
4. confront environmental & socio-economic injustices
5. support environmental training and learning.

We uphold as core values the principles of the Earth Charter:

I. Respect and care for the community of life

Following these four broad commitments:

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

II. Ecological integrity

Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.

III. Social and economic justice

Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.

IV. Democracy, non-violence and peace

Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making and access to justice.

Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.

Promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace

Issues and activities SAFCEI is involved in:

- Ethics & Ecojustice – ecological & economic
- Education for sustainable living
- Poverty & the environment
- Climate Change, including Energy and Transport issues
- Stemming Extinction & biodiversity loss
- Waste issues
- Food Security and GMOs

SAFCEI Plan of Action is to:

1. Establish contact with religious leaders in order to address their general assemblies/ synods/ conferences/ governing bodies of southern Africa on the objectives of the Institute with the purpose of enabling and encouraging them to adopt and implement the SAFCEI objectives for themselves.
2. Develop and provide resources for the training and motivation of faith communities to assist them in the implementation of SAFCEI objectives.
3. Establish networks and partnerships in southern Africa and elsewhere.
4. Develop with faith communities an ethical code applicable to environmental Concerns
5. Promote solutions to environmental concerns.
6. Pursue funding for the appointment of personnel for information/education, environmental education, fieldwork and faith based environmental witness in southern Africa.
7. Establish a SAFCEI website.
8. Organise and hold national environmental festivals and conferences, which would include meetings of the governing board and training workshops, as well as management committee meetings.

Financial Support:

We need financial support to enable us to fulfil our objectives. Will you be a partner with us?

Payments may be made directly to:

SAFCEI	Standard Bank
Branch Code 025 609	Account Number: 07 665 941 0
Swift Code: SBZAJJ	

(Direct Deposit: Please fax confirmation of deposit)
SAFCEI is a registered Section 21 Company



SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES' ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE

Issues and activities SAFCEI is involved in

www.safcei.org.za

July 2006

Climate Change:

Climate change is being generated by greenhouse gases, primarily caused by the burning of fossil fuels, particularly coal-fired electricity generation, and by motor vehicle emissions. If we don't take urgent remedial action, climate change could be devastating. It is essential we ensure that it is placed on the agenda of faith communities.

Energy:

How we generate energy and the amount we use is closely linked to climate change. There is a need to bring faith communities into greater awareness of the need to use renewable energy. If we are to prevent catastrophic climate change, we need to move from our present policy of high capital, high-tech, high energy development, to renewable, people-centred electricity generation that is in the control of local communities.

Economics and Ethics:

There are huge economic injustices and disparities in our world today. We won't get our economics right or stem environmental degradation, unless we get our ethics right. Ethics is obviously an area faith communities should be involved in.

Biodiversity and Extinction:

As people of faith, we believe God brought life into being. It is not for us to destroy it. Life on our planet is dependant on the interconnectedness of the variety of species. If too many species are destroyed, the very fabric of life is threatened. Our present rate of extinction is alarming. Among our faith communities we need to promote an attitude that has a high regard for life.

Natural Resources:

To ensure a sustainable future, it is essential that we value and preserve our natural resources, like water, soil and fish stocks, and habitats, like grasslands, forests and oceans.

Food Security, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), & the need for Organic & Sustainable Agriculture:

We believe our people have a right to know what food they are eating. GMO food is not labelled. We are also greatly alarmed by the monopolistic control of the sale of seed and distribution in South Africa. It is obviously essential for our small-scale farmers to be able to continue saving seed for the next season. Organic farming is sustainable and provides the best opportunities for export. This is not possible with GMO seed under the control of multi-national corporations. Our food security is in jeopardy.

Poverty:

In all these environmental issues it is the poor who will be most effected, as climate change brings an end to their traditional farming, or fish stocks decline, or arable land is taken over by, for example, developers for housing and golf estates.

Waste Management:

The amount of rubbish and waste that we are generating is becoming unmanageable. We can do much through recycling, and composting of biodegradable waste.

Reduce, Recycle, Re-use:

We all need to learn to reduce our consumption of material resources, water and energy. There is much that every individual family and community can do to change direction so that we develop more sustainable habits in the future.

Public transport

Our cities are becoming gridlocked. Members of faith communities should add a strong voice calling for the development of improved public transport that is more reliable and affordable.

Education for sustainable living

We recognise that faith communities should be centres of sustainable living which protect the environment and advance social justice and economic fairness. There is a growing need for education within the non-formal sector which promotes more caring, peaceful societies. Faith communities are underpinned by strong ethical principles and have the constituency and could find the expertise, to play a significant participatory role in this regard.

Our goal is to build a sustainable future for life on earth, working with and through the faith communities.



SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES' ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SAFCEI)

(Association incorporated under Section 21)
www.safcei.org.za

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

The Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) is an emerging movement of faith communities committed to cherishing living earth.

If any of the following environmental issues have become a matter of concern to you, SAFCEI would like to develop a relationship with you to learn how our diverse faith traditions can together become "the difference that makes a difference" in creating a life-affirming, healthy and happy society.

- Enriching the soils of the earth and caring for water resources and catchments.
- Stemming the extinction of rare plants and animals.
- Finding ways of reducing fossil fuel consumption, eliminating waste, and inventing clean energy supply systems.
- Creating 'green' buildings and infrastructure.
- Promoting sustainable livelihoods and income generation options for people most vulnerable to environmental shocks.
- Educating both children and adults to better understand the splendour of creation and what role they could play to ensure current and future generations can enjoy it as well.

SAFCEI caters for people to participate at various levels of involvement, ranging from "on the mailing list for digests and updates" to "fully committed for the long haul". Our short history has already shown what can be done by even a few people working with passion and commitment. By making connections and building partnerships between faith communities and environmental organisations, we are discovering that beneath the 'grassroots' there are many hidden 'taproots' that are ready to sprout and flourish with new growth.

If you, together with one or more people from your faith community, want to work with people of other faiths in a shared pilgrimage toward an economy that serves life, a community that builds peace and an environment that manifests Divine truth, here's what you can do.

- ② Subscribe to our mailing list to receive a regular digest of environmental issues that are important to faith communities.
- ② Pledge a regular sum of money to support our work, by debit order.
- ② Volunteer to join up with people of other faith communities in your area to respond to environmental challenges in your local community.
- ② Be trained in the process for helping faith communities to become 'eco-congregations'.
- ② Be trained in how to make a report on abuses of the environment that you notice.
- ② Be trained as a cleaner and greener energy innovator for domestic usage.

Apply now for full membership of SAFCEI, and participate in the leadership process.

Please complete and return the application form by fax, post or email to:
Fax: (0027) 021 702 3625 Ph: (0027) 021 702 3622
Email: secretary@safcei.org.za

SAFCEI
P O Box 106,
Kalk Bay, Cape, 7990



SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES’ ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SAFCEI)

(Association incorporated under Section 21)

“Faith communities committed to cherishing living earth.”

www.safcei.org.za

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute (SAFCEI) is a non-profit organisation established as a Section 21 Company. We seek to make connections and establish partnerships between faith communities and with environmental bodies. Our objectives are to raise environmental awareness; engage in formulating policy & ethical guidelines within our faith communities; facilitate environmental responsibility & action; confront environmental & socio-economic injustices; and to support environmental training & learning. We invite you to become a member of SAFCEI.

Please complete and return this application form by Email, Fax or Post to:

Fax: 021 7023625

Email: secretary@safcei.org.za

P O Box 106,
Kalk Bay, Cape, 7990

In terms of our Articles of Association, Members are admitted by the Management Committee. There are two Membership categories:

Full Members (a faith-based group, congregation or denomination)

Associate Members (individuals or organisations who support SAFCEI’s objectives)

I/we wish to apply to become a Member of SAFCEI (please tick appropriate box):

* Full Member (a faith-based group, congregation or denomination)

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

* Associate Member (individual, environmental - or other organisation wishing to be in association)

Member: email:.....

Name of Representative (in case of Faith Community / other Organisation):.....

Member Address:..... Tel:..... Representative Address:..... Tel:.....

..... Cell:..... Cell:.....

..... Fax:..... Fax:.....

Membership fees per annum R 100,00

I/We wish to make an additional financial contribution to further the work of SAFCEI:

* Once off: R .

* Monthly: R .

* Annually: R .

Payments may be made directly to:

SAFCEI, Standard Bank, Branch Code 025609,

Account Number: 07 665 941 0

In becoming a Member I/we make a commitment to further the Vision, Mission and Objectives of SAFCEI.

I/We wish to be included in the e-mail list to receive ongoing information: Yes No

I/We would like to be involved in the work of SAFCEI, particularly in the area of:

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| * Funding | <input type="checkbox"/> | * Communication & networking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> | * Education & training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Research | <input type="checkbox"/> | * Liturgy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Climate change | <input type="checkbox"/> | * Biodiversity & Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Biotechnology | <input type="checkbox"/> | * Economic justice | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Energy issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | * Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Development issues (e.g.N2 Toll road & golf courses) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| * Other (please state) | | | |

Goedgedacht Climate Change Statement

Call to South Africa's faith communities regarding the climate change crisis

We, participants from 16 South African faith communities, meeting on 17 and 18 October 2006 at Goedgedacht Farm near Cape Town, express our extreme concern at the rapid rate of global warming. As people of faith we recognise that everything on earth belongs to God, and therefore 'the protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust'.¹

We recognise that our disrespect of our environment is disrespect of God. 'We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future'.² In our discussion of the unique contribution our faith communities can make to meet the crisis, we affirm that 'the spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature'.³ We recognise that the sacred texts and oral traditions of faith communities enshrine the principle of taking care of the environment as an integral part of their faith.

God's call to us is to safeguard and nurture all of Creation. Arising out of that call, we acknowledge our duty to speak out against all forms of exploitation of people and the environment. We particularly acknowledge that the poor and people living at the margins of society are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. 'The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions'.⁴ Unless there are meaningful reductions in emissions by 2012, global warming could become unstoppable. We must 'become the change we wish to see in the world'.⁵

Participants:

- Stated that faith communities have a particular task to reconnect people with nature, and to remind them of their responsibilities to understand and honour the sacred relationship between humanity and nature.
- Recognised that climate change is an issue to which everyone must respond with urgency.
- Recognised that there is conclusive evidence of global warming, and that this will have serious detrimental effects on a wide range of natural systems and on the people of South Africa.
- Recognised that the current economic path followed by South Africa favours investments in large-scale projects that are detrimental to the functioning of the planet and the well-being of all.
- Acknowledged that, in the light of these challenges, there is a great need to educate themselves and their faith communities about the challenges that face the country, the region and the world.
- Recognised the steps that they will all need to take to reduce the impact of climate change and improve the ability of communities to adapt.

Participants urged all faith communities to:

1. Raise awareness of the crisis and the steps that are necessary to reduce global warming and its impact.
2. Promote personal commitment to an environmentally responsible lifestyle.

¹ From the Earth Charter.

² Earth Charter.

³ Earth Charter.

⁴ Earth Charter.

⁵ Mahatma Gandhi.

3. 'Live simply that others may simply live'.⁶
4. Lobby the public and private sectors to make binding commitments to reduce their current emissions and to redirect their investments towards more environmentally sustainable forms of development.
5. Lobby government and Parliament to ensure that all their policy choices minimise harm to the environment.
6. Lobby government to educate the people about living in an environmentally sustainable way.
7. Lobby government to develop adaptation mechanisms and support structures for the people who will be most severely affected by climate change.
8. Use their extensive networks to communicate the urgency of the crisis and the need to take action, and to work, co-operate and network with all concerned groups seeking solutions to this crisis.

⁶ Mahatma Gandhi.