



JAEI ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER

Stewardship of the Environment

The Diocese of Zululand serves 283 congregations – from the Tugela River in the South to the borders of Mozambique and Swaziland in the North, and inland to the Diocese of the Highveld.

The Very Revd Monument Makhanya was consecrated 14th Bishop of Zululand on Saturday 23 April 2016 and his charge to the Zululand Diocese Synod in November 2016 regarding the Environment rings so true for ALL Anglicans, but is especially close to our own Bishop Steve's heart so here is a message for EVERYONE to take to heart!

Taken from: <http://www.greenanglicans.org/when-someone-walks-into-our-churches-they-must-see-a-sacred-place-of-god-the-creator/>

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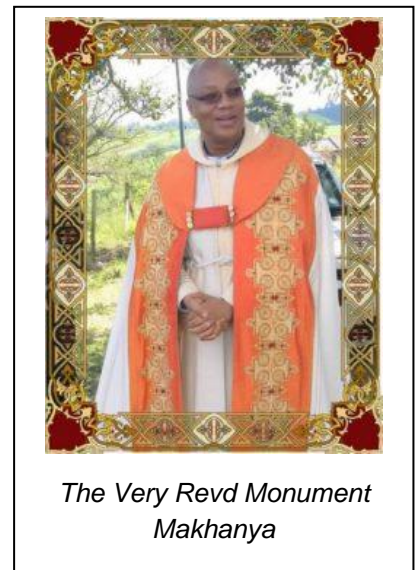
“When someone walks into our churches they must see a sacred place of God the Creator” **Bishop Monument Challenges the Diocese of Zululand to care for the environment**

The very first commandment that we were given as human beings was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. “Work the land and look after it” Gen 2:15

Eat from the garden, drink the water and make your shelter from the trees, but LOOK AFTER IT.

Over the recent years, we have not looked after God's earth – the top soil has been washed away, the trees have been cut down, the rivers are polluted and the land is covered with plastic and rubbish. And we are burning coal and petrol and polluting the air. The saddest thing of all is that as we burn them we have made a blanket around the earth which is warming it. We are heating up this planet, a Garden of God and we are now seeing more drought leading to suffering, rising of food prices and more hunger.

One of the most loved verses is John 3: 16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life”. It probably was the first verse we learned in Sunday school. We were all brought up with this verse and we should think of all the peoples of the whole world – Africa, china and India etc. not only us, our parishioners and our Churches, but the whole World. God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son to save humans, animals, rivers and mountains and to save



*The Very Revd Monument
Makhanya*

the land. When Jesus died on the cross, he died for us humans, but his blood dripped on the land.

We know as Christians we are called to preach the gospel to the lost, to visit the sick and to feed the hungry. But we are also called to recognize the gospel in the environment by working with Christ to heal the land. In the Anglican Church we say to care for creation is the fifth mark of mission. "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth". To heal the land is not an added extra responsibility; it is part of our mission as followers of Jesus.

So I propose the following ways to heal the land, which will really help us to leave our Church buildings and be outwardly looking, so as to recognize that Christ came to save the cosmos.

1. We need to confess "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chron 7:14. What are some of the things that we need to confess?

- we have land which is not used to grow food – while others go hungry
- we have cut down trees and have not planted more
- we waste water and forget that it is sacred
- we throw waste and allow the land to become full of plastic

2. We need to green our churches

When someone walks into our churches they must see a sacred place of God the Creator. In order to do this we need to do six things


- Preach and pray about creation: we can celebrate the Season of Creation in September; we can celebrate World Environment Day. Preach about water at our baptism services. We can have services or part of our services in God's nature, rather than going out **only** on Palm Sunday.
- Plant trees: Rev 22:2 "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" Trees clean the air from pollution, they hold the soil to prevent erosion, they provide shade and they provide food for birds, animals and fruit trees provide food for humans too. We need to know which alien trees are as they suck up the water, and rather plant indigenous trees which are born here in our part of Southern Africa.
- Start vegetable gardens – can we in this Diocese have some courses where we share knowledge about how each family can more efficiently grow their own vegetables and also improve our use of church land?
- Hold water as a sacred gift of God. We all know which river Jesus was baptised in – Jordan river- but often we don't know which river the water came from that we were baptised in. We think the water came out of a tap. I want to challenge you to discover where the water came from that was used in your church for baptism. If it is filled with rubbish – can you organise a clean-up campaign? Make sure that taps are not dripping, both at home and in your church.

- Remember that the earth is the Lord's. We like to keep our church clean and the sanctuary, but what about the community outside? We need to organise clean ups and reduce the rubbish that is lying everywhere, and to provide collection points for paper, cans, bottles and plastics to be sent for recycling, thereby also generating income for the parish.
- And we need to raise our children to love nature – for you will not protect what you do not love. Teach our children and grandchildren to grow vegetables, take your Siyakhula and youth on hikes, so that they can appreciate nature.

In order for the above to be carried out, I want to challenge all Archdeaconries to have a Chaplain to the environment with a committee as per the size of the Archdeaconry, which will see to it that the green Agenda is catered for at parish level. All organizations to make it a point that their constituencies are aware of the green agenda and that time is set aside to talk about the environment.

Bishop Monument, Charge to Synod, Diocese of Zululand 2016

The time for the lone wolf is over.
Gather yourselves! Banish the
word struggle from you attitude
and your vocabulary. All that we
do now must be done in a sacred
manner and in celebration.
Hopi elder



GREEN ANGLICANS