

GENERAL SYNOD 2010

RESOLUTIONS FORM

Resolution Number A180 – R1

Subject **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Moved by The Rt. Rev. Michael Bird, Diocese of Niagara

Seconded by The Rt. Rev. James Cowan, Diocese of British Columbia

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. Join with other faith communities and secular groups to press the Government of Canada to adopt a comprehensive climate action plan with firm targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 25-40% by 2020 based on 1990 levels (as per **Intergovernmental** Panel on Climate Change Working Group III report, Box 13.7, page 776), as a central concern of social and ecological justice;
2. Encourage dioceses and parishes to incorporate concerns about the care of creation more fully into regular liturgies and request the Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee and the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee to provide resources to support this;
3. Encourage dioceses and parishes to join with other faith communities and secular groups in researching and providing information on the climate crisis to members of their own communities;
4. Encourage dioceses to work with the “Greening Anglican Spaces” project group of the Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee to estimate and place their data in a national database, to consider professional audits, and to participate in a measurable and authoritative monitoring process.
5. Encourage the Council of General Synod to model how to estimate the annual rate of greenhouse gas emissions, (and other behaviours such as travel and operations) by gathering existing data from utility bills from Anglican buildings in at least 3 urban centres or regions in order to share this data, with subsequent professional interpretation, and make specific predictions for energy use reduction.

6. Request the Council of General Synod to consider having an estimate made of the annual greenhouse gas emissions for which the office of General Synod is responsible, commit to a stated reduction in these, and report regularly on progress made.

Source Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee

Submitted by Ms. Henriette Thompson, Director, Partnerships

Does this motion contain within it any financial implications? Yes No

Item 4 - Currently there is a project budget for "Greening Anglican Spaces" funded by a designated bequest and a grant from the Anglican Foundation.

Item 6 - requests General Synod to consider having an estimate made of greenhouse gas emissions for which the office of General Synod is responsible. This would require a professional energy audit of Church House, estimated at between \$400 and \$800.

If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications? Yes No

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1988 there has been a broad and growing consensus among the world's top scientists that climate change is an urgent issue demanding action. The most recent reports show that global warming has proceeded faster than anticipated, and that runaway climate change is an imminent prospect. Some scientists hold that 350 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the maximum allowable to avoid a global temperature change above 2 Celsius degrees. We are already at 387.5 ppm. If we fail to act now, whole continents could become uninhabitable. Hunger is already the lot of many who live on marginal agricultural land. The acidification of the oceans, as a result of carbon emissions, is another emerging crisis. These new concerns join the better known, but still inadequately addressed, issues of declining biodiversity, growing water scarcity, deforestation, soil depletion, overfishing and dead zones in the oceans.

The Copenhagen meetings in December 2009 failed to reach an international treaty for binding reductions and adequate assistance to developing countries for their adaptation and mitigation. The Government of Canada has yet to commit Canada to reductions close to those called for by the best available science. To our national shame, the federal government has played a negative role in negotiations, both at Copenhagen and in its preparatory meetings. Most

Canadians want stronger commitments to reductions. However, there is still inadequate public understanding of the issues involved. Dioceses and parishes, as places where people meet, could with expert partners help improve the level of knowledge and understanding.

Throughout its history, the Christian churches have affirmed the Biblical belief that ‘The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world (*oikumene*) and all who dwell therein’ (Psalm 24.6). Even so, we have participated in the exploitation and pollution of the planet. We have identified too uncritically with the values of Western culture, failed to communicate the Gospel in its fullness, and shared in the conquest and domination of Creation.

In a sermon preached at an ecumenical service during the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, Archbishop Rowan Williams urged listeners to consider “how the policies you follow and the lifestyle that you take for granted look in the light of the command to love the world you inhabit.” Williams, adds, “ask what would be a healthy and sustainable relationship with this world, a relationship that would in some way manifest both joy in and respect for the earth. Start with the positive question – how do we show that we love God’s creation?”

As Anglicans, our fifth Mark of Mission calls us to “strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.” This resolution empowers General Synod to live more fully into this Mark of Mission in the next triennium. By advocating for more significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, offering worship resources for our communities, and examining our own ways of being through the lens of caring for creation, we are being responsive to God’s call to care for creation.

We, as Christians, cannot rely on government alone to sound the warning bell and challenge us to examine our current lifestyles. The gospel calls us to radical discipleship and an ethic of care of all creation.