



european christian **environmental** network

## **10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENT NETWORK 27 September – 1 October 2014, Balatonszárszó, Hungary**

### **Letter to Church leaders and the Churches of Europe**

#### **THE CHURCHES AND FAITH COMMUNITIES OF EUROPE HAVE A ROLE AND A VOICE IN RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

##### **Who are we?**

ECEN is a network of Christians across Europe contributing to the Conference of European Churches work on environment.

Delegates at the 10th ECEN Assembly came together in Balatonszárszó, Hungary to share, learn, work and pray for a more sustainable future. We came from a multitude of traditions that cross boundaries and have similar values and shared concerns. Even if we come from different traditions and geographical areas we breathe the same air as all other people together with all God's creatures on the planet Earth, and we partake of the precious gifts of air, soil and all natural resources.

After sharing theological insights on our relation to creation, we learned of the latest scientific status of climate change, and dialogued with representatives from government. Following these exchanges our sense of urgency has been acutely heightened and our commitment to act and change strengthened.

##### **What must we do?**

We are called to act locally with a global outlook. As churches and faith communities we are called upon to care for our neighbour and our neighbour is every living creature in God's creation.

We call upon the churches and church leaders across Europe to respond to the spiritual and practical crisis of climate change. We followed the inspiring address by Bishop James Jones of the Church of England to the Assembly and identified five practical action points.

##### **Prayer**

We pray as a community of faith. We listen to each other and we share our fears but we also share our hopes; fears for the foreseeable impact of climate change and hopes for the possibility of change and a renewed world.

We should follow the example of Our Lord and pray that God's will be done on earth as it is heaven.

*Bishop Jones prayer:*

*Holy Jesus  
Child of Adam  
Come in Glory  
And renew the face of the Earth*

## **Personal**

Follow the example of Our Lord and teach the faithful to live accountable lives. Climate change creates hunger, thirst, sickness, refugees and destitute people and in our response to these we can serve Christ today (Matthew 25; 44). Through the choices we make on energy, food and water we contribute to the environmental impacts on others. We must examine our decisions in the light of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.

## **Parochial**

Local churches and faith communities can show the love of God in action through caring for creation; by acting to reduce the ecological footprint of their activities and by adopting goals for the reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions of the EU Institutions and their policies. Churches and faith communities can contribute by efficient use of energy, supporting renewable energy sources and by considering disinvesting assets from fossil fuel companies.

## **Political**

We call upon all churches and faith communities to address climate injustice; those who are most affected by climate change are the ones who contributed least to the problem. There is moral obligation on developed countries to lower greenhouse gas emissions and at the same time lend support to the most affected. Do not give up in the face of injustice; remember the plea of the widow in the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18; 1-8).

## **Planetary**

Start a dialogue with other traditions and faiths on climate. Involve scientists and others who have studied climate change in a conversation on how to respond. And never forget those who suffer most from climate injustice; find common ground for dialogue with others to build resilience in combatting climate change.

## **The Pilgrimage to Paris**

Time is limited. Countries of the world will meet at the United Nations Climate negotiations in Paris in December 2015. People all over the planet hope for a fair, ambitious and binding new treaty as one way to overcome the climate threat. People of faith are making a pilgrimage, both real and metaphorical, towards this date. Get involved, learn, pray and take action to help bring about a successful outcome.

You can read Bishop James Jones' practical points in full and find out more about how to get involved on the ECEN website: [www.ecen.org](http://www.ecen.org)