

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS - ACTION PLAN

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. **How can we encourage Christians to live more simply so that other may simply live?**

- Part of the Orthodox statement on environmental care reads as follows: By reducing our consumption ... we come to ensure that resources are also left for others in the world.... We are called to work in humble harmony with creation and not in arrogant supremacy against it. Asceticism provides an example whereby we may live simply... Excessive consumption leaves us emptied, out-of-touch with our deepest self. Asceticism is a corrective practice, a vision of repentance.
- Part of the **Accra confession** reads: The policy of unlimited growth among industrialized countries and the drive for profit of transnational corporations have plundered the earth and severely damaged the environment. In 1989, one species disappeared each day and by 2000 it was one every hour.

2. **What can we do as Christians do JOINTLY to create greater awareness among our communities about the environmental crisis?**

Here is what Pope Francis has said in *Laudato si...* It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion."

3. **In view of passivity in society as well as in the church what can we as individuals do to bring about change?**

In the Bible, Jesus teaches us that that we cannot serve God and Mammon (Lk 16:13). The **Accra Confession** calls us to reject today's culture of rampant consumerism based on our faith in God.

4. **How does consumerism contribute to the suffering of other persons and creation?**

Pope Francis in *Laudato si* makes a very strong connection between our neglect of the environment and our lack of concern for the poor.

5. **What actions can we take so that as Christians we begin to see more clearly the intimate relationship between loving God, loving our neighbour and caring for our common home?**

ENVIRONMENTAL CARE ACTION PLAN

What individuals can do

A. Save energy

1. Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms, use energy saving bulbs, turn off lights in vacant rooms, don't keep your PC or laptop connected when not in use.
2. If you use charcoal, make sure that your cooker is energy saving. Wherever possible, substitute other energy sources for charcoal.
3. Use green energy (solar) as much as possible in churches, houses and schools

B. Save water

1. Do not buy water. Always carry a reusable bottle or coffee mug with you. Each year, close to 20 billion plastic bottles are tossed in the trash.
2. Flush the toilet less and remaining water after washing clothes or dishes.
3. Do not run the tap throughout when showering or brushing teeth.
4. If you live in your own house, harvest and store rainwater.

C. Solid Waste Management

1. Recycle your used plastic and separate plastic waste from other garbage and buy larger containers of food; instead of buying several smaller ones over time.
2. Do not print documents from your PC if you can use electronic means of communication; print on clean reverse size of documents that are out of date.
3. Keep vehicles well- tuned up to reduce air pollution.
4. Do not burn garbage openly as smoke is unhealthy.

What individuals can do, together with others

A. Join a Group

1. Work with an existing neighborhood group or start one yourself. You can work together on problems such as: poor waste management, river pollution, proper sanitation, tree planting, or any other environmental problems specific to your neighborhood.
2. Join tree planting groups at local forests on Environment Day and other

occasions. Also liaise with Kenya Forestry Services for appropriate plants/ vegetation to plant to conserve water-catchment ecosystems near the rivers/streams.

3. Have a letter writing campaign to encourage the government to zero-rate taxes on importation of renewable energy technologies and provide subsidies/partial rebates for purchase and use of green energy technologies in churches and schools.
4. Display efficient firewood cook stoves and solar and LPG cookers and have knowledgeable users discuss the strengths and importance of these improved stoves
5. Encourage members to pool rides or use buses for church related functions.
6. Encourage staff and church members to bring imported freight from terminals to Nairobi by rail rather than by road.

B. Create awareness on government policies that have adverse environmental consequences

1. Advocate for higher taxes on fossil fuels and for zero taxes on green energy technologies;
2. Advocate for infrastructure that encourages walking for short distances, cycling and carpooling or train rides for longer trips;
3. Advocate movement of freight by train rather than by lorry;
4. Advocate for policies that provide affordable access to water and sanitation for the poor;
5. Work with NEMA on policies and strategies that encourage environmental sustainability.
6. Hold awareness meetings to increase public understanding of the need for policies and practices that restore degraded grazing lands.

C. Agriculture Related Activities

1. Liaise with Kenya Forest Department and KEFRI on appropriate indigenous non- invasive woody perennials/trees to plant with crops on plots, church/school compounds,
2. Limit the burning of vegetation and crop stubble,
3. Have cooking contests among women's groups on new less popular drought resistant food crops to encourage new food habits,
4. Conduct training sessions for interested church members led by agricultural officers on methods of water harvesting, conserving soil moisture through mulching and simple drip irrigation techniques.
5. Hold awareness meetings to increase public understanding of the need for policies and practices that restore degraded grazing land.