Motion on Caring for the Creation: the need to acknowledge and respond to population issues

Adopted by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia
21st September 2010

That this General Synod of The Anglican Church of Australia gives thanks to Almighty God for the gracious gift of human life and for the privilege of being divine image bearers. Synod acknowledges:

a) That all human life comes from God, irrespective of age, gender, race, or ability, and that God does not delight in the death of any he has made, and notes:

b) Resolution I.8 of the Lambeth Conference 1998, which (iii) reaffirms the Biblical vision of Creation according to which the divine spirit is present in Creation and human beings have responsibility to make personal and corporate sacrifices for the common good of all Creation; and (iv) recognizes that unless human beings take responsibility for caring for the earth, the consequences will be catastrophic because of: overpopulation, unsustainable levels of consumption by the rich, poor quality and shortage of water, air pollution, eroded and impoverished soil, forest destruction, and animal extinction.

c) The encouragement in Resolution 14.15 of the Anglican Consultative Council in May 2009 for Provinces “to advocate sustainable restorative economies with national governments, the United Nations through the Anglican Observers Office, and local constituencies”.

And requests

(1) Australian Anglican Dioceses and individuals to:
(i) Grow in understanding of global and national environmental challenges, and the role of human population growth in contributing to them.
(ii) Use resources including those identified by the General Synod’s Public Affairs Commission and Environment Working Group to assist in developing integrated views of issues and potential responses, and take action to reduce our impacts.
(iii) Contribute thoughtfully and prayerfully to public debate about how to - achieve justice not only for current Australians but for our descendants, - nurture and protect life on this fragile land with all its beauty and diversity, - share in a world of finite resources, showing love for our neighbours, particularly those who live in the two-thirds world.
(iv) Remain confident in the gospel of Jesus Christ to address environmental challenges as it calls people to turn from human selfishness and greed.
(v) Prayfully consider and reduce their levels of consumption.
(vi) Explore ways to ensure that every child is welcomed and has the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

(2) The Australian Government to:
(i) Recognise the role of population growth and unsustainable levels of consumption by the affluent in contributing to global and national environmental challenges, and avoid any reliance on continuing population growth to maintain economic growth.
(ii) Determine a sustainable population policy for Australia which is fair and just.
(iii) Consider carefully any incentive aimed specifically and primarily at increasing Australia”s population while continuing to support low-income families and
sustainable immigration.
(iv) Support agricultural research both to care for our land and to preserve our ability
to produce food.
(v) Contribute more generously to improving the welfare of people in the least
developed nations, and other life in their environments, in particular by including
support for family planning and women's reproductive health programmes with aid
for development, in ways that respect the cultures of those people and take account
of Christian values including respect for the sanctity of all human life.

(3) The reporting of the outcome of this Motion to the United Nations Anglican
Observers" Office.