

Notes for climate change consultation – Living in harmony with creation

Last time the Vic/Tas synod looked at climate change was 2008. Assembly has done some work though in the meantime, including supporting young people with advocating and protests.

The Uniting Church has different councils:

Congregations → presbyteries → synods → assembly
eg Manningham eg Yarra Yarra eg Vic/Tas whole of Australia

The report talks about 'human induced climate change' which means people created the problems. It's going to take all countries decades to do something about it.

If we act on climate change, it will mean money is not spent in other areas eg poverty.

But if we don't act on climate change, poverty will get worse.

This is called a 'wicked problem' where there is no easy answer and each answer you think of leads to lots of other questions, like a door which opens on lots of other doors, and then you open one of those doors and that door opens onto lots of other doors!

Some people ignore the scientific evidence for climate change.

The report includes lots of figures and facts. The main ones are:

- 20% increase in greenhouse gases 2015-2019
- only India and Philippines have made a commitment that will reduce the global warming by 2%
- Australia's commitment is hopeless alongside other countries that are 'developed'
- Victorian government has committed to target of 50% renewable energy by 2030
- Australian government has suggested 48% by 50%
- but to make any difference, the commitment needs to be between 70 and 75%
- Australia has the 2nd highest per capita (ie per person in population) emissions from fossil fuels with only Saudia Arabia ahead of us. We are above USA and double China's

JIM cluster wants to write a proposal for synod so that the congregations take action. However, the congregations will only take action if they are involved and agree to them. Synod can't tell them what to do.

The report asks:

- How serious a threat do you think climate change is?
- Should it be related to global justice, stewardship or eco-theology?*
- Should synod call a climate emergency?

- Should synod call for a ban on all new coal mines, no expansion of existing mines, no more coal-fired power stations, and what about natural gas stations?
- What else???

Our faith pushes us to do something about climate change. It's not just because it's a good thing to do, it's because we believe God created the planet.

* Global justice = love your neighbour as yourself

Stewardship = caring for creation, not in hierarchical way where people are on top under God, but because we all share the planet.

Eco-theology = people dependent on creation for our survival

There's another way of looking at this – all of creation is on an equal footing, we are no higher than any other part. We should not be saved at the expense of other parts of creation.

The earth is not entrusted to us, we are entrusted to the earth.

The earth doesn't need us in order to survive, we need the earth.

Who's at the top of that hierarchy?!!

Don't save the bees in order to save humans, save the bees because they are bees.

Rev Claire Dawe, June 2020