



# The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

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01 August 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

We write on behalf of The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa to express our deep concern about climate change and urge the government to take decisive action to address its ongoing impacts. Our Church is observing 2023-2034 as the Climate Justice Decade, recognising our moral imperative to advocate for justice-oriented actions to ensure the flourishing of both the planet and its people.

For the first two years of our Climate Justice Decade, we are focusing on zero-waste initiatives. We have organised several programs to raise awareness within our congregations about reducing plastic use. Many of our congregations and synods have initiated campaigns based on the slogan "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle," emphasising the importance of ethical consumption and disposal of plastic goods. Additionally, several of our parishes and synods have engaged with Para Kore, a te ao Māori-based educational initiative, to further reduce waste.

Our efforts have highlighted that climate catastrophe is fundamentally a justice issue requiring radical structural changes. We have learned from our zero-waste campaign that waste needs to be understood as waste colonialism. For example, Coca-Cola alone produces 120 billion single-use plastic bottles annually, 99% of which are made from fossil fuels, equivalent to 200,000 plastic bottles every minute. Only 3% of these are reusable. Thus, we realise that focusing solely on lifestyle changes and ethical consumption in our zero-waste campaigns inadvertently supports the environmental harm caused by large corporations and complicit governments.

Plastic pollution has already contaminated our Whenua, Moana, and Tinana me te Hinengaro (bodies, and minds). As kaitiaki, we are responsible for resisting the plunder and waste, unleashed by big corporations. Therefore, we urge your government to:

1. Recognise the climate crisis as climate injustice, which disproportionately endangers tangata whenua and other marginalised communities in Aotearoa.
2. Reconsider the decision to repeal the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration, as such activities often occur on Indigenous Whenua and Moana without consent.
3. Relocate hazardous waste management plants away from Indigenous and marginalised communities, who are disproportionately affected by toxic pollution.
4. Support a global plastics treaty that keeps oil and gas in the ground and holds corporations accountable for excessive plastic production and waste colonialism.
5. Ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives are represented in all decision-making processes.

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Thank you for considering our concerns. We reiterate that Kaitiakitanga is the foundational principle for our environmental policies. We look forward to a radical shift in your policies to ensure justice for the victims of climate injustice and to protect and rekindle the mauri (life force) of Papatūānuku.

Ngā manaakitanga

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Peter Taylor'.

Rev Michael Peter Taylor  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TeRito Peyroux-Semu'.

Ms TeRito Peyroux-Semu  
Vice-President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tara Tautari'.

Rev Tara Tautari  
General Secretary