

Climate Justice Policy

Prepared by the Public Issues Network with revisions by Conference October 2018

‘Climate Change and inequality represent the principal challenges facing humanity in our day... We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one social and environmental crisis....to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.’

Adapted: Laudato Si 2015

Vision

As the Conference of the Methodist Church of NZ Te Haāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, we affirm God’s love for the whole of creation and our common home with its capacity for healing, renewal and flourishing as one sacred community. We affirm a deep regard for the diversity of all forms of life, and refresh our guardianship responsibilities for Papatuanuku (earth) as our common home.

Climate Change and the Church

The Paris Agreement gives a global commitment to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius, striving for 1.5 degrees to limit climate change. The temperature of the earth has been stable within a 2 degrees range for 10,000 years and has made life on earth possible.

The industrial activities of our modern civilization cause pollution to the atmosphere and have raised atmospheric carbon dioxide levels from 280 parts per million to 400 parts per million in the last 150 years. The IPCC (international Panel on Climate Change) are intensifying their warnings of the impacts of increases in greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide on climate.

- For churches, climate justice means fairness, equity, a Te Tiriti o Waitangi framework, intergenerational justice, and support for sustaining the ecology of our common home.
- As a church in Aotearoa we are in solidarity with the Pacific region and in particular with Churches of the region. Our contributions to climate justice are based on Aotearoa as a Pacific nation.
- We affirm God’s love for the whole of creation.
- We, the Methodist Church of NZ Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa take these concerns seriously and commit to achieving *Just Transitions* to a zero carbon economy for Aotearoa NZ in the period 2018 - 2050.
- We, Rohe, Parishes and Connexional bodies, also commit to engaging with our communities to address these matters in our own ways and spaces and report our progress back to Conference 2020.

Key Policy Guidelines for Climate Justice

Special Approach of the Church:

- a) While our Government in Aotearoa New Zealand is currently developing policy that is durable and aligned with climate responsibility, our church's faith based values are unique. Our approach to climate justice then comes from love as well as just moral obligation.
- b) In this land we will ensure that Māori cultural values are embedded into climate justice decisions and activities that include concepts of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and whakapapa (kinship relations).
- c) Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, and Rotuman values also enhance our mission and commitment to climate justice, through concepts such as faaaloalo (respect) and sootaga (quality of relational life).
- d) Climate justice ensures that those with fewer resources are not further disadvantaged by changes in living costs, energy costs and jobs, and able to participate in and benefit from changes to a zero carbon economy.
- e) *Just Transition* means that changes in the economy involve planning and policy for re training and education opportunities in low emissions work and occupations. This includes policy for industry and agriculture for long term planning and avoidance of stranded assets.
- e) Responsible investment is a work-in-progress for churches, with divestment and mission-focussed investment as points for attention.

Climate Justice Policy for the Methodist Church of NZ Te Hāahi Weteriana o Aotearoa includes:

1. To deepen loving relationships with all forms of life and Papatuanuku. It includes learning and teaching, joining with ecumenical activities and other groups to become informed, to join in local activities to stop pollution, to contribute to consultations and policy in the church.
2. To support the well-being of present and future generations by setting our course to safeguard nature now and by sharing resources equitably.
3. The church will support investment and development initiatives of the church that align with transitions to net zero carbon emissions
4. To engage in advocacy, including political advocacy for policy to support transitions to zero carbon and climate justice.

Suggested steps for a way forward

1. Establish a Climate Justice Working Group to take forward and implement policy, including:
 - a. Support learning for our people, our leaders and our communities on climate justice and strengthen theological understanding of care for the integrity of creation.
 - b. Run workshops, professional development, youth education workshops to support church activities and theological development.
 - c. Review church assets of property, land, finance and purchasing decisions such as for food, contracting goods and services, building and repairing and managing waste.
 - d. All Parishes, Rohe and other church entities are invited to review such decisions and identify goals and plans for transitions to climate justice with agreed processes for reporting on goals, plans and experiences to Conference.
 - e. Reduce travel by use of teleconferencing.
 - f. Develop a Methodist church platform for dignified climate migration for Pacific peoples displaced by climate change (see resource '[We Don't Want to Lose Our Roots](#)')
2. Prepare a travel levy scheme with proceeds from the fund to be held in Trust for Climate Justice activities in the Pacific region.
3. Develop practices of living well with the earth with community building, and accountability for our use of resources. Design measures and monitoring for the church.
4. Invite Public Issues to convene a Climate Justice Working Group with representatives of Property Committee, MTA, Te Taha Māori, Taiwi, Methodist Alliance, Trinity College and expert advisors.
5. Continue consultation with Church bodies to enable practical policy and action plans in each sector of the church to be developed for an integrated approach and reporting to Conference

Resources at www.methodist.org.nz/public_questions_network/pi_resources

APPENDIX

Draft Terms of Reference for climate Justice Working Group

Establishment of the Climate Justice Working Group

- a. The Working Group will be convened by Public Issues.
- b. Membership to be invited from Property Committee, MTA, Te Taha Māori, Taiwi, Methodist Alliance, Trinity College, Youth Ministry and expert contributors.
- c. The Working Group will review the policy approved by Conference, and draw up a work plan with achievable goals and timelines for implementation and reporting to conference.
- d. It is expected there will be 2 meetings in the first year with no, or minimal additional costs. Members will be selected in part with a view to keeping members close to a specific geographic area or alternatively needing to travel to the meeting location for other reasons.
- e. The proposed policy requires engagement with different groups – eg Youth, Synods etc. This engagement will need to take place according to capacity for collaboration and with a sense of opening up pathways that take time

The following are the main areas for action / deliverables

1. Education and Workshops
2. Procurement and Purchasing
3. Climate Migration Advice
4. Travel Levy Fund
5. Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting

1. Education

- a. Theological education and training
Working with Trinity College, the Working Group will collaborate in supporting and enabling a climate justice reference in theology and practice, and in informal theological education such as Schools of Theology.
- b. Children and Youth education
Involve parish-based children and youth ministry representatives and Youth Ministry leadership in initiatives for climate justice, for the purpose of supporting and enabling young people in climate change learning and practice
- c. Resource Website
Oversee the development of a website for gathering and accessing resources on climate justice for the church

2. Procurement and purchasing options

- a. The Working Group will facilitate information sharing on procurement and purchasing. One of the practical actions available to church people and organizations is procurement and purchasing decisions; these are significant and range from tea, coffee and food to building materials. Guidelines for purchasing include environmental integrity, labour conditions,

building materials, distance from ‘farm to plate’, plastic use, waste. Planting trees and reducing eating meat and dairy are best for the climate.¹

- d. The Working Group will ensure that information is available to the church on products is that include low greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, non polluting materials and practices, and fair labour conditions, as well as beneficial purchasing and procurement options.

3. Climate Migration

The Working Group will clarify a pathway for the church to contribute to climate migration thinking and policy. This needs to be done with groups affected by climate migration, with humanitarian agencies and with legal expertise.

5. Travel Levy Scheme

The Oversight Group have discussed the benefits of setting up a Methodist scheme through the Connexion with a levy for carbon emissions from travel (for Connexional travel and others as they voluntarily contribute). Proceed are to go into a fund to benefit Pacific Island communities ; to be used at the discretion of this Trust (eg it might assist Pacific Island communities adapt to renewable energy such as solar panels for the Helena Goldie hospital, or for forest regeneration). This scheme will be developed under the auspices of the Working Group

6. Measures, Monitoring and Reporting

- Assessments of progress can be facilitated by simple goals set by individuals, parishes and groups such as halving waste, increasing vegetarian options when catering, setting limits on plastics, etc.
- Measuring and converting to carbon equivalents should not become an onerous distraction.
- Reporting to conference is a way of celebrating change and sharing difficulties; it is about transparency and sustaining attention to climate justice responsibilities.
- In general reporting and sharing experience and information will be facilitated by the Working Group, Reporting by Connexional bodies such as MTA and MCPC may have more specific criteria to be clarified by the Working Group in consultation with respective bodies.

Examples of activities

Contact: betsan@response.org.nz

- ◆ A study group on Climate Justice (use ‘Climate Conversations’ or other resources - website below)
- ◆ Use prayers for climate justice (eg prayers by Rev. John Howell)
- ◆ Offer a sermon on climate change, care for earth and people forced to move because of floods or rising seas.
- ◆ Youth activity – map activities to stop pollution in your area. Join in with 350.ORG, Gen Zero
- ◆ ♪Use of public transport, teleconferences, ♪Plant trees. ♪Keep track of our carbon footprint. ♪Grow and use nutritional food with zero pollution (no chemical fertilizer, herbicides etc.) ♪Eat less meat ♪Protect water quality. ♪Use alternatives to plastic. ♪ Use ideas from Green Church
- ◆ Make low emissions purchasing & procurement decisions
- ◆ Are you doing building work? See the ‘Low Carbon Building Guide’
- ◆ Join the Churches Climate Justice Network

Resources at www.methodist.org.nz/public_questions_network/pi_resources

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/31/avoiding-meat-and-dairy-is-single-biggest-way-to-reduce-your-impact-on-earth>