



# Southern Green Anglican

## Youth edition September 2013



### Contents

- **Anglican students**
- **AYF drama**
- **Consumerism**
- **Garden of Hope**
- **Eco-walk**
- **St Cyprians school**
- **Provincial Youth**

## ANGLICAN STUDENTS TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

At their Provincial Conference in the Diocese of Free State the ASF discussed the challenges of climate change. ASF members expressed fear about their future, which has been threatened because of unsustainable development. They were concerned about increased food prices and sea level rise. They want to see their parishes get involved with sermons, awareness campaigns, creating jobs through food gardens. They would also like parishes to plant trees, have recycling bins and clean up days in the local community, and check their water usage.

In terms of how ASF members should respond they said 'we must be eco-friendly', 'we must learn about local eco-systems and inform the community', 'we must take what we learned to the rest of the country', 'we must plant trees especially fruit trees', 'have awareness days as part of our branch plan of action', 'be responsible citizens and be a positive influence on others'

***Even though so much harm has already been done, there are ways the people of God can change the situation. God created the Earth and told us to be good stewards of it and showed us how to take care of it, he has given us this world so we can eat and fulfill our needs, but we need to be thankful for our temporary home by keeping it clean, manage its resources well and preserve it as best as we can for future generation. Ncumisa Magadla, CPUT Bellville***



# Using drama to bring across the environmental challenge



*Drama, in all its many forms, allows for experimentation, social critique and self-expression. There is no better way of learning about issues affecting our communities than through sharing our lived experiences!*

*Kate Davies, SAFCEI*

At their provincial conference in George members of the AYF from 5 Dioceses introduced their friends to some critical environmental issues through a series of thought-provoking eco-dramas.

Using background information, groups were tasked with developing a story around a contextual environmental issue in their own Diocese. In ten minute presentations, each team of actors had to do a performance that was not only factually correct but one which offered a sense of hope with positive and practical suggestions for action and change.

The winner of the SAFCEI 'Earthkeepers' prize was Port Elizabeth Diocese with their enthusiastic production on the theme of illegal dumping. They acknowledged many pressing social issues which make it difficult to respond to long term environmental challenges. They highlighted the ethical responsibility of the church in playing a leadership role. There were two 'runner up' performances. False Bay Diocese contrasted rural and urban perspectives on the value of water and Saldanha Bay did a clever 'one man show' about climate change.



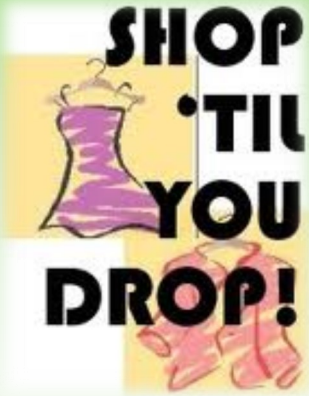
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# Challenges facing young people—consumerism

## SHOP UNTIL YOU DROP



We live in a consumer society. The economy does not exist in order to provide good health care, housing, education, or justice, **it exists to produce more consumer goods.**

In order to increase turnover there is built in 'obsolescence', goods are designed to be dumped.

Small items like plastic bags and coffee cups are designed to throw away, but bigger items such as mops or washing machines are also not built to last. Technology is moving so fast that in order to use new versions of software you 'have' to upgrade your computer. And then we are hit with fashion- the blackberry becomes outdated so we need to buy the latest version Ipad. Fashion is about getting customers to buy new goods because the shape of the heel is outdated or the skirt is the wrong colour for this season.

The aim of an advert is to make us unhappy with what we have or who we are. Adverts tell us that we are not trendy, we are too fat, or too thin, that we are unloveable. All this can be made right if we just go shopping. We will be content only if we buy what the neighbours have. We are encouraged to break God's commandments and to covet our neighbours' shoes, car or new cell phone.

Consumer society tells us that retail therapy will bring us happiness. Money can buy us love.

The values of the consumer society are in direct opposition with the values of the gospel. Jesus tells us that we cannot serve God and money (Matt 6:24). A retail analyst stated the following: "*Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption*"

We need to remember the things that make us happy, family, friends and leisure time,

enjoying the beauty of God's creation. Our value does not come from what we own, it comes from who we are. We say we believe in Ubuntu, 'Umntu ngumntu ngabantu'- that a person is a person through other people, but do we live as if that is true? It is the quality of our relationships that defines our value in society, not the number of designer goods we own.

People created the consumer society. And we're people too. So let's create a society that looks more like the kingdom of heaven....

*Rev Rachel Mash, ACSA Environmental Coordinator*



*"The.. economy's ultimate purpose is to produce more consumer goods." (President Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisors Chairman)*

# Challenges facing young people— Consumerism

## THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A FREE UPGRADE

This consumer society is not only stealing our souls, it is destroying our health and our communities and threatens the sustainability of this planet.

There is no such thing as a cheap product. An advert only shows us the final bargain price of the item that will 'make us happier'. It does not show us the impact of the production of this item on other people, communities and the environment.

### How much does your "free" cell-phone upgrade really cost?

A key component in a cell phone is a metal called coltan. Thirty percent of children in the Democratic Republic of Congo have dropped out of school to mine coltan which is also fuelling the



violence there. Most cell phones also have gold, copper, beryllium, lead, nickel, and zinc, which all must be mined, putting both planet and workers at risk. Chemicals leach into the groundwater of surrounding communities creating devastating environmental and health impacts.

### And how much does that bargain t-shirt really cost?

The cotton was perhaps grown Africa, in Burkina Faso. Cotton is a very thirsty crop and the industry gets priority for water while farmers suffer from drought. Cotton also needs a lot of pesticides which don't just kill insects; they harm workers and neighboring communities.

Workers frequently suffer from nerve diseases and vision problems because of the toxic chemicals. The cotton is then bleached



with chlorine, a toxin which can cause cancer. Once woven into fabric, the cotton is shipped to a factory or a sweatshop where people in China or Bangladesh work long days for low wages in unsafe conditions. Often factory workers are teenagers working 11 hour days for way below the minimum wage.

So what should our response be? Firstly we need to remember the three Rs: Reduce, Re-use and Recycle. Recycling is important for it reduces the pressure to produce new products. We should all recycle. But recycling is not enough. The waste coming out of our houses is just the tip of the iceberg. For every one bag of waste you recycle, 70 bags of rubbish were created in the production of those items.

More important is to reduce our consumption and to re-use items. In order to do this we need to be liberated from the spiritual forces of consumerism. Think of the real cost of that 'bargain' on other people and the environment, and try to buy local whenever possible.

**If you want to find out more about the real cost of items you buy, watch THE STORY OF STUFF**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLBE5QAYXp8>

# Young people enjoying nature



## GARDEN OF HOPE – IGADI YETHEMBA

Many young people lose hope when they struggle to find work. But some young men from St Michael's church in Harare, Khayelitsha had a different vision, they decided to start an organic garden. They have cleaned a plot of land owned by the church which involved removing a lot of rubble and rubbish! They attended a four day micro-farmer course run by Abalimi Bezekhaya and were trained in organic farming. In organic farming no artificial chemicals, pesticides or fertilisers are used in the production process. Abalimi

support a network of over 3000 micro-farmers in the CapeTown townships. The products will be either sold locally or through their 'harvest of hope' – where people can order a weekly or fortnightly basket of fresh organic veggies. Their garden is growing well and is truly a garden of hope for these unemployed young men. May God bless their dream to come true..

## YOUNG PEOPLE ENJOYING GODS CREATION

Young people from St Michaels Eco-Congregation in Johannesburg took part in a walk around the beautiful Kloofendal Nature Reserve to experience the peace, tranquillity and marvels of God's Creation.

The walk was begun by reflecting on what God's awesome Creation meant to each one of us so that we could relax and become one with God's Creation. Marc Ross and Noeleen Mullett (both experienced nature guides) led the group and imparted all sorts of snippets of information about the environment around us – from looking at termite mounds, to a demonstration of the "toothbrush" tree (*Euclea Crispa*). Birds were very evident, and a number of species were seen and heard.



The children (and the adults) were given an opportunity to go searching for creepy-crawlies in the dead leaf litter and there was much excitement when a few termites and ants were found. Unfortunately, many of the creepy-crawlies were still fast asleep and had not yet awoken from their winter slumber. The group thoroughly enjoyed the walk and have asked that this become a regular activity on the St Mike's Eco-Congregation calendar.

# Integrating the environment into life at school

The environmental club at St Cyprians Anglican School consists of 40 high school girls. Concern for the environment was quite a new concept for all of us, but we have started seeing it as an integral part of our routine.



First we had an audit of the school which led to installing proper insulation for our Science labs, purchasing rain tanks and building our own vegetable garden. In June we held our annual Environmental week where we had guest speakers such as science writer Leonie Joubert who talked about food security, Cormac Cullinan who discussed Fracking in the Karoo, and the late Reverend John Oliver who spoke about the importance of the relationship between humans and the planet which God has blessed us with.

During the week we ran a bake sale to raise funds for Greenpop (who plant trees) and held an inter-house paper drive to collect paper for recycling. Each day we held a morning quiz to increase awareness of the state of the environment. The learners became very excited about awareness for our environment, and the week culminated in the prize giving for an environmental art competition.

In environmental club this year each grade is focusing on a special project. The grade 8s and 9s split their time between working on the Oranjezicht City Farm (an urban agricultural paradise!) and our school vegetable garden. They are coming up with innovative ideas to increase the yield of our garden and also to beautify it by using recycled materials such as mosaics. The grade 10s are involved in a project to clean up the river running through Van Riebeeck park above the school and are also planting trees there with the City of Cape Town. The



Grade 11s are involved in a project with several schools in Cape Town researching the impact of waste and finding ideas to reduce its impact. They are also collecting bread bag tags for an organization who use them to purchase wheelchairs for those in need. The matrics are currently working on ideas to lower the environmental impact of the school tuck shop. These activities we do at St Cyprians are in order to do our part to care for the environment, and they have become a welcome part of our routine. **Kayleigh Murray**

# Provincial Youth face up to the challenge of climate change

Rev Rachel Mash was invited to address the Provincial Youth at their consultation in Lesotho. and the Provincial Youth consultation on the environmental challenges facing us. 20 Dioceses were represented by 62 delegates . We were reminded of John 3:16 that God so loved this world. We were shocked to hear of the ways in which as human kind we are impacting this world that God so loved.

Population growth which will rise from the current 7 billion to 9 billion before it plateaus, means that 1.5 million extra people are looking for food and housing every week. Sixty percent of the ecosystems on which we as humans depend have become degraded. We are living in a highly urbanised world, with 1 billion people living in informal settlements with inadequate housing. Our world is highly unequal with twenty percent of the population accounting for 86% of the consumption.

So Climate change is affecting a world which is already battered from human actions. The results of climate change will be an increase in drought in some areas and flooding in others. We will see a rise in sea level affecting some of our coastal towns. Food prices will rise due to droughts and land degradation. And Southern Africa is warming at twice the global average.

Lesotho itself is suffering from drought and seeing many people leave their farms and come into the city, which swells the ranks of the unemployed



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