



CHURCH of IRELAND GENERAL SYNOD  
CHURCH in SOCIETY COMMITTEE  
Ecological and Environmental Sub-Committee

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**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**

The Ecological and Environmental Group has embarked on a project to raise environmental awareness throughout the broader Church, so that Church members may explore for themselves the implications of ecological and environmental issues for their Christian lives in a dynamic and participative way and so that the Church of Ireland shows its commitment to its responsibilities in this area.

The Committee considered the way in which the Church of Ireland could best respond to the challenges faced globally, nationally, and locally, with regard to Ecological and Environmental matters, and bearing in mind the particular example called for from those who acknowledge God as the Creator, and who consequently value the created world.

Being aware of the growing concern among all about the frailty of the universe, and the wanton way in which man has ravaged the world, with insufficient regard for the sharing of resources and the need to ensure their supply in the future, the committee felt that a start should be made to define its purpose, and to undertake a project that would be within its scope, and which could be completed within a limited time-span, and which would lay the foundation for future development.

It was therefore agreed that the committee would undertake to produce, in the course of 2003, a compact folder of information to be distributed to the Bishops of each Diocese, and to the Rectors of each parish. Funding has been sought for this purpose from the Church of Ireland Priorities Committee. The purpose of the folder is to contain the basic information required to enable each parish to undertake its own audit regarding what it is doing at its own local level to ensure the best use of resources, and to raise the level of awareness of the need for every individual to contribute to proper care for the environment.

It was felt that, where possible, due regard should be taken of the work that already exists, and that the experience of those who have already pioneered projects in this area should be acknowledged and used. The Rev W D Humphries of St. Molua's Parish, Stormont, shared with the committee, the experience he and his parish has had of introducing an Eco-Congregation Scheme, and it was decided that this organisation should be approached, and, possibly after a little adaptation for the Church of Ireland parishes (particularly those in the Republic of Ireland), the programme could be warmly recommended for widespread adoption.

The current tasks of the Committee are as follows: -

- To explore the way forward towards the introduction of the Eco-Congregation Scheme in Church of Ireland parishes;
- To enquire if it is possible to mount a stand at the General Synod to advertise the Eco-Congregation Scheme, and to raise members' awareness of the support being given to environmental awareness by the Church of Ireland, and to make them aware of the existence of this Committee, and of its remit;
- To provide a report to the Church of Ireland General Synod, to be included in the book of reports, regarding this Committee, and its on-going work;
- To continue to gather information from all relevant sources, for inclusion in the folder for the parishes;
- To draw up a list of experienced speakers who might be approached to speak in parishes, and possibly to launch a parochial awareness of how they should approach care for the environment in their area;
- To explore the possibility of an article, or series of articles, in the Church of Ireland Gazette, which might be repeated, in full or in part, in Diocesan magazines;
- To consider the possibility of producing a pack of information for Primary schools, and promoting awareness of environmental issues, bearing in mind the work already being undertaken in this area;
- To explore the possibility of sponsorship to fund a competition for primary schools who may undertake ecological and environmental projects;
- To seek to have ecological and environmental emphasis included in Harvest Thanksgiving Services and to draw up a resource list and possible service outline;
- To approach the Representative Church Body Property Committee for assistance in producing guidelines for rectors and glebe wardens, in relation to care and management of church property (including grave yards), with due regard to matters such as insulation, economic use of resources, etc.

The Committee hopes to meet, as it has done, both in the North and South, and to maintain progress in the encouragement of ecological and environmental awareness among Church members, and of the responsibilities we share, collectively and individually, for ensuring that our beautiful world is cared for in our generation, and maintained for the future.