

## **Report on “Protection of our environment”**

The main theme at our Church Synod October 2009 was the “Protection of our environment”. God has created the world and “it was very good”. This divine creation has been entrusted to mankind, not to abuse it, not to exploit it, not to destroy it, but to use it responsibly, to care for and to protect it. We heard some challenging and informative lectures.

At the Synod a decision was taken that we as Church want to take up this calling to seriously get involved to protect our divine heritage. It was also decided to establish an “Environmental committee”. A number of interested synod representatives and experts volunteered to serve on such a committee. A first meeting was then scheduled at our church centre in Kempton Park. Unfortunately not all invited members could participate. The concept “Environment” was subdivided into 5 categories:

- Water preservation
- Renewable Energy
- Motor Industry
- Recycling of refuse
- Mining Industry

In each of these areas we can become involved to make a difference.

Two letters were written to all pastors and congregations with the request to establish their own environmental committee and name a contact person through whom further communication and dissemination of information could function effectively. Only 6 congregations responded – this was a big disappointment to me especially as it had been a decision taken at the Synod with great enthusiasm.

In Nelspruit we continued with the work and created a small corner in our monthly newsletter, which we call our “Green Corner” in which we inform the congregation about small but possible ways to contribute towards protecting our environment. Our responsibility towards the protection of that which was entrusted to us is simply too big that it may be stopped only because some congregations or pastors don’t show any interest. I would once again call upon and challenge all congregations to set aside some space in their newsletters for such information and really get committed to get involved even with very small things. Only together we can make an impact. Some congregations have really made a committed effort in an exemplary way to get involved eg. by providing containers to separate refuse, glass, paper and tins and then to expose of it to be recycled, another congregation is involved in negotiating with the mine authorities to discuss the air and water pollution etc.. For this commitment I am extremely thankful. We may, however, not ask the question is it a lucrative thing to do, will we make some money doing this? It pays to do it for our environment, the creation of God entrusted to us and for the future generations. I will again in future communicate with all pastors, congregations and contact persons and point out what can be done to make a difference, even if these things seem negligible and irrelevant – it is each and every drop that eventually fills the bucket. I would be very grateful for all information about how you as congregations are involved and further literature of interest that could motivate all of us to participate in this important work – this could then be communicated to all congregations. This calling to protect our environment is not an option, it is an obligation!

**The Creation is God’s wonderful gift to us. We may live on it, enjoy and admire it – let us in gratitude protect it so that the future for ourselves and those that come after us, can be secured.**

D.R. Lilje