

eco- ***congregation***



an environmental toolkit for churches

Module 8

greening the purse strings

*Management of financial, catering and purchasing
matters*

Eco-congregation Canada is a project of
A Rocha Canada – Christians in Conservation
512 172 Street, Surrey, B.C., V3S 9R3 Registered Charity # 86663 8943 RR0001

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Contents

Agenda	2
Opening devotion	2
Finance	
• Managing money	3
• Investment	3
- Further resources on Ethical Investment	4
• The Minister’s expenses	4
• Fundraising	4
• Giving	4
Catering	
• Minimising waste	5
• Food and the environment	6
• Use your LOAF	7
• Giving thanks	7
• Fair Trade	7
• Other good catering practice	8
• Promoting recycling and green products	8
Shopping for church supplies	
• Greening the purse	9
• Cut flowers	9
About Eco-Congregation	10

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

The **Agenda**

St. John's Church – Finance and Housekeeping Meeting

Monday 23rd July 2007 7.30pm

Agenda

Devotions: Rev G.O. Green

Apologies: Mr F.R. Itter

1. Minutes of the previous Meeting
2. Financial statement – current and deposit account
3. Report from the Caretaker incl. purchase of cleaning materials
4. Flower rota and review of policy on cut flowers
5. Minister's travel allowance
6. Any of business
7. Date of next meeting – proposal – same date next year?

Closing prayer

Many churches have a finance, catering or management committee that works to ensure that the weekly housekeeping needs of their church are met. Typically such committees are responsible for finances, church property, catering, cleaning and ministerial expenses. This module addresses some of the issues raised in the agenda above with suggestions as to how management committees can help their church show practical care for God's creation. The care of church premises are dealt with more fully in Module 7 'Greening the cornerstone'.

Opening **Devotion**

Lord God we thank you for your gifts of:

This world - given through your creative energy;

The Kingdom of God – revealed in the life and witness of your Son;

The Church, given birth through your Holy Spirit.

We thank you for our own church

and ask that you guide us

as we seek to act as good stewards

in accordance to the Kingdom values of Jesus,

and with respect for the well-being of your creation. Amen.

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Finance

Churches, along with individuals, have a variety of opportunities to use their financial influence to promote the values that they hold.

Managing money

If your church is concerned about environmental issues, consider asking your bank the following questions:

- \$ Do you have an environmental policy?
- \$ What environmental organizations/projects have you supported?
- \$ Do you consider the environmental impact of a project before agreeing a loan?

Banks are influenced by the opinions and choices of their customers.

Investment

Increasingly churches are choosing to invest any financial resources that they hold according to the principals that they believe in – it is about putting money where the church's heart is. In today's language this is called ethical investment. Ethical investment developed from the desire of people and organisations wanting to avoid profiting from certain activities. Churches adopting ethical investment policy through so-called 'negative criteria' typically avoided investing in businesses whose main activities included:

1. The manufacture or sale of alcohol
2. The manufacture of tobacco
3. The provision of gambling facilities
4. The production of armaments

Additionally, some churches avoid investing in companies that benefit from trade with nations which have a poor human rights record.

Ethical investment has developed so that it is possible to select investments on the avoidance of certain activities (negative criteria) and focus on positive criteria. For example, if your church wanted its investment to promote care of the earth it might choose companies with activities such as developing renewable energy technology, recycling and waste minimisation initiatives or companies with a transparent environmental policy.

If your church has some investments, investigate the environmental or social criteria which are operated. If you feel that the criteria don't match your church's values, consider moving your investment. There is a wide range of ethical funds available. Consider exploring some funds and taking a recommendation to your churches main decision-making meeting. This will enable the whole church to 'own' the decision and also spread the message of investing where your heart lies.

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Further Resources on Ethical Investment

The United Church of Canada produces a booklet on ethical investments. Mission and Investing explores the different options congregations have for socially responsible banking and investing.

Mission and Investing is available for \$8.95 from the Order Desk, United Church resource distribution, 25 Connell court Unit 2, Toronto ON M8 1E8 product # 500 000 032 or visit the Website: www.united-church.ca

The Social Investment Organization is a national non-profit association for socially responsible investment in Canada. Their website offers information on environmentally responsible investment funds in Canada, as well as contact information for financial advisors and institutions across Canada that are active in responsible investment.

The Social Investment Organization: 184 Pearl St. 2nd floor, Toronto ON M5H 1L5
Phone: 416-461-6042 Website: www.socialinvestment.ca

The Minister's expenses

Local churches are usually responsible for ensuring that their minister's work-related expenses, including travel costs, are met. Some churches just pay a mileage or car allowance, which doesn't give an incentive for the minister to use more environmentally-friendly forms of transport. Consider the following:

- in addition to any car mileage allowance/expenses, consider offering cycling allowance/ expenses. This may save the church money and encourage the minister to cycle
- indicate that the church will meet the cost of local bus fares

Fundraising

The garage sale is an environmentally friendly form of fundraising and in addition to actually raising some cash it:

- encourages people to recycle goods
- makes goods available to people on low incomes
- creates a space where people from the community can gather and meet the church members

Giving

Many churches give financially and some choose to support a Christian environmental organisation.

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Dumfries Baptist Church, Scotland gives regularly to A Rocha – an international Christian conservation organisation – and also prays for A Rocha’s work.

St John’s Church in Hamilton, UK gave the equivalent of about \$4,500.00 raised through their Harvest Appeal and Craft Fayre one year to Floresta – a Christian charity which helps tropical subsistence farmers to move away from ‘slash and burn’ agriculture towards more sustainable farming practices.

Every year youth groups from across Canada gather at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg for the Peace-it-Together conference. They spend the weekend exploring how to live out peace and justice in their own context. The theme of the 2008 conference was creation care. A collection was taken on Sunday morning to tie into the theme of the weekend, with the proceeds sent to A Rocha, an international Christian conservation organization. A Rocha used the donation for environmental education resources.

Module 10 ‘Green Choices’ lists Christian environmental organisations in Canada and the USA.

***‘For where your treasure is,
there will be your heart also’***

Matthew 6:21 Revised English Bible

Catering

Many churches undertake catering. This may range from a cup of tea/coffee after a morning service to the occasional or regular provision of meals. The following good catering practice can help churches care for the environment:

Minimising waste

- Use your church’s dishes wherever possible and avoid disposable cups and plates. Doing the dishes can be good for fellowship and avoids needless waste!
- Provide recycling bins for glass bottles/jars/cans/plastic cartons on the premises
- If you have an outside garden or yard area, install an outdoor composting bin for vegetable matter (food and flowers). The compost can enrich the church garden. Some local authorities have such compost bins available at a reduced price or for free.

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Members of **St. Peter's Anglican Church** in Winnipeg formed a creation care committee to promote concern for the Earth in their congregation. One initial focus was to promote individual action, especially through composting. The first composting bin became insufficient very quickly, and a second was added as parishioners were enthusiastic about composting kitchen waste.

Food and the environment

Food is necessary for life, but some methods of producing, processing and distributing food have a bigger impact on the environment than others.

Whilst it is recognised that the development of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and more intensive agricultural methods has resulted in the ability to significantly increase agricultural production, so enabling more people in the world to have sufficient food, there have been some negative side effects. For example, in the UK the growth in the application of chemical pesticides has led to the sharp decline of many native species of wildlife and poor water quality in some streams and rivers. In developing nations there are also health and safety concerns about the welfare of some agricultural workers in relation to their exposure to pesticides.

There are also concerns about the growth of so-called food-miles. Food-miles is a concept that encompasses the environmental and social costs involved in transporting produce from field to plate. The concern about 'food-miles' has arisen because of the growth of the amount of food transported:

- over vast distances between the country of origin and where it is eaten
- within countries as food is stored, processed, packaged, taken to distribution centres and then to shops!
- from the demand to have a full range of produce available throughout the year rather than just in 'season'

The following steps can reduce the impact of our need for food on the environment:

- Where possible, choose local produce and use a farmers or co-operative market if one is operating to reduce 'food miles'
- Whilst recognising that people enjoy choice, try to choose seasonal produce wherever possible
- Avoid produce which has excessive packaging
- Consider choosing organic produce and providing vegetarian options
- Consider advertising any policy initiatives that are taken (e.g. on a menu, in the church magazine, through the local press)

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Use your LOAF!

Christian Ecology Link developed a set of 'LOAF' principles for food and produced a LOAF place mat that can be downloaded from: www.christian-ecology.org.uk

Locally purchased
Organically grown
Animal friendly
Fairly traded

Grace

Traditional grace with a creation theme

Thank you for the world so sweet
Thank you for the food we eat
Thank you for the birds that sing
Thank you God for everything

A Just after dinner grace

For fairly-traded chocolate and fairly-traded tea
For bananas that spread smiles from the producer to me
For rich and fragrant coffee that cost more than a bean
We give thanks
In the name of the one who paid the full price for life

A (tongue in cheek) grace mindful of over-indulgence

God of goodness bless this food
Keep us in a pleasant mood
Bless the cook and all who serve us
Lord from indigestion
Preserve us!

Grain of Wheat Church Community in Winnipeg has regular common meals after Sunday morning worship, with each family contributing a dish in potluck style. After a 6 month campaign encouraging the congregation to reduce their carbon emissions, they celebrated with a 100-mile common meal. Families were challenged to bring food grown within 100 miles of Winnipeg. Each dish was labelled with a card listing ingredients and their source. Many people were surprised at the variety (and quality) of food that was grown and produced locally and readily available.

Fairtrade

While it is good to minimise food miles, it is not possible to grow products like tea and coffee in temperate climates. However, there are concerns that workers in the developing nations may not necessarily receive a fair wage or have reasonable working conditions. To deal with this justice issue, churches have taken a lead in communities by promoting fairly-traded products and encouraging members of their congregation to buy them.

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

- Ensure that your church purchases fairly-traded tea, coffee and sugar, which are readily available from organic food markets, craft stores like Ten Thousand Villages, and also from some supermarkets.
- Consider running a fair trade stall to enable your congregation to readily purchase fairly-traded goods. This could be run after worship services and at other regular events such as council meetings or men's/women's breakfasts.
- Host an event and invite a speaker from an international development organization to speak on the benefits of fair trade products for producers in developing countries.

St. Matthew's Anglican, a Winnipeg inner city church, supported the One Month Challenge fair-trade initiative by selling fair-trade products in the sanctuary after Sunday worship services for 4 weeks. Besides coffee and tea, they offered delicious fair trade chocolate and baking cocoa, as well as handi-crafts from around the world.

Module 12 'Global Neighbours' has more information about fair trade.

Transfair Canada is a non-profit group committed to endorsing fair trade products and educating the public. Their website includes information on events happening in your area, as well as how to find stores across the country that sell certified fair trade items. Visit www.transfair.ca

Good catering practice

- Fill kettles with only the amount of water required, to save energy and money!
- Save energy, money and getting steamed-up by turning kettles off rather than leaving them boiling.
- Sometimes church catering results in more food being laid out than is eaten - often due to the generosity of church members! If you are planning a shared meal and there is a chance of good food not being consumed, identify a place in the community where it could be usefully used, for example a shelter or soup kitchen and arrange to take any surplus to them.

Promoting recycling and green products

Increasingly churches are greening their church by choosing environmentally-friendly versions of products from purchasing fairly traded products to recycled paper and environmentally-sensitive cleaning materials to organic paint. Churches can also promote recycling and lighten their 'footprint' on the environment by minimising waste and promoting recycling of products/materials used on church premises and in some instances by providing resources for the local community to use.

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

Shopping for church Supplies

Greening the purse

Many churches have an office and run children's work, both of which require some paper and other office or art supplies; all churches have washrooms that require products to keep them functional, and all churches need cleaning! To meet these needs churches need to purchase products. Churches could consider the following choices for their shopping list to demonstrate their care for God's creation:

\$ Buy recycled paper products for office, children's work and in the washrooms

\$ Where there is a choice choose durable rather than disposable products

\$ Source a supply of eco-friendly cleaning products. Avoid chlorine-based bleaches, phosphate-based detergents and any cleaners that are not 100% biodegradable

To make maximum use of products and minimise waste, set up storage facilities for:

- used paper which can be used on both sides
- paper which has been fully utilised and is to be recycled
- envelopes which can be reused (labels available from any stationary store)

And spread the message that your church cares for the environment by:

- Stating that you have chosen recycled paper on items such as your church stationery, service sheets and magazine

The environmental committee at **St. Peter's Anglican Church** in Winnipeg has encouraged the Vestry to approve the purchase of 'greener' products, such as microfibre cleaning cloths, biodegradable paper towels and environmentally friendly cleaning liquids. They hope to make other changes, including using alternatives to plastic garbage bags.

Evesham Methodist Church, UK has an aluminium can guru in the shape of their green co-ordinator, Mr Graham Gooderham. Graham encourages the collection of a substantial number of aluminium cans each year, tidying up public spaces and collecting from a variety of premises. The church has collected over 78000 cans and raising the equivalent of \$2,400.00 for church funds.

Christ Church Methodist/United Reformed Church, UK also promote recycled products through their annual fundraising fair. Their 'Eco-Congregation' stall features a range of recycled goods including attractive costume jewellery made from old glossy magazines and sun hats made from plastic bags.

Cut Flowers

The cut flower industry has taken over large swaths of land in South and Central America and Africa. This industry exacts a heavy toll on workers and on the environment. Cut flowers and foliage are typically grown with large amounts of pesticides and fertilizers. Workers, spending many hours each day in the fields are exposed to these hazardous chemicals, often with little or no training or safety gear. There are serious threats to forests and other biodiversity-rich ecosystems in the tropics resulting from the conversion of wild land to floriculture and the run off of pesticides and fertilizers used. Transporting the flowers to Canada, and keeping

Module 8 – **greening the purse strings**

them refrigerated for freshness, use up vast amounts of fuel and generates climate-changing gases.

Alternatives to imported cut flowers in church could include:

- Flowers and/or foliage from members' gardens or other local sources
- Flowering plants which can then be planted in the church grounds or members gardens
- Increased use of colourful banners/displays etc to brighten up the church

Module 7 'Greening the Cornerstone' and Module 10 'Green Choices' feature related information on caring for church premises and living sustainable lifestyles.

About Eco-Congregation

Eco-Congregation is an ecumenical environmental project for churches in Britain, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Canada. It provides free resources, support and an Award program to help churches to consider environmental issues in the context of their Christian life and mission and to take positive action. Eco-Congregation was originally developed by the environmental charity ENCAMS on behalf of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). It is now overseen by CTBI and delivered by a partnership of organisations.

In Canada, Eco-congregation is managed and delivered by A Rocha Canada.

Contact: A Rocha Canada, 512 172 Street, Surrey, B.C. V3S 9R3
Tel: 604 542-9022
Email: canada@arocha.org
Web: www.arocha.org/canada

In England, Eco-Congregation is managed by A Rocha UK and supported by a grant from the Methodist Relief and Development Fund. The office base is at The Arthur Rank Centre (ARC). Contact: 024 7669 2491, Email: ecocongregation@arocha.org ,
Web: www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales

In Scotland, Eco-Congregation is managed and delivered through a partnership between Keep Scotland Beautiful (an Associated company of ENCAMS) and the Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRT) of the Church of Scotland. It is endorsed by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and is supported financially by the Scottish Executive's Sustainable Action Fund. Contact : +44 (0)131 556 2953 , Email: ecocongregation@srt.org.uk , Web: www.ecocongregation.org/scotland

Churches in Wales are supported by Eco-Congregation based at the Arthur Rank Centre.