

A Commitment By Church Of South India Madhya (Central) Kerala Diocese

Journey Towards Carbon Neutrality

Mathew Koshy Punnackadu

On May 21, the Church of South India (CSI) Madhya (Central) Kerala Diocese (MKD) embarked on a transformative journey to convert all 400 parishes and institutions into carbon-neutral entities. This initiative, known as CSI Carbon-Neutral Parishes and Institutions, is a proactive measure to address the potential disasters induced by climate change at a local level.

CSI acknowledges the urgent need for concerted and meaningful action as the impacts of climate change escalate. The gravity of this global crisis is underscored by the alarming rise in global warming, primarily driven by the increase in greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas with a lifetime spanning hundreds of years, remains in the atmosphere far longer than other gases, contributing to the annual increase in warming. The primary source of carbon dioxide is the combustion of fossil fuels such as petrol and coal. The relentless pursuit of economic growth by developed nations has significantly elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide levels from 280 parts per million (ppm) two centuries ago to a concerning 440 ppm recently, highlighting the situation's urgency.

Despite the efforts of 28 Conference of Parties (COP) meetings aimed at curbing global warming, the reluctance of developed countries to significantly reduce carbon emissions exacerbates the crisis. CSI asserts that developed nations, whose actions have precipitated global warming in pursuit of excessive profits, must re-evaluate their development paradigms. The CSI advocates for developing and disseminating carbon-free technology, particularly to developing countries that bear the brunt of climate change yet contribute minimally to its causes. This shift from a carbon economy to one reliant on solar and hydrogen is essential.

The principle of 'Think Globally, Act Locally' is not just a guiding principle for the CSI, but a call to action for all. Local churches, play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of climate change by adhering to green practices and policies. Through the collaborative project 'Net



A carbon-neutral society seeks to balance carbon dioxide emissions through reduction and offsetting measures. This journey begins with calculating carbon emissions within a specific area and undertaking measures like afforestation to absorb equivalent amounts of carbon dioxide. While precise estimation of carbon emissions can be challenging for parishes, their participation in various carbon offset projects can significantly reduce overall emissions.

Zero Carbon', in partnership with the Green Mission of the Government of Kerala, the CSI aims to achieve carbon neutrality at the parish level, empowering the people to be a part of this global movement.

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Meaningful change starts with the collective efforts of individuals and communities dedicated to a healthy Earth, prioritising sustainable development. The Church's mission includes working towards a world where



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all living beings coexist in unity and peace. Unique among Indian churches, CSI's constitution explicitly includes environmental protection as a fundamental aspect of its mission. This commitment dates back to 1992, establishing a department dedicated to environmental protection at the

Synod level. Today, ecological departments and committees exist in all dioceses as part of this vision.

The Diocese has approved "The Ten Commandments for Carbon-Neutral Parishes and Institutions" to support this mission. These guidelines aim to provide practical steps towards achieving carbon neutrality.

CSI MKD Carbon Neutrality -Ten Commandments.

Embrace God's call to safeguard His unique creations by following these ten commandments for carbon-neutral parishes and institutions.

1. You shall conduct a Self-Audit:

Examine your ways and practices to understand your impact on the earth and strive for improvement.

2. You shall harness Solar Energy:

Harness the power of the sun, a freely given gift, to illuminate

and energise your dwellings and institutions.

3. You shall enhance the efficiency of Electrical Equipment:

Ensure your devices are highly efficient, using less and wasting, not conserving precious resources.

4. You shall increase the Green Cover of the Earth:

Plant and nurture trees and plants, the lungs of the earth, providing air and sustenance to all creatures.

5. You shall practice Water Conservation:

Use water wisely; it is the essence of life. Let not a drop be wasted, ensuring future generations can also partake. Promote rainwater harvesting.

6. You shall manage Waste Effectively:

Recycle, reduce, and reuse to free the land from the burden of waste, allowing the earth to flourish.

7. You shall avoid water from throwaway Plastic Bottles:

Avoid plastic bottles that pollute land and water. These cheap bottles often contain harmful chemicals. Choose sustainable alternatives for the planet's health.

8. You shall use Kitchen Bins for converting Waste into Fertilizer:

Transform your kitchen waste into a rich fertiliser, giving back to the earth what you have taken, there by nourishing the soil.

9. You shall promote an Organic Lifestyle wherever possible:

Embrace organic living, avoiding harmful chemicals and practices, living in harmony with creation.

10. You shall encourage Children to be Green Ambassadors:

Teach and inspire young ones to care for the earth, ensuring a verdant future.

May these commandments guide you towards a more sustainable and harmonious existence with the world around you.

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