

28th August 2021

Dear Bishop,

SUBJECT: ACT NOW - DIVEST IMMEDIATELY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

At this time of climate and ecological emergency, we stand at a defining moment for the future of humanity, especially the most vulnerable and young people who have done least to cause the climate crisis.

The landmark IPCC report published on 9th August is unequivocal in its 'Code Red Warning for Humanity'.¹ It is beyond time that the Church of England finds its voice and divests immediately and entirely from fossil fuels and calls unequivocally on the UK Government to act now to end the production, sale and use of fossil fuels.

We therefore write to urge you take action on the following:

1. To announce immediately your intention to divest from all companies whose core business is to produce fossil fuels.
2. To divest from all fossil fuel investments before 31st December 2021 and commit not to invest in fossil fuel companies in the future.
3. To speak out urgently for immediate action to prevent irreversible climate impacts and ensure a liveable planet for all of God's creation.

Divest from fossil fuel companies

Although the strategy of engagement with fossil fuel companies is well intentioned, it has failed to prevent Shell from harming the people of the Niger Delta and from continuing plans for future fossil fuel exploration, which includes a 20% rise in gas production.² On the contrary, the strategy has given moral legitimacy to companies whose core business is destroying lives and livelihoods and continuing to lobby against climate action.³

It is time to act now

Commenting on the IPCC report António Guterres, the UN secretary general has warned: 'There is no time for delay and no room for excuses. This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet. If we combine forces now, we can avert climate catastrophe. But, as the report makes clear, there is no time for delay and no room for excuses.'⁴

Fatih Birol, the International Energy Agency's executive director and one of the world's foremost energy economists, said: 'If governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investments in oil, gas and coal, from now – from this year.'⁵

Rt Revd Ernesto Manuel, the Bishop of Nampula in Northern Mozambique puts the case for divestment very clearly: 'Fossil-fuel investments increase climate change and impacts on those most vulnerable, and also destabilise communities... We plead with the international community — take your money out of fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy which is decentralised, benefits local people, and does not contribute to climate change.'⁶

The UK hosting of COP26 in November provides a unique opportunity for action. We urge you to announce your immediate intention to divest from all fossil fuel companies by the end of this year and call on the UK government and world leaders to act now. Your prophetic voice will be a source of inspiration and a clarion call to all humans in positions of authority, that deeds not words will prevent humanity from destroying God's creation.

Please respond to this email by emailing: christianclimateaction@gmail.com

Yours in Faith,

Val King
On behalf of Christian Climate Action

1. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sqsm20847.doc.htm>

2. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/11/shell-grow-gas-business-energy-net-zero-carbon>

3. <https://www.channel4.com/news/revealed-fossil-fuel-companies-lobby-uk-government-for-gas-compromise-ahead-of-cop26>

4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58130705>

5. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/18/no-new-investment-in-fossil-fuels-demands-top-energy-economist>

6. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/21-may/news/uk/faith-institutions-pull-out-of-fossil-fuel-companies>