

Bishop Geoff Davies was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1941. His father, an Anglican priest, worked in South Africa, England, the USA and Middle East, so as a child he had varied education. His tertiary education was at the University of Cape Town (UCT), reading Social Anthropology and History. He worked on the Argus newspaper in Cape Town before studying Theology at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was ordained priest in St. Paul's Cathedral 1969 and served in a parish in London.

He returned to Africa, looking after a far flung parish in Serowe, Botswana. It was here that he became even more aware of the fragility of the natural environment, and our need to care for it. In 1977 he was appointed Rector of Kalk Bay, Cape Town, after marrying Kate Cuthbert, a zoologist and environmentalist teaching at UCT. Here he was involved in the struggle to save the informal settlement of 'Crossroads', near Cape Town airport, from being demolished.

From 1981 he was Director of the Department of Mission for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, based in Khotso House with the SACC – South African Council of Churches - when Archbishop Desmond Tutu was General Secretary. In 1985 he organised a 'Call to Mission' for the Church on the theme 'The Earth is the Lord's' to raise environmental awareness. The message was that not only did South Africa need to abolish Apartheid and establish justice for people, but that justice was needed for all of life on this planet Earth, if we are to find peace and harmony.

In 1987 he became the first Bishop of the new Anglican Diocese of Umzimvubu in the Eastern Cape, based in Kokstad, an entirely rural area with many dependent on subsistence farming and migratory labour. The land was severely over-utilized. In 1995 he proposed a wide-ranging environmental resolution for the Church's Synod entitled 'Save Our Future'.

On returning to Cape Town in 2004 Bishop Geoff and Kate initiated the formation of the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute, SAFCEI, a multi-faith NGO. It supports and encourages religious leaders and people of all faiths to respond to the environmental crisis and lobbies for environmental accountability and ethical economics from government and all sectors of society. It was launched by Nobel Peace Laureate and environmentalist Wangari Maathai in 2005.

In preparation for the 2011 UNFCCC COP 17 talks in Durban, Bishop Geoff was a founding member of the 'We Have Faith – Act now for Climate Justice' campaign. The day before the talks a rally was held in the Durban football stadium, hosted by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and attended by the COP President and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres.

In 2009 Bishop Geoff Davies was given the South African Environmentalist of the Year Award and on 31 March 2016 he received the Archbishop of Canterbury's Langton Award for his lifetime work of urging the Church to embrace environmental care, seeking eco-justice – both ecological and economic justice.

ENDS

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