



Псковский регионологический журнал 2013-2024

ISSN 2079-8784

URL - <http://ras.jes.su>

Все права защищены

Том 18. №2/2022 Том . 2022

## Environmental responsibility of religious organizations (on the example of the State Christian Church of England)

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### Аннотация

Examples of the implementation of the concept of social and environmental responsibility by foreign religious institutions allow us to conclude that there are successfully functioning models for the implementation of this type of activity. The purpose of the article is to present an analysis of the implementation of environmental responsibility on the example of the structural unit of the regional level of the State Christian Church of England. The object of the study is the diocese of Canterbury, which has the necessary characteristics and takes an active part in solving environmental problems. In addition to the methods of analysis and synthesis of information, the calculated coefficient of territorial concentration was used to reflect the degree of uniformity in the distribution of church parishes across the territory of the archdiocese, and the accessibility for the population of events organized on their basis, including environmental issues. The results of the analysis of the model of actively implemented environmental activities by a religious organization at the regional level, using data reflecting both the list of activities and its financial component, as well as the method for calculating the territorial concentration coefficient in relation to the parish infrastructure, can be used in developing a strategy for cooperation between the state and the Church in the designated area.

**Ключевые слова:** environmental responsibility, religious institution environmental activity, the diocese of Canterbury, the concept of sustainable development

**Дата публикации:** 22.06.2022

### Ссылка для цитирования:

Янковская А. А. , Балабейкина О. А. , Абрамова Е. Environmental responsibility of religious organizations (on the example of the State Christian Church of England) // Псковский регионологический журнал – 2022. – Том 18. №2/2022 С. 65-79 [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://prj.pskgu.ru/S221979310019588-9-1> (дата обращения: 15.05.2024). DOI: 10.37490/S221979310019588-9

<sup>1</sup> **Introduction.** The State Christian Churches are still remaining significant socio-cultural institutional structures at the current stage of European society development. Their activities and value paradigms largely determine the behavior of native population representatives. Despite some outlined secularization tendencies, Christian Churches continue to play a prominent part in social, economical and political processes.

<sup>2</sup> It is no coincidence that in 2008, Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared the idea of necessity for involvement of religious organizations in the process of implementing the fundamentals of the concept of sustainable development (CSD), which was soon applied [14].

<sup>3</sup> Since CSD is targeted at achieving the balance of socio-economic goals, as well as qualitative and quantitative attributes of environmental preservation, the major role of CSD is assigned to environmental responsibility. It should also be stated that fostering solutions to environmental and conservational problems is explicitly declared in seven out of seventeen goals of CSD<sup>1</sup>. The involvement of religious organizations in the process of achieving mentioned above goals makes it relevant to identify the main trends related to the implementation of environmental responsibility by church structures.

<sup>4</sup> Several decades ago, representatives of the largest Christian religious institutions declared their willingness to participate in environmental protection measures. Thus, Pope John Paul II, being the head of the Catholic Church from 1978 until 2005, in his Official

Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace in the year 1990 mentioned the necessities to solve problems, caused by environmental crisis, and emphasized the universe of responsibility for everything that had happened<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> If in the vast majority of European countries church-state issues, evolving significant changes, are in the nature of productive collaboration, then in modern Russia they are at the formation stage after the extending period of Soviet ideological atheism. But recently, in national practice there have been some trends, aimed at interaction in the field of implementing social responsibility by religious organizations. This is reflected in the content of scientific papers [4] and on the official websites of church structures<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Since environmental responsibility is a significant part of social responsibility, both representatives of Russian religious hierarchy and authorities at the domestic and regional levels can benefit from the experience of foreign Christian religious institutions in this area. The National Church of England, which has been successfully functioning in this direction at regional and local levels for decades, can serve as a representative sample.

<sup>7</sup> The present study aimed at presenting the model of balanced successful implementation of environmental responsibility by religious Christian institutions using the example of Canterbury Diocese.

<sup>8</sup> **Literature overview.** Issues, related to the social responsibility of religious organizations, align with the goals of the CSD. They have been repeatedly covered in academic literature, being reflected in national [2; 4; 22; 30] and foreign studies [1; 19; 27; 28; 32; 36], including monographs [21]. However, Church's responsibility to the environment has rarely been a subject of independent [10–12; 15; 23; 29; 35].

<sup>9</sup> Probably, the reason lies in the fact that the environmental footprint of religious institutions is minimal, and Christian doctrine determines direct assistance to the needy as a matter of priority of social activity. Therefore, the emphasis in research articles, where the socio-economic role of religious institutions is reflected and analyzed, is placed to the benefit of the help to those in need. And yet, researchers consistently paid attention to studies that reflected the great significance of the Christian faith in the formation of environmental consciousness and responsibility [13; 30]. This issue was also considered in retrospect [20]. It should be noted that as a response to the necessity for scientific understanding of the problems, caused by the impact on natural and environmental component of religious tourism, studies of foreign researches related to the designated narrow topic has appeared in recent years [7–9; 16–18; 24–26; 31; 33; 34]. But at the current stage, an integrated approach to the study of making arrangements activities of religious institutions in the field of environmental responsibility remains without due attention of researchers.

<sup>10</sup> **Methodology and material.** The main source of empirical data was the information contained in the Church of England's diocesan reports, published in the public access. Data related to the implementation of environmental responsibility was extracted from the reports and analyzed.

<sup>11</sup> Apart from analysis methods and synthesizing the information, traditional methods for processing of statistical data were used. These include calculation of spatial index concentration for parishes of Canterbury Archdiocese, as the principal agents, in which activities related to church projects in the field of environmental responsibility are implemented.

<sup>12</sup> The strict administrative territorial structure of the Church consists of subordinate building blocks, namely two archdioceses in Canterbury and York, and in the aggregate comprises 41 dioceses. This rigid structure makes it possible to organize social activities in a systematic manner, including implementing environmental responsibility.

<sup>13</sup> The authors focus a lot of attention on Canterbury Diocese. As a field of research, it was chosen for context reflection of the Church environmental responsibility due to a number of apparent reasons. First, open - access reports of the Church of England are highly detailed. Moreover, a projection of its social responsibility up to 2022 has been drowned up and published<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> The features of Canterbury Diocese are another basis for choosing this organization as a case for substantive consideration of its guidelines and principles of implementation of environmental responsibility. Possessing the status of Central Diocese, it is typical by area, the number of parishes, and population. The Diocese of Canterbury consists of more than 200 parish units, grouped into 100 legal entities and combined in 15 area deaneries, spatially corresponding to local districts. Each deanery has its own Deanery Synod which consists of lay members and elected lay representatives. All major events are organized by the Church and take a place in a parish of a diocese.

<sup>15</sup> Equity in the area distribution of parishes is the key point both for attending meetings by the public and influencing its most significant part. Free participating of all members in Parochial Church meetings, targeted at direct and indirect resolving of environmental issues, has particular importance.

<sup>16</sup> In order to identify the equity of distribution degree within the Church of English parishes in Canterbury Archdiocese, we calculated index for spatial concentration by the formula: 
$$I_i = \frac{O_i}{O} \cdot \frac{S}{S_i}$$
 where,  $O_i$  = quantitative value of the core feature (the number of Church of England's parishes) for the  $i$  territorial unit (Diocese of Canterbury Archdiocese);  $O$  = the total quantitative value of the studied feature (in the Church of England parishes) for all territorial units of the region (Canterbury's dioceses);  $S_i$  = the area of  $i$  territorial unit (each of diocese in the Church of England, grouping the Canterbury Archdiocese);  $S$  = the total quantitative area of all unit;  $n$  = the total amount of territorial units of the region in point (the number of dioceses in the Church of England in Canterbury Archdiocese).

<sup>17</sup> *Table 1* Equity in the area distribution of the Church of England's parishes by the index calculation for spatial concentration as at January 2020

Diocese	Area square miles	Number of parishes	Index of spatial concentration	
Bath and Wells	1,610	463	0,00567	0,12466
Birmingham	290	151	0,00655	
Bristol	470	166	0,00413	
Winchester	1,130	255	-0,00176	
Worcester	670	169	0,00042	

Guildford	530	159	0,00254	
Gloucester	1,130	301	0,00182	
Derby	990	254	0,00117	
Canterbury	1,050	263	-0,00107	
Coventry	700	206	0,00284	
Leicester	830	243	0,00352	
Lincoln	2,670	492	-0,01340	
Lichfield	1,730	438	0,00005	
London	280	399	0,02723	
Norwich	1,800	555	0,00948	
Oxford	2,210	612	0,00577	
Peterborough	1,140	351	0,00577	
Portsmouth	420	140	0,00252	
Rochester	540	213	0,00681	
St Albans	1,120	338	0,00527	
St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	1,430	445	0,00801	
Salisbury	2,050	442	-0,00530	
Southwark	317	292	0,01764	
Truro	1,390	214	-0,01014	
Hereford	1,650	340	-0,00512	
Chelmsford	1,530	468	0,00798	
Chichester	1,450	361	0,00054	
Exeter	2,570	491	-0,01102	
Ely	1,530	309	-0,00567	

Based on data: URL: <https://www.crockford.org.uk/dioceses>.

<sup>18</sup> The index for spatial concentration, equal to 0.12, leads to the conclusion that Anglican parishes in Canterbury are equally distributed. Accordingly, all thematic events, which are implemented in each parish, are accessible for all residents, living on the territory of the archdiocese.

<sup>19</sup> Almost all dioceses of the Church of England, situated within England, are involved in the activity, focused on the implementation of environmental responsibility. Its intensity is determined by frequency, regularity, and variety of events. Since there are no objective data to assess the size of their participants, the same indicators indirectly reflect the degree of coverage of outreach they are aimed at.

<sup>20</sup> At the beginning of the XXI century, the Church of England started to work intensively with the international network “A Rocha” (in 2005 it was registered as a Christian charity “A Rocha UK). This significant event improved the prospects for expanding functioning in the field of implementation environmental responsibility, as well as creating the impetus for the further development of certain dioceses.

<sup>21</sup> The Church of England participates in the projects “Eco Church” and “Eco Diocese”, evaluating the parish’s performance in the field of statutory activity, church facility, glebe management, involving in global initiative and lifestyle estimating of those concerned. “Eco Church” and “Eco Diocese” assess all these fields mentioned above in a specially designed algorithm — Eco Survey. There are three levels of *Eco Church Award* — Bronze, Silver and Gold.

<sup>22</sup> In order to qualify for an Award, a church must attain the required standard in each of the areas covered by the Eco Survey. Similarly, «Eco Diocese» ranks all dioceses using an on-line resource. In 2021 “Eco Church” involves such dioceses as Gloucester (three churches are awarded Silver Eco Diocese), Portsmouth (Bronze Eco Award), Salisbury, Southwark, Peterborough, Lichfield, Winchester, Worcester, Carlisle, Chester, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Canterbury, Coventry, Exeter, London, St. Edm and Ipswich, Hereford, Guildford, Rochester, Sodor and Maine, Derby and Leicester. «Eco Diocese» involves St. Edm and Ipswich (Bronze Eco Award), Salisbury (Bronze Eco Award), Lichfield, Gloucester, Winchester, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Canterbury, Coventry, Portsmouth, Hereford, Guildford and Derby.

<sup>23</sup> Concerning socio-environmental responsibility actions, Canterbury belongs to the traditional diocese of archdiocese of the same name. Description of mentioned above activities may be supplemented by a cost-benefit analysis of the diocese.

<sup>24</sup> Official papers of Canterbury Diocese contain doctrinal justification for the need to implement environmental responsibility. For example: – compliance with the environmental law by Diocese Officials and clergy; – participating in taking certain actions for solving global environmental issues. In particular, climate change issues are considered. For example, by removing carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere. – reducing the use of limited natural resources (including water) and, as far as possible, renewable or recycled resources; – reducing of waste (including refuse of single-use plastic) and the application of the “3 Rs” principle: reduce, reuse and recycle); – reducing energy consumption (including avoiding travel and using vehicles in favor of *walking* and *cycling*); – using environmentally friendly products; – environmental education; – education of environmental responsibility among the Church of England’s adherents<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Listed above principles are functioning in practice through the active involvement of Canterbury Diocese into the implementation of environmental responsibility.

<sup>26</sup> Among workstreams of Diocese, targeted at achieving environmentally determined by CSD, it is worth highlighting the involvement in the work of Supra-Diocesan (often international) organizations and environmental networks. It is in this sense Canterbury Diocese membership in European Green Pilgrim Age Network (EGPN) can be considered. EGPN is an international program for religious tourism destinations.

<sup>27</sup> The project budget for the period from October 2016 to October 2021 was €1.18m and was distributed among partner organizations.

<sup>28</sup> The aim of this interfaith project is to introduce further tools for environmental preservation and protecting cultural heritage, as well as expanding job opportunities due to the pilgrimage and tourism industry while mitigating the eco-impact from it. The tasks of GPSN are also to promote contribution to the preservation of ethnocultural and religious traditions, as well as shaping environmentally responsible behavior patterns among pilgrims and tourists<sup>6</sup>. Activities in a designed direction are highly relevant in European countries in view of the increasing popularity of so-called “Christian Restoration Centers” or retreats, located tourist destinations in environmentally friendly natural landscapes belonging to religious institutions [3; 6; 17].

<sup>29</sup> Participating in the programs of “A-Rocha” (Eco Church and A-Rocha UK Project) is also important<sup>7</sup>. Canterbury Diocese is registered as an Eco-Diocese and encourages parishes constituting it to participate in Eco Church program<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to participating in international environmentally responsible organizations, Canterbury Diocese conducts extensive awareness-raising work, including the following key activities, conducting a series of issue webinars “Net-Zero Carbon”. They cover a wide range of issues, such as installation of rooftop solar panels on diocesan buildings, techniques and methods of promoting *environmentally friendly models of behavior etc.*

<sup>31</sup> *Participating in these webinars is free of charge for everyone<sup>9</sup>.*

<sup>32</sup> *Another series of webinars has been held in Canterbury since 2016 and is dedicated to searching for solutions to pressing environmental issues.*

<sup>33</sup> *So, in 2020 an event was held under the theme “The activity of the eco-church in practice” (The Practicalities of Being an Eco Church), previously, in 2019, the issue related to climate change was addressed and in 2016–2017 Environmental Forums were held<sup>10</sup>; – support of environmental conservation and campaign. One of them is “The wildlife trust”. Under it, it is proposed to provide a water source in private gardens for wild animals. On the official website of the Diocese, you can find top tips for installing and maintaining such stations<sup>11</sup>; – participating in the information campaign “Towards an environmentally sustainable church” — an environmental program promoting and implementing a transition to “green electricity” (use of low-energy lighting, solar panels, infrared radiant panel heaters, roof and wall insulation, recyclables, etc.)<sup>12</sup>; – calculation of energy footprint of parishes using a special program after inputting source data (Energy Foot Print Tool, EFT); algorithm development, aimed at decreasing the total energy consumption<sup>13</sup>.*

<sup>34</sup> In addition, Canterbury supports the Diocesan digest summarizing the overview of the past, latest, and announcing upcoming eco-events (“All things bright and beautiful”). The newsletter alternates with the priest's blog, where news provides a theological assessment of environmental issues<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Awareness-raising activities are supported by an action item list in the field of environmental responsibility. These include: – actions that parish can take to reduce carbon emissions and minimize the use of single-use plastics as part of Sustainable Heating and Lighting Policy, agreed at the Diocesan Advisory Committee meeting on 13 November 2020<sup>15</sup>; – improving environmentally sound management of church buildings as a part of the “Church Care” program by creating appropriate software<sup>16</sup>. – “Land and Green Spaces” program involves encouraging parishes to interact with local schools in their environmental projects<sup>17</sup>. Schools and parishes are provided free with seeds, as well as tree seedlings and shrubs for planting in the surrounding areas. An online resource containing planting care practices is also maintained<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> *The Sittingbourne Community Wardrobe project* is implemented within the framework of reasonable consumption and support for individuals in lower-income category.

<sup>37</sup> Everyone is granted the opportunity to donate school uniforms so that volunteers prepare them for use by new owners<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, Diocese functions with minimal staffing, encouraging adherents to continue praying using the online resources of the cathedral and Diocese, Skype, Zoom, and Teams network, as well as a Diocesan Prayer Network. A review of the ongoing activities allows claiming that Canterbury Diocese allocates a significant proportion of its resources while achieving environmentally determined CSD. The analysis of the revenues and expenditure confirms its good financial standing (although it demonstrates a projected total income reduction due to quantitative decrease among parishioners) and a large amount of funding<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> *Table 2 Income and Expenditure 2019–2022*

	2019	2020	2021 (Budget)	2022 (Project)
<b>Budget Revenues (£'000)</b>				
Revenues Items				
Parish Share	7740	7653	7617	6735
Shortfall in Parish Share	(497)	(1005)	(1279)	-
Project grants and external funding	560	882	909	938
Other donations	1275	1075	834	834
Total funds	9078	8605	8081	8507
<b>Expenditure (£'000)</b>				



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# Environmental responsibility of religious organizations (on the example of the State Christian Church of England)

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## Abstract

Examples of the implementation of the concept of social and environmental responsibility by foreign religious institutions allow us to conclude that there are successfully functioning models for the implementation of this type of activity. The purpose of the article is to present an analysis of the implementation of environmental responsibility on the example of the structural unit of the regional level of the State Christian Church of England. The object of the study is the diocese of Canterbury, which has the necessary characteristics and takes an active part in solving environmental problems. In addition to the methods of analysis and synthesis of information, the calculated coefficient of territorial concentration was used to reflect the degree of uniformity in the distribution of church parishes across the territory of the archdiocese, and the accessibility for the population of events organized on their basis, including environmental issues. The results of the analysis of the model of actively implemented environmental activities by a religious organization at the regional level, using data reflecting both the list of activities and its financial component, as well as the method for calculating the territorial concentration coefficient in relation to the parish infrastructure, can be used in developing a strategy for cooperation between the state and the Church in the designated area.

**Keywords:** environmental responsibility, religious institution environmental activity, the diocese of Canterbury, the concept of sustainable development

**Publication date:** 22.06.2022

## Citation link:

Yankovskaya A., Balabeykina O., Environmental responsibility of religious organizations (on the example of the State Christian Church of England) // Pskov Journal of Regional Studies – 2022. – Volume 18. No2/2022 C. 65-79 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://prj.pskgu.ru/S221979310019588-9-1> (circulation date: 15.05.2024). DOI: 10.37490/S221979310019588-9