

Sunday, 29 November 2015

## Notes from the climate summit in Paris - Sunday

Here at the United Nations climate summit, COP21, in Paris, I spoke to a representative of African pilgrims who covered 6,000 miles cycling across nine countries, collecting signatures calling on the world's leaders to deliver climate justice.

I recall Bishop Carlos Matsinhe setting them off on my behalf in Maputo in August, and in Nairobi the cycling "caravan" was received by the archbishop there.



Cyclists for climate justice in Zambia.

Representatives have now come to Paris, very proud of their achievement. Sadly we could not publicly display the joy of their arrival, since mass rallies here have been curbed for security reasons following the Paris attacks of two weeks ago.

On Saturday afternoon, I joined Bishop Pierre Whalon, who is in charge of European congregations of the Episcopal Church in the U.S., for dinner with British climate pilgrims, where we conversed as well as reflected on the cry of the people and the planet.

The meal was hosted by Christian refugees from Iraq, and I found it moving to contemplate the different paths which each group faces in the future: while the UK pilgrims will of course head home, the Iraqis live in fear of ISIS and, determined to keep their faith, face the prospect of never going home and losing everything.

Earlier, I had joined the faith grouping at the climate talks in receiving the pilgrims at the beautiful [Basilica of St. Denis](#). As part of the faith grouping, at a venue near the Basilica, I handed [the signatures to the UN's top official dealing with climate change](#), Christiana Figueres. There too, there was a moving moment when she broke down on seeing that almost two million people had signed the petition. A young lady sung a newly-composed song and we danced on stage.

After this, we had an interfaith dialogue and I had an opportunity during a breakaway for small groups to catch up with Olav Fykse Tveit, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and to reflect on what be our redemptive moral call beyond COP21 should be if an agreement is reached here. The question I pose is: what is the unique call of people of faith?

I am writing these reflections on Sunday morning, after morning prayer. A dark grey, even black cloud is covering Paris as I write; it's been wet but the rain has stopped for now. On my arrival I

was not ready for this weather, so went to buy a nice, warm coat and pullover at the local charity shop.



Shaven-headed in a Parisian winter.

I also made the mistake of going for a haircut, so now I have to wear the "ACT Now for Climate Justice" hood outside all the time to keep my shaven head warm!

Today we in the faith community have a planning meeting and prayers together. I have a couple of interviews, hopefully not as many as yesterday, and then a quieter afternoon before the conference opens at 17:00 Paris time.

God bless you, and pray for the talks,

**#Thabo**

**Cape**

**Town**

Read more about [the ACT Alliance's activities in Paris \[PDF\] >>](#)

Posted by Anglican Media Office, Bishops court at 14:26