

NRCCC 2014 National Prayer Breakfast Report by Fred Krueger, notes by Diana Van Vleet



"In the face of an absolutely unprecedented climate emergency, society has no choice but to take dramatic action to avert a collapse of civilization," declared keynote speaker Dr. Richard Miller, from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

"Either we change our ways and build an entirely new kind of global society, or circumstances will change our world for us."



Dr. Richard Miller
Creighton University

During this 16th annual NRCCC national prayer breakfast celebrating religious concern for God's creation, people of faith from across America gathered at the Capitol Hill

Lutheran Church in Washington, DC, on

Monday, May 12, 2014 to pray for peace for earth. Over twenty speakers highlighted cutting edge issues that religious groups are emphasizing.

Dr. Tom English, representing the Presbyterian Church USA from San Diego California, said that Presbyterians are making climate change their number one issue. "Climate change," he reported, "will cause a massive extinction of species. Food shortages will result. People will die from heat and starvation. Even the United States Military reports that this will cause clashes between nations and so it is primary national security threat."



L-R---Rev. Owen Owens, Rev. Tom Carr, Dr. Tom English, Rabbi Warren Stone, Ms. Terri Eickel, Rev. Chuck Redfern. Awarding Steward of Creation to Tom Carr.

Patrick Carolan, executive direction of the Roman Catholic Franciscan Action Network, observed that "We Franciscans do not care for the term creation care. Instead we see a community relationship with land and water and animals. These things are all connected."

"All across our country, we are inviting Catholics to take the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor and to join the Catholic Climate Covenant. The St. Francis Pledge is both a promise and a commitment by Catholic individuals, families, parishes, organizations and institutions to live our faith by protecting God's Creation and by advocating on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change."

Allen Johnson, from Christians For The Mountains in West Virginia, described epidemiological surveys that his group has been assisting using students in the areas where mountaintop removal is taking place in Appalachia. "We're finding a strong linkage between the fine particle dust in mountaintop removal areas and public health. The costs to local people is much greater than the value of the coal extracted," he explained.

Every year the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care presents its "Steward of God's Creation" award to an individual who has excelled in the care and keeping of God's creation in a manner that is exemplary and effective. This year members voted to honor Reverend Tom Carr, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Hartford, Connecticut.

Rev. Carr started his personal journey into climate activism by writing every Baptist minister in his state about the seriousness of climate change. He explained why each should begin addressing this urgent issue in their congregations. He then organized the Interreligious Ecojustice Network of Connecticut which stopped the building of several proposed coal-fired power plants. Next, he helped to strike an alliance between faith groups and labor unions to multiply the impact of the moral message about climate change. Carr then coordinated a statewide conference on religion and climate change that brought together religious leaders and faith activists. The conference developed a forceful declaration on the dreadful consequences of climate change. Carr volunteered to act as liaison between the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care and other organizations. An early result of this activism is that the legislators from his state unanimously support strong measures to address climate change.

For all of these reasons, plus his service, energy, and success at moving the attitudes of his state, NRCCC co-chairs Rev. Owen Owens and Rabbi Warren Stone presented Reverend Tom Carr with a 2014 Steward of God's Creation award.

As a sign that the religious ecology movement is gaining more widespread acceptance, for the first time participation came from Hindu and Islamic leaders. Swami Arjun Bhargava spoke of how Hindus are beginning to teach ecological

awareness in their temples and making lifestyle changes. Imam Seyyed Mohammed, director of the Islamic Society of North America, spoke of the intensity of prejudice against Muslims in America and how glad he was to meet hospitality. He spoke of how Muslims are forming a Green Deen organization, which will teach the importance of addressing climate change in the mosques of America.

Other speakers included Teresa Eickel who explained the strategy employed by the Connecticut campaign.

Rick Velleu represented the Our Voices interfaith climate movement from London, UK and their goal of reaching out internationally on climate change.

Dr. Eric Gopelrud from Alexandria, Virginia will mobilize religious groups from across the State of Virginia in a campaign on climate change.

Dave Carroll from Wisconsin has just invented a new LED light bulb, called the Forever Bulb. It uses less energy, costs less and provides brighter light. What makes this bulb unique, he says, is that it lessens atmospheric pollution and reduces human impact on climate change. This will help us all to live an environmentally caring lifestyle. Dave also announced that he will coordinate a 2015 Minnesota NRCCC faith based conference on climate change.

The musical highlight of the program occurred when international opera star Teresa Eickel sang For the Beauty of the Earth and then led the gathering in America, the Beautiful. --Cont. p. 13



Prayer by Rich Cizik of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good



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---Dr. Richard Miller



Rev. Tom Carr
2014 Steward of Creation



Terry Eickel
Interreligious Eco-Justice Network



Dr. Lise Van Susteren, a psychiatrist in the Washington, DC area, spoke to the Prayer Breakfast about the psychological impact that climate change will increasingly have upon the public. She urges the Mental Health system get prepared