



General Board of
CHURCH & SOCIETY
of The United Methodist Church

Global Warming and Energy

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the ever-lasting covenant.

- Isaiah 24, NRSV

The crisis facing God's earth is clear. We, as stewards, have failed to live into our responsibility to care for creation and have instead abused it in ways that now threaten life around the planet.

The scientific consensus is clear that human activities are leading to a warming of the surface temperatures of the planet and the effects of this warming are being felt now and will be felt more intensely in years to come.

As a matter of stewardship and justice, Christians must take action now to reduce global warming pollution and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world whose land, livelihood and lives are threatened by the global climate crisis.

"The scale of human activity has grown so large that it now threatens the planet itself. Global environmental problems have become so vast they are hard to comprehend. ... The vast majority of scientific evidence suggests that carbon dioxide from fossil fuels has already caused a measurable warming of the globe. Confronted with the massive crisis of the deterioration of God's creation and faced with the question of the ultimate survival of life, we ask God's forgiveness for our participation in this destruction." (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future," ¶7)

"A transition to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources will combat global warming, protect human health, create new jobs, and ensure a secure, affordable energy future." (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Energy Policy Statement," ¶5)

"The U.S. must move beyond its dependence on high carbon fossil fuels that produce emissions leading to climate change and ratify the Kyoto Protocol under the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change." (2004 Book of Resolutions, "U.S. Energy Policy and United Methodist Responsibility," Scripture ref.: Isa 24:4-5 and 2 Chron. 7:14)

The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) advocates for the United States to adopt mandatory global warming emissions reductions and re-engage in the global dialogue and international framework for combating this clear and present danger. In collaboration with ecumenical and interfaith allies, GBCS supports a climate and energy campaign that focuses on both state and federal action. In addition, GBCS provides educational and worship resources to bring this issue into the life of the church.

FAITH PRINCIPLES ON GLOBAL WARMING

Justice: Strive for justice and acknowledge that global warming's societal impact already falls... most heavily on the people around the world who are least able to mitigate the impacts—poor and vulnerable populations in the U.S. and in developing countries. As a leading industrialized nation that has

disproportionately contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, it is incumbent upon us to rectify this injustice.

To reach our goal of justice, we require that legislation:

- o Include mechanisms that mitigate the impacts of global warming particularly for vulnerable populations in the U.S. and abroad.
- o Prevent further harm to human health and all of God's creation by utilizing clean energy sources when addressing global warming and carbon pollution.
- o Focus on a fair and equitable distribution of benefits and costs among people, communities, and nations, and rectify the disproportionate impact that low-income communities have and will experience as the climate continues to change.
- o Enable our brothers and sisters in poverty to have economic independence and stability and to eliminate the devastating impacts [of] global warming....
- o Take action now to avoid placing the burden of carbon reduction unduly on our children's children.
- o Endorse policies that place a high priority on allowing all people to live in God's abundance and with dignity by ensuring that basic human needs and justice are not adversely impacted by the effects of global warming....

Stewardship: Heed the call to be faithful stewards of God's creation by limiting the impacts of global warming on God's Earth. Already, global warming has damaged the balance of creation, including increasing... threatened species, long-term drought, and melting Arctic ice. To reach our stewardship goal, we require that legislation:

- o Follow recognized scientific recommendations to protect all of God's creation and prevent catastrophic damage to God's Earth and people. Legislation must include comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emission reductions that limit the increase in temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less. Legislation should reduce U.S. carbon emissions to reach a 15-20 percent reduction in carbon by 2020 with a vision to achieve carbon emissions that are 80 percent of 2000 levels by 2050.
- o Avoid catastrophic global warming, which would devastate God's creation, put more pressure on disaster and relief responses, and endanger the future of the planet.
- o Call on major emitters to take responsibility for their actions and work to significantly reduce their carbon emissions.

Sustainability: Ensure that efforts to curb global warming prevent further environmental and societal tragedies. As people of faith we are guided by the value of sustainability. Sustainability requires that we enable biological and social systems that nurture and support life not be depleted or poisoned. To reach our goal of sustainability, we require that legislation:

- o Maintain God's good creation by preventing policies that place the burden of our lifestyles on one aspect of creation and encouraging policies that sustain and restore vibrant eco-systems with economic justice so that communities of life can flourish for generations to come.
- o Respond to global warming in a way that reflects the interdependence of all of God's

creation.

- o Support energy sources that are renewable, clean, and avoid destruction of God's creation.

Sufficiency: In a world of finite resources, for all to have enough requires that those among us who have more than enough will need to address our patterns of acquisition and consumption. We can not achieve significant reductions in global warming emissions unless we make changes in our lifestyles and particularly in our energy consumption. To support the goal of sufficiency, legislation must:

- o Encourage energy conservation in our homes, our communities, and our places of worship.
- o Encourage energy conservation in national transportation and distribution systems and commercial enterprises.
- o Encourage the federal government to lead through research and example in the practice and implementation of energy conservation.

Social Principles of The United Methodist Church

2009-2012

D) Global Climate Stewardship—We acknowledge the global impact of humanity's disregard for God's creation. Rampant industrialization and the corresponding increase in the use of fossil fuels have led to a buildup of pollutants in the earth's atmosphere.

These "greenhouse gas" emissions threaten to alter dramatically the earth's climate for generations to come with severe environmental, economic, and social implications.

The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions.

We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emissions.