

WORD TO THE CHURCHES ON GLOBAL WARMING

*“The earth is the LORD’S and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1 NRSV)*

SUBJECT

God, the creator and sustainer of all life, calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. God is sovereign over all of creation. “The earth is the LORD’S and all that is in it.” Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in its fullness, through the Holy Spirit. We believe that God cares for all creation. All creation is blessed and included in God’s care.

PROBLEM

Many scientists attribute global warming as the consequence of human industrialization. Beyond the critical concerns with the health of the planet that we will pass down to future generations, there are immediate ethical and humanitarian needs around the world for which we know the cause and currently have the technology to rectify (e.g. shortages of clean water, adequate food, medicine). We Christian individuals, congregations, and members of ecclesial bodies have been in conversation about ecology for some time and the thrust of our arguments appears to lie within three broad categories: ecojustice, stewardship of creation, and communion with the Creator.

SOLUTION

We need to correct *every* human-caused destructive trend that affects our environment but we also need to correct the flawed vision of our own standing before the God of inexhaustible goodness and mercy, who has given us creation to tend, not to own. Among the suggestions are first of all repentance for our share, whatever percentage, of the social and ecological sins leading to the present situation, whether or not we were aware at the time of the consequences of our actions. We ask God’s forgiveness and, further, intend to lead a new life worthy of our Christian discipleship, a life dedicated to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

HOW LONG?

The admonition to tend and keep God’s garden (Genesis 2:15) echoes through the last fifteen years of pronouncements from the leadership of the world-wide ecumenical community. The urgency of the environmental situation is invoked, calling for immediate action to mitigate the incipient tragedy which will fall upon us and, even more so, on future generations, but inevitably upon all of us. We are called to be faithful witnesses to our biblical and sacramental heritages and to give intelligent response to the scientific evidence placed before us.

Adopted by the Southern California Ecumenical Council (SCEC) Faith and Order Commission on October 17, 2008. Members present: Kyle Bennett, Al Cohen, John Huber, Ray Kibler, Denis McGrath, Tom Reed, Alexei Smith, Eve Tibbs, for presentation to the SCEC Board on November 14, 2008.