

What Does Your Faith Tradition Say About Caring for the Earth?

compiled by Iowa Interfaith Power & Light

American Baptist Churches

Therefore, we call on all of the members of the American Baptist Churches of the USA to:

1. Affirm the goodness and beauty of God's creations.
2. Acknowledge our responsibility for stewardship of the Creator's good earth.
3. Learn of the environmental dangers facing the planet.
4. Recognize that our practices and styles of life have had an effect on the environment.
5. Pursue a lifestyle that is wise and responsible in light of our understanding of the problems.
6. Exert our influence in shaping public policy and insisting that industries, businesses, farmers and consumers relate to the environment in ways that are sensible, healthy and protective of its integrity.
7. Demonstrate concern with "the hope that is within us," as despair and apathy surround us in the world (Rom. 12:21).

8. Become involved in organizations and actions to protect and restore the environment and the people in our communities.

We call upon the National Boards, Regions and institutions of our denomination to:

9. Promote an attitude affirming that all nature has intrinsic value and that all life is to be honored and revered.

10. Seek ways and means to alert the churches to present and impending environmental threats.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches – June 1989

<http://restoringeden.org/resources/denominationalstatements/americanbaptist>

Baha’i

Baha’i scriptures teach that, as trustees of the planet’s vast resources and biological diversity, humanity must seek to protect the “heritage [of] future generations”; see in nature a reflection of the divine; approach the earth, the source of material bounties, with humility; temper its actions with moderation; and be guided by the fundamental spiritual truth of our age, the oneness of humanity. The speed and

facility with which we establish a sustainable pattern of life will depend, in the final analysis, on the extent to which we are willing to be transformed, through the love of God and obedience to His Laws, into constructive forces in the process of creating an ever-advancing civilization.

<http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=2>

Buddhism

All Buddhist teachings and practice come under the heading of Dharma, which means Truth and the path to Truth. The word Dharma also means “phenomena,” and in this way we can consider everything to be within the sphere of the teachings. All outer and inner phenomena, the mind and its surrounding environment, are understood to be inseparable and interdependent. In his own lifetime the Buddha came to understand that the notion that one exists as an isolated entity is an illusion. All things are interrelated; we are interconnected and do not have autonomous existence. Buddha said, “This is because that is; this is not because that is not; this is born because that is born; this dies because that dies.” The health of the whole is inseparably linked with the health of the parts, and the health of the parts is inseparably linked with the whole. Everything in life arises through causes and conditions.

<http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=66>

Community of Christ

The Earth Stewardship Committee was established to address the call for environmental stewardship throughout the world in response to Doctrine and Covenants 150:7 "The land is being desecrated by the thoughtless waste of vital resources. You must obey my commandments and be in the forefront of those who would mediate this needless destruction while there is yet day." The committee recognizes the need to foster greater sensitivity toward God's earth through a deeper understanding of human interrelatedness to and dependence on the earth. The committee will promote changes and embrace practices that result in a sustainable environment. The committee will help the church become more aware of the issues related to the environmentally sound policies and procedures.

[http://www.webofcreation.org/
DenominationalStatements/communitychrist.htm](http://www.webofcreation.org/DenominationalStatements/communitychrist.htm)

Disciples of Christ - The Alverna Covenant

Whereas:

God has created the world with finite resources

God has given to us the stewardship of the earth

God has established order through many natural cycles

Whereas:

We are consuming resources at a rate that cannot be maintained

We are interrupting many natural cycles

We are irresponsibly modifying the environment through consumption and pollution

We are populating the earth at a rate that cannot be maintained

As a member of the human family and a follower of Jesus Christ, I hereby covenant that:

I will change my lifestyle to reduce my contribution to pollution

I will support recycling efforts

I will search for sustainable lifestyles

I will work for public policies which lead to a just and sustainable society

I will share these concerns with others and urge them to make this covenant.

Report of the Task Force on Christian Lifestyle and Ecology, General Assembly 1991

[http://www.webofcreation.org/
DenominationalStatements/disciples.htm](http://www.webofcreation.org/DenominationalStatements/disciples.htm)

Episcopal

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize that the use of fossil fuels harms air quality and public health and is contributing to changes in the global climate that threaten the lives and livelihoods of our neighbors around the world; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention affirm that our Christian response to global warming is a deeply moral and spiritual issue; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention reaffirm Resolution 1991–A195, adopted by the 70th General Convention, declaring that Christian Stewardship of God's created environment, in harmony with our respect for human dignity, requires response from the Church of the highest urgency; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention reaffirm Resolution 2000–D022 (MDGs and the ONE Episcopalian Campaign), adopted by the 73rd General Convention, encouraging all members, congregations, dioceses, and other church institutions to use environmentally safe and sustainable energy sources; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention acknowledge with praise and appreciation the work of Interfaith Power and Light, a non-profit initiative that helps congregations, religious

institutions and others work for a more just, sustainable and healthier Creation (website of Interfaith Power and Light – www.theregenerationproject.org); and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention encourage all members, congregations, dioceses, and other church institutions to consider prayerfully whether to partner with Interfaith Power and Light by incorporating respect and care for Creation into programs of worship and education, by reducing energy use through conservation and increased efficiency, and by replacing consumption of fossil fuels with energy from renewable resources.

General Convention of The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006

http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2006-c018

Evangelical

Christians must care about climate change because we love God the Creator and Jesus our Lord, through whom and for whom the creation was made. This is God's world, and any damage that we do to God's world is an offense against God Himself (Gen. 1; Ps. 24; Col. 1:16).

Christians must care about climate change because we are called to love our neighbors, to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, and to protect and care for the least

of these as though each was Jesus Christ himself (Mt. 22:34-40; Mt. 7:12; Mt. 25:31-46).

Christians, noting the fact that most of the climate change problem is human induced, are reminded that when God made humanity he commissioned us to exercise stewardship over the earth and its creatures. Climate change is the latest evidence of our failure to exercise proper stewardship, and constitutes a critical opportunity for us to do better (Gen. 1:26-28).

Love of God, love of neighbor, and the demands of stewardship are more than enough reason for evangelical Christians to respond to the climate change problem with moral passion and concrete action.

<http://christiansandclimate.org/learn/call-to-action/>

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Christian concern for the environment is shaped by the Word of God spoken in creation, the Love of God hanging on a cross, the Breath of God daily renewing the face of the earth.

We are deeply concerned about the environment, locally and globally, as members of this church and as members of society. Even as we join the political, economic, and scientific discussion, we know care for the earth to be a profoundly spiritual matter.

This statement: offers a vision of God's intention for creation and for humanity as creation's caregivers; acknowledges humanity's separation from God and from the rest of creation as the central cause of the environmental crisis; recognizes the severity of the crisis; and expresses hope and heeds the call to justice and commitment. This statement summons us, in particular, to a faithful return to the biblical vision.

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Environment.aspx>

Friends United Meeting

The concern for the care of God's creation has long been implicit in our Christian testimony. We recognize that our historic peace testimony to living in harmony with the world in a covenant the renewal of which was foreseen by the prophets as in Isaiah's vision of the peaceable kingdom (11:1-9), by Paul (e.g. Romans 8:12-17), and in the great commission when the risen Christ told the eleven "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15 NRSV, the AV has all creatures). Implicit in our testimony on simplicity is the understanding that we will not take more than we need, particularly (and here we move into the testimony on justice) if it means depriving others, including future generations, of their basic needs.

We call upon Friends to examine their own lives to see if their own patterns of consumption reflect self centeredness and greed rather than a concern for living harmoniously in the creation, that we might witness to the world that harmony. We call upon the nations of the world, and in particular our own governments, to enact laws and reach agreements which will protect the creation from the effects of human exploitation, greed, and carelessness.

[http://www.webofcreation.org/
DenominationalStatements/friends.htm](http://www.webofcreation.org/DenominationalStatements/friends.htm)

Hinduism

Hindu religion wants its followers to live a simple life. It does not allow people to go on increasing their material wants. People are meant to learn to enjoy spiritual happiness, so that to derive a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment, they need not run after material pleasures and disturb nature's checks and balances. They have to milk a cow and enjoy, not cut at the udder of the cow with greed to enjoy what is not available in the natural course. Do not use anything belonging to nature, such as oil, coal, or forest, at a greater rate than you can replenish it. For example, do not destroy birds, fish, earthworms, and even bacteria which play vital ecological roles; once they are annihilated you cannot recreate them. Thus only can you avoid becoming bankrupt, and the life cycle can continue for a long, long time.

<http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=77>

Islam

The central concept of Islam is Tawhid - the Unity of Allah. Allah is Unity and His Unity is also reflected in the unity of mankind, and the unity of man and nature. His trustees are responsible for maintaining the unity of His creation, the integrity of the Earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and natural environment. Unity cannot be had by discord, by setting one need against another; it is maintained by balance and harmony. Therefore, Muslims say that Islam is the middle path and we will be answerable for how we have walked this path and how we have maintained balance and harmony in the whole of creation around us.

<http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=132>

Judaism

From the resolution adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis on climate change, 2005:

Responsibilities to Future Generations: "Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live." (Deuteronomy 30:20) Humankind has a solemn obligation to improve the world for future generations. Minimizing climate change requires us to learn how to live within the ecological limits of the Earth, so that we will not

compromise the ecological or economic security of those who come after us.

Integrity of Creation: "The human being was placed in the Garden of Eden to till it and to tend it." (Genesis 2:15)
Humankind has a solemn obligation to protect the integrity of ecological systems, so that their diverse constituent species, including humans, can thrive.

Equitable Distribution of Responsibility: Nations' responsibilities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions should correlate to their contribution to the problem. The United States has built an economy highly dependent upon fossil fuel use that has affected the entire globe, and must therefore reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a manner that corresponds to its share of the problem.

<http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=climate&year=2005>

Native Hawaiian Tradition

As faithful stewards of aloha aina (the living earth community), native Hawaiian Tradition has these spiritual ideals:

Ohana: all of life is related as a family

Malama: mutual caring for each other and for future generations; awe/inspiration/reverence for all life; viewing the world as our neighborhood; recognizing our karmic

footprint; realizing our spiritual and moral obligation to each other and the earth

Kuleana: taking responsibility and ownership to do what is needed; being empowered to determine one's own future; working toward personal transformation.

Aloha: Compassion and a welcoming spirit; recognizing the sacredness of life and our kinship with all beings; caring for elders and ancestors (kupuna); embracing creativity and hopefulness in all that we do.

http://hipl.org/about_us.html

Presbyterian Church, USA

The Presbyterian Church passed a resolution in 2006 at the 217th General Assembly that “strongly urges all Presbyterians to immediately make a bold witness by aspiring to live carbon neutral lives. (Carbon neutrality requires our energy consumption that releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere be reduced and carbon offsets purchased to compensate for those carbon emissions that could not be eliminated.)” The Presbyterian church finds that the Christian mandate to care for creation and the biblical promise of the restoration of right relationships between God, human beings, and the rest of creation impels and inspires us to act to reduce our energy usage. God created the earth and all that is in it and declared it good (Genesis 1:1). Wondrous complexity,

interdependence and beauty mark God's creation. Human beings are called by God to the task of stewardship — taking care of the earth respectfully for its own sake and for present and future generations that they may live on it and enjoy its fruits (Genesis 2:15). Earth-keeping today means insisting on sustainability — the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together — which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus. (202nd General Assembly)

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA, June, 2006

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/enough/electric-stewardship/>

Reformed Church of America

In 1994, a report to the General Synod stated that:

Responsible Christian witness in light of the environmental crisis is becoming increasingly important and urgent...the Reformed tradition offers a theology which neither merges God with creation nor denigrates creation as beyond the realm of God's continuing interest, care, and promised redemption...Humankind has been given a special responsibility to care for creation...The degradation of creation not only imperils life, including

human life on this planet, it is also a sin against God.(MGS 1994: 95)

<https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=498>

Roman Catholic

As people of religious faith, we bishops believe that the atmosphere that supports life on earth is a God-given gift, one we must respect and protect. It unites us as one human family. If we harm the atmosphere, we dishonor our Creator and the gift of creation. The values of our faith call us to humility, sacrifice, and a respect for life and the natural gifts God has provided. Pope John Paul II reminds us in his statement *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility* that "respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God." In that spirit of praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonders of creation, we Catholic bishops call for a civil dialogue and prudent and constructive action to protect God's precious gift of the earth's atmosphere with a sense of genuine solidarity and justice for all God's children.

A Statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalclimate.shtml#change>

Southern Baptist

From the Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative: We must care about environmental and climate issues because of our love for God—“the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the Universe” (BFM 2000)—through whom and for whom the creation was made. This is not our world, it is God’s. Therefore, any damage we do to this world is an offense against God Himself (Gen. 1; Ps. 24; Col. 1:16). We share God’s concern for the abuse of His creation. We must care about environmental and climate issues because we are called to love our neighbors, to do unto others as we would have them do unto us and to protect and care for the “least of these” (Mt. 22:34-40; Mt. 7:12; Mt. 25:31-46). The consequences of these problems will most likely hit the poor the hardest, in part because those areas likely to be significantly affected are in the world’s poorest regions.

<http://www.baptistcreationcare.org/node/1>

Unitarian Universalist

2006 Statement of Conscience

Earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming planet. As Unitarian Universalists, how can our faith inform our actions to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate

change? We declare by this Statement of Conscience that we will not acquiesce to the ongoing degradation and destruction of life that human actions are leaving to our children and grandchildren. We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses. As a people of faith, we commit to a renewed reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/8061.shtml>

United Church of Christ

...The Twenty-sixth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on the Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ, specifically Wider Church Ministries and Justice and Witness Ministries, to address the severe nature of this global warming crisis as one of the most urgent threats to humankind and, indeed, all of God's precious planet earth and that Local Church Ministries develop materials to help churches "green" their buildings.

A Resolution on Climate Change

<http://www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/climate-change-final.pdf>

United Methodist Church

All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect.

2008 Social Principles: The Natural World

[http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.3743117/k.541B/The_Social_Principles/apps/ka/ct/contactus.asp?
c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=3743117&en=dnIQKMMfEbKJKHNg
E3JyGQPrHfLLKNPuGkIJIPOxHnJXH](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.3743117/k.541B/The_Social_Principles/apps/ka/ct/contactus.asp?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=3743117&en=dnIQKMMfEbKJKHNgE3JyGQPrHfLLKNPuGkIJIPOxHnJXH)