



**Lukas Vischer (ed.):  
Churches on Climate Change  
A Collection of Statements and Resolutions**

### **1. Place and Date of Publication**

Lukas Vischer (ed.), *Churches on Climate Change, A Collection of Statements and Resolutions on Global Warming and Climate Change on behalf of the World Council of Churches Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation*, Berne 1992, Preface 7.

### **2. Historical Context**

Several statements in this booklet refer to an international conference of church representatives from Northern industrialized countries held at Gwatt, Switzerland, in 1991. The consultation resulted in a report entitled "The Churches' Role in Protecting the Earth's Atmosphere" (1991).

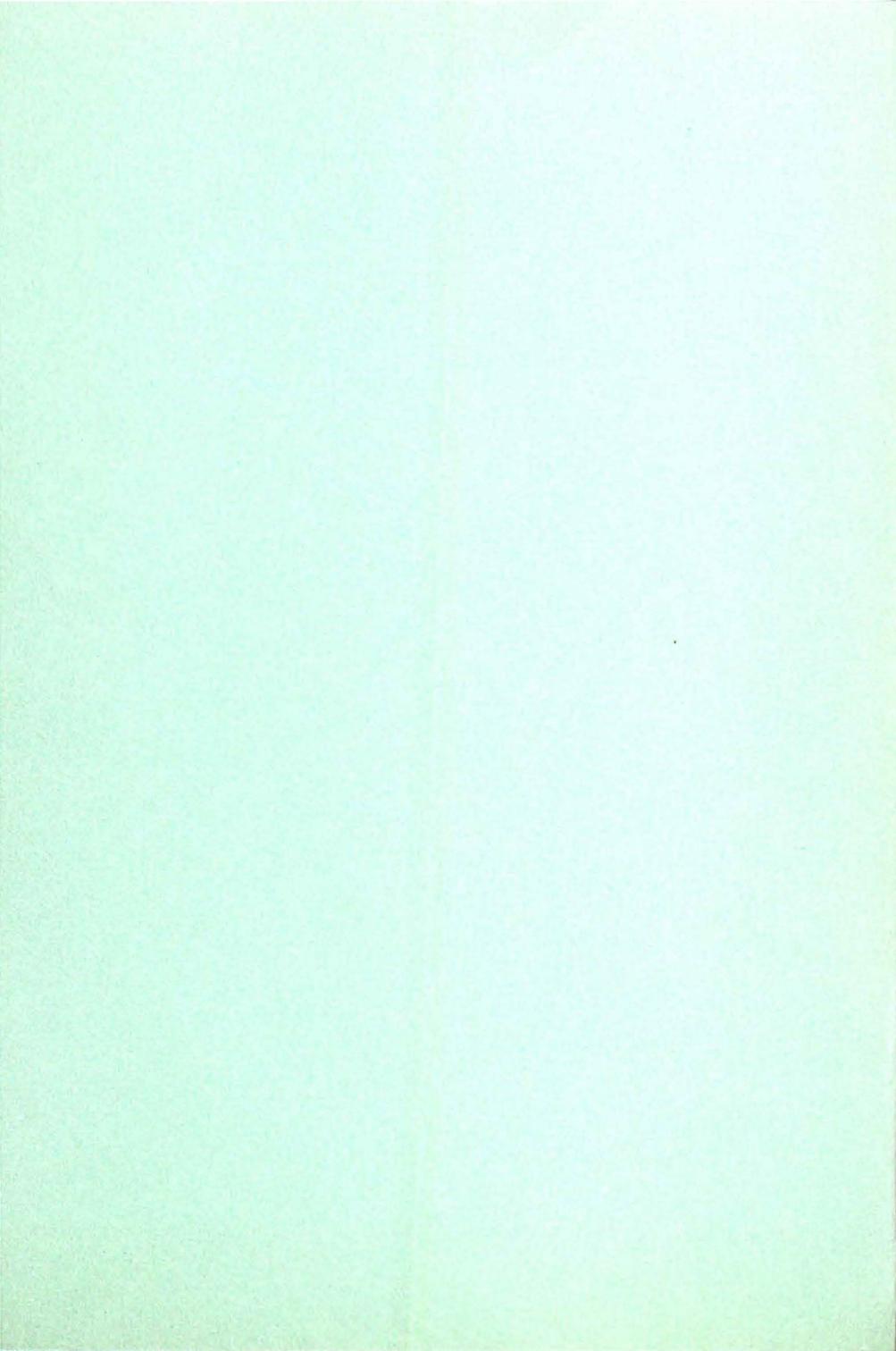
### **3. Summary**

The churches express a common concern: What does it mean that the equilibrium of nature is being disturbed by human activity? What life-style is called for to live in harmony with God's creation and to respect the rights of poorer nations? They agree on the nature, causes, and consequences of global warming and urge members and governments to take adequate steps.

The United Church of Canada includes an Educational Brochure; the Presbyterian Church of Canada enumerates a number of principles for a just north-south relationship concerning global warming; the Presidents of the Evangelical Church and the Bishops' Conference in Germany stress the urgency of steps and announce special support for politicians who stand up for unpopular truths; the Council of Churches in the Netherlands illustrates the ecological and spiritual sources and activities of the "halve-it-appeal" concerning CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, motor traffic, and waste. In a letter of appeal to the solidarity of European Churches, the Pacific Churches recall the fact that the South Pacific islands are not only among the primary victims of climate change but continue to be suffering from Star missile testing, toxic waste dumping, chemical munitions destruction, and nuclear testing programmes of Western industrialized countries; an Environmental Manifesto from the bishops of the Church of Sweden points to the interdependence of biological, physical and spiritual destruction and recalls that "The Earth is the Lord's"; the Swiss Protestant Federation contributes a statement on "Global Warming and Climate Change", while the Ecumenical Association Church and Environment presents an action programme on "Save the Earth's Skin"; the Presbyterian Church USA speaks of a "turnaround decade" of the 1990's and envisages the USA as the consumer of nearly a quarter of the world's energy to take the lead and move away from unnecessary and wasteful production and consumption; the American Baptist Churches and the Church of the Brethren USA emphasize human stewardship of God's creation and the need to reject the myths of unlimited resources and economic growth; the WCC proposes joint participation of churches in industrialized and developing countries to participate in networks committed to resist the causes of atmospheric destruction; the Roman Catholic Church and church leaders of the USA and Canada agree in classifying the ecological crisis as a moral problem.

# CHURCHES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A COLLECTION  
OF STATEMENTS  
AND RESOLUTIONS  
ON GLOBAL  
WARMING AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE



# **Churches on Climate Change**

**A Collection of Statements  
and Resolutions on Global Warming  
and Climate Change**

**on behalf of the  
World Council of Churches  
Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation  
edited by Lukas Vischer**

**Berne 1992**

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## Preface

The prospect of global warming and climate change present in a special way a challenge to Christian conscience. What is the significance of the fact that the fragile equilibrium of nature is being disturbed by human activity? What is it which is required to live in harmony with God's creation? What life-style is called for in the industrialized countries to protect the earth's atmosphere and at the same time to respect the rights and aspirations of the poorer nations?

These questions are becoming increasingly concerns of the churches. The statements and resolutions which are reproduced in this booklet are clear evidence of the growing awareness of the issue in the Christian community.<sup>1</sup>

Statements and resolutions do not necessarily change the course of things. They are not more than expressions of concern. This booklet has been prepared in the hope that these voices will be taken seriously both inside and outside the Christian churches.

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<sup>1</sup> Several statements refer to an international conference of church representatives from Northern industrialized countries which was held at Gwatt, Switzerland, from January 13-18, 1991. It resulted in a substantial report entitled "The Churches' role in Protecting the Earth's Atmosphere"; it has not been reproduced here but can be obtained by writing to the World Council of Churches, Sub-unit on Church and Society, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland; it is available in English, German and French.

## I.

## CANADA

A. The United Church of Canada

1. *Global Warming and Atmospheric Destruction*  
Resolution adopted by the 33rd General Council of  
the United Church of Canada (August 1990)
2. *Global Warming*  
Text of Educational Brochure

B. The Presbyterian Church of Canada

*Global Warming*  
Recommendation adopted by the  
117th General Assembly (1991)

C. Canadian Council of Churches

*Global Warming and the Responsibility  
of the Industrialized Nations*  
Resolution adopted by the 8th  
Triennial Assembly (May 1991)

A. The United Church of Canada

1. *Global Warming and Atmospheric Destruction*

Resolution adopted by the 33rd General Council of The United Church of Canada (August 1990)

**Whereas** we believe the world belongs to God, and

**Whereas** the World Council of Churches Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul, Korea (March 1990) unanimously adopted the issue of atmospheric destruction as the focus for the covenanting of World Council of Churches member churches in the area of the integrity of creation, and

**whereas** the world wide reduction of forests is removing a principal source of absorbing carbon dioxide thus exacerbating the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and

**whereas** the people of developing countries are likely to suffer from the negative consequences of the greenhouse effect more so than people in industrialized countries, in part because their geography may leave them more vulnerable to the impact of climatic change and in part because the economic crisis with which their countries are faced gives them little flexibility to prepare for or respond to those consequences, and

**whereas** the 29th General Council (1982) statement on Energy and the Church urged Canadian federal and provincial governments to make a major shift towards the development of the huge, largely untapped potential of

soft path energy options including renewable energy sources and energy conservation, and

**whereas** the General Council Executive (March 1988) and the Division of Mission in Canada Executive (February 1989) have passed resolutions related to global warming and limits to energy use,

**therefore be it resolved** that the 33rd General Council of the United Church of Canada

a) Reaffirm its belief:

that we are called by God to live in harmony with all of creation, and that a stewardship commitment to care for the earth requires us to be aware of present and impending threats to our environment and to take action to preserve the integrity of creation.

b) Commit ourselves and our church:

to join in the search for ways to live together in harmony with God's creation,

to resist globally the causes and deal with the consequences of atmospheric destruction,

to work for the indispensable reversal of thinking of unlimited energy consumption and economic growth.

- c) Urge the Government of Canada to commit itself to:
- an expansion of energy conservation programs,
  - to increase, improve and more fully subsidize public transit, including bus, train and air travel.
  - to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.
  - to reduce the emission of domestic CO<sub>2</sub> levels by 20% from 1990 levels to the year 2000.
  - to totally eliminate the production and industrial use of CFCs by 1995.
  - to give increased support for energy efficiency improvements.
  - to support active research into and development of energy from renewable resources.
- d) Affirm the appropriateness of responding to the global warming trend using soft path energy approaches which emphasize energy efficiency, renewable resources and energy conservation as the primary energy strategy for reducing fossil fuel emissions rather than expanding nuclear power production.
- e) Urge all levels of government to actively encourage local, national and international negotiations and programs aimed at dramatically reducing deforestation and promoting reforestation and limiting the emission of greenhouse gases.

- f) Support and participate in national and international networks of religious bodies and other non-governmental organizations addressing the greenhouse effect.
- g) Continue through the Division of Mission in Canada, the Division of World Outreach and Stewardship Services, within the context of a theology based on caring for the earth, an educational effort to acquaint United Church members with the nature, causes and consequences of the greenhouse effect and include suggestions for individual and collective action to help address the problem.

## 2. *Global Warming* An Educational Brochure

*The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof (Psalm 24:1a)*

### **Our responsibility toward creation**

The earth viewed from space looks small and fragile. It is a beautiful sight. We can appreciate God's love for it. God created it and entrusted us with its care.

Sadly, we treat this beloved planet as if we own it and can use it as we wish. We recklessly exploit its resources and pollute its complex ecosystem. Christian theology has been misused to sanction such activity by appealing to the concept of our "domination" over all creation. Domination has been the result.

That is not what God intended. Throughout the Bible we find themes describing an interdependent relationship between humanity and the rest of nature, with all creation being accountable to God. We are called to care for and nurture the earth, to love it as God loves it.

The gradual warming of the earth's climate is one of the more disastrous consequences of humanity's exploitation of the earth. Global warming is largely due to the accumulation of polluting gases in the atmosphere most of which come from a lifestyle of wasteful over-consumption in the rich, industrialized countries. The effects of global warming will be felt by peoples and ecosystems around the world. If we are to express our love and care for all creation, we must learn more about the problem and take effective action.

Caring for the earth is our Christian responsibility. Doing something about global warming is one way to act on that responsibility.

#### Some facts to consider

Though debate continues within the scientific community about certain aspects of global warming (also called the enhanced greenhouse effect), there is widespread agreement that:

- there is a natural blanket of gases referred to as the greenhouse effect that surrounds the earth, keeping the atmosphere warm and allowing life to exist. Extra gases, a by-product of our activities, are being added to this blanket however, trapping more and more heat in the atmosphere. This disturbing development is called the enhanced greenhouse effect or global warming.
- the primary greenhouse gases causing global warming are carbon dioxide (from the consumption of fossil fuels in energy production, industry and transportation and the clearing and burning of forests), chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs (found in air conditioners, refrigerators, solvents, plastic packaging and foam insulation), methane (emitted by garbage dumps, rice fields and cattle), nitrous oxides (from fossil fuels and fertilizers) and ozone (low-level smog from industry and motor vehicles).

- the mean temperature of the earth has risen 0.7 degrees Celsius in the past century. The hottest decade on record was the 1980's. Increased concentrations of greenhouse gases will likely result in a rise in the earth's mean temperature of 1.5 to 4.5 degrees Celsius over the next 50 years.
- the consequences of global warming will likely include:
  - drier and hotter weather in the interior of large land masses with more droughts on the Canadian and U.S. prairies and in Africa;
  - melting of parts of the polar ice caps resulting in rising sea levels with flooding of low-lying areas (one fifth of Egypt's arable land could be covered, dislodging 10 million people; Bangladesh could lose one sixth of its area, home to about 25 million people);
  - more frequent and violent storms.
- there are strategies that could reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by improving energy efficiency, conservation and developing clean, renewable sources. (Nuclear power is a much less effective strategy for reducing fossil fuel use because it would take much longer, cost a great deal more money and involves more environmental risks than an energy efficiency strategy.) Decreasing our use of motor vehicles would also reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Since trees (and other plants) absorb carbon dioxide, mass deforestation should be halted and better reforestation programs implemented. CFCs should be banned. Agricultural practices should be revised to reduce the emission of nitrous oxides. Recycling and decreasing our garbage would reduce the need for landfill sites that produce methane.

### Ten ways to reduce global warming

1. Use newly-developed light bulbs that require one-quarter of the electricity of conventional bulbs.
2. Use energy-efficient appliances and let manufacturers know you are purchasing on that basis.
3. Insulate space well. Vast amounts of energy are lost because poorly-insulated houses and offices require extra energy for heating in the winter and cooling in the summer.
4. Switch to natural gas. Though still a fossil fuel, natural gas releases much less carbon dioxide than does oil or coal.
5. Avoid driving your car whenever possible. Use public transportation, cycle or walk.
6. Get better gas mileage. If you must drive, purchase a fuel-efficient model and insure that your car is always well tuned.
7. Reject CFCs. Pressure stores and manufacturers to develop replacements for CFCs in products.
8. Plant trees. As it grows, each tree converts an average of 4 kilograms of carbon dioxide to oxygen every year.
9. Recycle paper. Newspapers and fine paper can be recycled reducing the need to deplete our forests.
10. Start a garden. Vegetation of all sorts absorbs carbon dioxide, but particularly plants with vigorous leafing patterns.

### Influencing public policies

Everyone can help combat global warming by altering their lifestyles, but changes are also needed in the policies and practices of governments, corporations and international organizations.

The World Council of Churches' Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation held in Seoul, Korea, March 1990, adopted atmospheric destruction and global warming as a focus for ecumenical action and suggested that churches press their governments for the following types of policies:

- set a target for industrialized nations to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by 3 per cent annually. This would allow developing countries to still expand their energy supply while meeting a global target of 2 per cent annual reduction;
- increase support for public transportation;
- shift priorities from expanding the supply and use of fossil fuels to increasing the conservation and efficiency of energy use;
- enact a fossil fuel tax, the proceeds of which would go to an international fund to meet sustainable energy needs in developing countries;
- promote the development and use of clean, renewable ways of generating energy;
- ban chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs);
- combat deforestation and encourage the planting of mixed varieties of trees.

**Together, we can make a difference.**

## B. The Presbyterian Church of Canada on Global Warming

Recommendation adopted by the 117th General Assembly (1991)

Scientists are predicting far-reaching changes of the earth's climate caused in large part by human intervention. The second world climate conference (Geneva, 1990) stated: "if the increase of greenhouse gas concentration is not limited, the predicted climate change would place stresses on natural and social systems unprecedented in the past 10'000 years." Last year's report of the committee (A&P 1990, p. 414) contained a short introduction to the problem. This year, this part of the report deals with the effects of global warming on the third world.

If a global climate change cannot be prevented or at least slowed considerably, it will be the people of the south who suffer the most because the shifting of climate zones may reduce the ability to produce food; flooding is a consequence of sea level rise and will affect southern countries in particular.

The problem of global warming brings into sharp focus the injustice in the economic relations between the north and the south. Some forms of ecological destruction in the south that are contributing to global warming are directly a result of the poverty in which many of the people of those countries live. The economic and structural conditions in the south also will inhibit the capacity of those countries to shift to more sustainable approaches that contribute less to global warming. Global trading and institutions like transnational corporations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank exert enormous northern control over the economies and environments of southern countries.

Churches in the northern countries should indicate very clearly to their respective partners in the south that they are willing to give

assistance and support in any measure deemed suitable to achieve sustainable development through ecologically benign methods of production both in agriculture and industry. The goal would be the creation of an economy that does not threaten the survival of the planet. Churches in the northern countries can offer this assistance with credibility only when they comply with the postulate of sustainability in their own living.

Principles for a just north-south relationship that would address global warming are offered as follows:

1. **Self reliance:** Many countries find it necessary to replace basic food production with cash crops grown for export. Other economic activities are also determined by the needs of greater economic powers such as transnational corporations and international financial institutions. Each country should be able to concentrate on developing its own resources to an optimum level before entering a world market which is biased in favour of the north.
2. **Leap-frog development:** It is neither possible nor desirable for the south to follow a similar industrial development path as the north. This would lead to a greater global warming problem. It is in the interests of both the south and the north for the poorer countries to leap-frog over the path followed in the north, and to move directly into more sustainable and cleaner approaches in their development strategies. Industrialized nations have a responsibility to ensure that advanced technologies are transferred to the south. Some of these can be combined with the strengths of traditional cultural patterns which emphasize a sustainable relationship with the earth.
3. **Transfer of Resources:** The transfer of sharing of resources (information, technology, skills, research capacity and financial assistance) among countries is required if meaningful and

effective steps are to be taken to combat global warming and its ramifications. The uniqueness of the resources and needs of each country of the south should be recognized so that each can best help itself and also help each other. Churches in the north should seek to influence the kind and extent of foreign assistance available through bilateral and multi-lateral programmes so that the nature of that assistance is appropriate in the eyes of the people of developing countries. The churches must oppose the imposition on the south of megaprojects which are often labelled as atmosphere-friendly because of their non-use of fossil fuels. The social and environmental drawbacks of nuclear power plants and giant hydro-electric schemes dwarf the contribution, if any, that they make to the reduction of global warming.

4. **Just Trade Practices:** With respect to food in particular, a free market approach results in the dumping of food in the south that is produced in the north with hidden subsidies of energy-intensive methods. Protectionism, on the other hand, also encourages high energy food production which contributes directly to global warming. World trade in food must be regulated in a way which reduces unnecessary trade, encourages home production, and permits trading of southern goods at fair prices. Current pricing policies do not include any value for environmental costs. This must be changed.
5. **Sustainable energy practices:** Energy consumption in the south will increase in the next decades. Every effort should be made by the north and the south to improve greatly the efficiency of how energy is used in every sector of our respective economies. Although the south uses much less energy than the industrialized nations, its energy is often used inefficiently. Every effort should be made to use sustainable, renewable energy sources. This reduces dependence on fossil fuels which have contributed significantly to the debt of southern countries. Biomass is a major source of fuel

throughout the south but its supply is in major crisis. This has contributed to deforestation, flooding, desertification, and great hardship as people, especially women, have had to go ever-greater distances to seek fuel for basic cooking needs. Providing resources for biomass production to be put on a sustainable footing is an urgent need and can make a major contribution to helping meet basic energy needs in the future.

6. **Protection of the oceans:** Tropical seas are being heated by global warming and the resulting increased evaporation is as significant a greenhouse gas as any land source. The capacity of the oceans to function naturally is being eroded by oil pollution, sewage, waste disposal, nuclear testing and the impact of tourist activities. Laws and conventions on regulating ocean traffic, fishing and waste disposal must be enforced. Nuclear testing in the south Pacific must be stopped. Assistance must be given to countries of the south to maintain and develop both traditional and new ways of using marine resources which are non-polluting and non-destructive.
7. **Population:** There is no escaping the fact that the world population growth particularly in the south is now on such a scale that it must be confronted as a major element in the whole ecological and climatic catastrophe which threatens to devastate our planet. Social and economic conditions must therefore be created which will make voluntary limitation of family size an attractive and achievable option for families throughout the world. These conditions should not include any form of discrimination against large families or against female children, but should take the form of measures including basic health care for all, which would convince parents that more children are not necessary to ensure the survival of some, and the availability of free family planning resources.

## Conclusion

The natural resources of our earth are not endless. Humankind has exploited those resources, not looking to the generations of the future but to the profits of today. As Christians, we are responsible for the stewardship of creation. The peoples and countries of the south must be seen as full partners in recognizing and accepting the challenge before us as the degradation of air, land, water and forests is everywhere. Urgent steps must be undertaken in partnership with each other to restore our natural resources without which humankind would not survive.

### Recommendations adopted by the 117th General Assembly:

1. *That boards and agencies be requested to support and participate in national and international networks of religious bodies and other non-governmental organizations addressing the greenhouse effect.*
2. *That the government of Canada be urged to participate actively in negotiations on an international convention on world climate, which is expected to be signed at a United Nations conference on environment and development to be held in 1992.*

## C. Canadian Council of Churches on Global Warming and the Responsibility of Industrialized Nations

Resolution adopted by the 8th Triennial Assembly (May 1991)

**Whereas** Christian scripture and theology affirms that the "earth is the Lord's" and that humanity has responsibility to care for it as the creation of God, and

**whereas** industrialized nations in the North have been responsible for the vast majority of emissions of greenhouse gases that are contributing to global warming, and

**whereas** the consequences of global warming such as increased droughts, rising sea levels and more frequent storms will be experienced more intensely by developing countries in the South, and

**whereas** the March 1990 World Council of Churches' Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in Seoul called on churches to combat "the causes of destructive changes to the atmosphere which threaten to disrupt the earth's climate and create widespread suffering," and

**whereas** a consultation in Gwatt, Switzerland of churches from the Northern industrialized countries of East and West Europe, Canada and the United States (January 1991) forcefully articulated the responsibility of their nations to address global warming, and

**whereas** Canadian churches actively participated in these ecumenical meetings and some have already begun educating their constituencies and pressing government and industry to address the problem of global warming;

Therefore be it resolved that the 8th Triennial Assembly of the Canadian Council of Churches (1991):

1. **Affirm** the conviction of the World Council of Churches' on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Convocation (March '90) that atmospheric destruction represents one of the most serious threats to the integrity of creation;
2. **Endorse** the principal recommendations of the Gwatt Ecumenical Consultation (Jan. '91) concerning the responsibilities of Northern industrialized countries regarding global warming, namely:
  - a 3% annual reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, phasing-out of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) and reducing other greenhouse gas emissions;
  - dramatic increases in energy efficiency, conservation and the development of alternative renewable sources;
  - expansion of public transportation;
  - creation of more just economic relationships with the South before those countries can be expected to limit their increase in the emissions of greenhouse gases;
  - major transfer and sharing of resources between the North and the South to combat global warming and its ramifications;
  - active support of the UN negotiations for a World Climate Convention; and
3. **Encourage** participating churches of the Canadian Council of Churches to educate their members about the seriousness of the global warming problem and what they

can do in their own lifestyles, pressure government and industry to take assertive steps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and request the Canadian government to take an active and supportive role in the UN negotiations for a World Climate Convention.

## II.

## GERMANY

- A. Evangelical Church in Germany and  
German (Catholic) Bishops' Conference

*Provision for the Protection of the Atmosphere*  
Statement by the Presidents of the  
Evangelical Church and the Bishops' Conference  
(February 1991)

The Study Commission "Provision for the protection of the atmosphere" set up by the German Parliament has presented its final report. In this connection the chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, Bishop Dr. Dr. Karl Lehmann, and the chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, Bishop Dr. Martin Kruse, made the following statement:

The threat to the earth as mankind's habitat by climatic changes increases from year to year. The full extent of the consequences of the "greenhouse effect" and the destruction of the ozone layer cannot yet be foreseen. To slow down the processes influencing the climatic changes represents a tremendous challenge for mankind. All our efforts are required to maintain the integrity of creation in peace and justice.

The Parliament has made a start towards accepting this challenge. Its Study Commission "Provision for the protection of the atmosphere" has recently presented its final report. What scientific expertise is in a position to contribute to the understanding and solving of the problems today is included in it. *We know enough to take action. Now is a case of seeing that action is in fact taken, and that that action is thoroughgoing enough.*

In the past few years the churches have taken up increasingly the tasks connected with the maintenance of the earth as mankind's habitat. For this reason they pay particular attention to the exemplary work of the Study Commission. The Parliament and Government have in the Commission's report the information on which decisions can be based. They must decide quickly on effective steps and see to it that they are carried out. Economic forces, science, local government, and regional authorities, indeed all citizens, are faced with the task of coming to grips with the facts which have been revealed in the Commission's report, of demanding the necessary political steps, and of supporting them vigorously in their own fields.

## 1. The task

The Study Commission regards it as absolutely necessary to call a permanent halt to the global rise in temperature, and with a view to this makes a number of concrete recommendations, as for example for the banning of the production of CFCs and for a world-wide reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. *Here we are faced with tasks, of whose wide-reaching implications we are not yet aware.* The necessary changes will affect everybody, in the building and housing sectors as also in transport or in economic and industrial politics. They will succeed only if the widespread thinking in terms of what we are entitled to is corrected and certain limitations are accepted. It must not come to the point where our current standard of living and way of life are rated higher than our children's and grandchildren's quality of life.

## 2. The role of the Federal Republic of Germany

The economy in the industrialized northern hemisphere has a disproportionately high share in carbon dioxide emission. The inevitably increasing use of energy in the southern hemisphere can be borne by the environment only if the industrialized nations take, for the sake of justice, a disproportionately large share in the reduction of carbon dioxide emission. The Federal Republic of Germany has at its disposal both the financial and industrial capacity as well as the technical competence *to assume a pioneer role* among the industrialized countries.

## 3. State intervention

The necessary changes cannot be effected by technical innovations alone. Voluntary initiatives and the readiness to live more simply are indispensable and helpful. But they, too, are not sufficient on their own. *Incisive changes must be brought about by government*

*regulations.* In this connection the question of a possible increase in the cost of energy cannot be avoided. All those bearing political responsibility who announce and stand up for unpopular truths in this connection need our special support.

#### 4. Co-operation across party boundaries

The protection of the atmosphere requires co-operation across party boundaries and is not a suitable subject for election speculation. Therefore politicians should not close their minds on partisan ground to suggestions which are worthy of consideration, but which come from the other side. The Study Commission has made it clear that *there are no easy solutions.* One thing is clear: saving energy and using energy efficiently are of the highest priority as a first step. But this aim can be achieved only if various paths are pursued simultaneously and tried out experimentally.

#### 5. Monitoring the steps taken

The steps taken must be publicized in detail and regularly monitored. Only in this way can necessary follow-up recommendations be made possible at short notice. Now the need is to *learn quickly* by trying out different paths and strategies towards a solution *what the necessary political steps and those to be taken by individuals look like.* Every year that passes by without noticeable successes makes the task for the future still more difficult.

### III.

#### THE NETHERLANDS

##### A. Council of Churches in the Netherlands

*Halve the emission of carbon dioxide,  
the motor traffic and the production of  
waste in the forthcoming 15 years*  
An Appeal of the Working Group on  
Church and Society

##### B. Council of Churches in the Netherlands

*Survey on Activities by the Churches  
in the Netherlands regarding Climate Change*

## A. Council of Churches in the Netherlands

### *An Appeal of the Working Group on Church and Society*

It is late...

Much has already been lost in nature and environment.

The degradation of creation oppresses us. More and more is known about the processes that threaten plants, animals and man. And it becomes increasingly clear that man is the largest threat to the survival of life on earth. The great progress that has been achieved in the field of technology and economy is no more than illusionary in many cases; its effects are often a threat to life on earth.

A major problem of supernational dimension is the greenhouse effect. The greenhouse effect is explained by the fact that the sun radiates heat to the earth's surface; this heat, however is to a lesser extent reradiated to space outside the earth, because of a kind of insulation layer, formed by carbon dioxide and other trace gases. Therefore, a gradual warming of the earth takes place, exactly like what happens in a greenhouse where the glass limits the outward radiation. Through the emissions of, particularly, carbon dioxide the insulation layer around the earth is reinforced. Carbon dioxide is emitted during the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas and oil, but also by burning wood. Fuels are used for the production of very many goods, as well as in all sorts of services. There exists hardly any activity in our society, in which fossil fuels are not utilized.

A rise in temperature on earth has many consequences. They are not yet precisely known, but in any case we should envisage a sea level rise as a result of melting of the icesheets. Usually densely populated areas, which lay just above sea level, such as islands and river deltas, are threatened by floods. Food supply may be

endangered by climatic change. This will lead to big social and military conflicts.

It can also be anticipated that people will be forced to leave their homes as a result of sea level rise or damage to cropland. They will become environmental refugees...

Particularly the poor countries and within these the poor people, will become the victims of the greenhouse effect because they have no possibilities to take effective counter-measures.

Although there is much uncertainty about the magnitude and the consequences of the greenhouse effect, we must not fail to do something against it. If we wait till even more is known about it, it may well be too late to take action...

It should not just be simple necessity and calculated self-interest or concern about the future of the earth that induce us to take action. That is too narrow a basis for change in attitude and behaviour. Now it is time to re-emphasize the command to respect all creation. Concern for survival is necessary, but to behold Creation with awe and astonishment and to handle it with reverence are just as important for a justified vision on nature and environment. (...) Attention must particularly be paid to understanding how people can live responsible lives. This should lead to clear choices. A sober and careful life-style and participation in political action may not in themselves be a solution to environmental problems, but they are a good start and could influence those in the political arena to take the problems seriously. It is clear that our social structures must be challenged, and political measures are necessary.<sup>2</sup>

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2 From: A covenant for life - a letter of faith on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, 1988.

Within the framework of the Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation much attention has been paid to the greenhouse effect. It was also discussed during the national Churchday in Utrecht on 16th September 1989 in one of the subprogrammes.

In the European context a decrease of energy use in the affluent countries was discussed extensively during the Ecumenical Conference on Peace and Justice (Basle, May 1989). On the same line the topic was under discussion at the World Convocation in Seoul (March 1990). There a recommendation was formulated focusing on limiting the greenhouse effect. This could be achieved by a worldwide decrease of carbon dioxide emission of 2 per cent per year.

In order to achieve at the same time a right sharing of the use of fossil fuels, affluent industrialized countries should diminish their carbon dioxide emissions by 3 per cent annually.

In addition there was a recommendation to initiate programmes for the protection of tropical forests. Moreover, a plea was made for reforestation programmes that are socially and ecologically attractive. Trees and other plants need carbon dioxide for their growth. Replanting will lead to extra uptake and storage of carbon (dioxide) during all the years the trees are alive.

It is late.

Much has already been lost in nature and environment.

However, it is not yet too late to change. In line with what was said within the framework of the Conciliar Process and in global context, the Working Group Church and Environment of the Council of Churches launches the following appeal:

## **HALVE**

**the emission of carbon dioxide**  
**the motor traffic**  
**the production of waste**

**in the forthcoming 15 years.**

Such a decrease cannot take place from one day to another. It requires long-term and straightforward purposeful action from individuals, from social organisations and eventually also from various public authorities.

The intended halving will have far-reaching consequences for all aspects of our daily life: housing, work, transport, recreation, supply and use of energy etc.

The necessary savings and limitations should partly be realised by political means. The rest could be achieved through more careful behaviour and new technologies. But then for this, too, political support is necessary. More fully elaborated, the appeal has a number of consequences within the sub areas, on which the working group has focussed already at an earlier stage.

### **1. Our living environment**

We ask individuals to make as little as possible use of gas, electricity and warm water; switch over to the purchase of energysaving appliances, such as low energy lamps, and if possible sun collectors, and to refrain from the use of superfluous electric equipment.

We plead that the churches draw up an energy balance within their own organisations for the design and use of buildings in order to come to a substantial reduction of use of energy.

At the same time we ask the authorities

- to set stringent standards for energy use in houses and other buildings. For newly built houses a standard of 500 m<sup>3</sup> gas per house per year can be in force, for renovated houses 800 m<sup>3</sup>;
- to draw up stringent rules for the energy use of electric appliances;
- to support the development of those energy sources which do not harm the environment, such as solar energy, wind energy etc..

## 2. Traffic

We call for a diminishing of the private use of cars by 50 per cent. An important contribution to this can be walking or cycling short distances and (for the rest) to make, as much as possible, use of public transport. We urge people to travel by plane as little as possible.

We ask the churches for actions to support car-free Sundays and to stimulate travelling by public transport within their own organisations e.g. by taking this into account when organising meetings and by reimbursing travel costs based on the cost of public transport only.

Churches could also encourage a more open exchange of thoughts and discussion about the emotional aspects related to the use and possession of the "holy cow".

At the same time we ask the authorities

- to pursue a planning policy that restricts mobility needs;
- to introduce a speed limit on motorways of 90 km/h;
- to desist from the construction of new motorways and tunnels and to invest exclusively in an extension of public transport and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists;
- to take measures for the promotion of transport by rail and by sea.

## 3. Waste

We appeal for separate collection of organic waste, paper, glass and small chemical waste. We plead for refraining as much as possible from superfluous packing.

We ask the churches to work on a careful use of goods, buildings and raw materials within their own organisation.

At the same time we ask the authorities

- to provide a waste collecting system whereby different types of waste are carefully separated;
- to stimulate re-usable and recyclable packing material;
- to prohibit the use of aluminium packing material.

#### 4. Food

We plead for establishing a food pattern that costs little fossil energy. This means: restricted meat consumption, asking for a minimum of wrapping material, to eat as much as possible goods that are grown outdoors, to buy as little as possible prepared food stuff and fruits and vegetables that are grown in far away countries.

We ask the churches, when arranging meetings, to look for accomodation, where environmental aspects of production and processing are taken into account.

At the same time we ask the authorities

- to introduce regulated levying in order to reduce to use of power fodder and fertilizers;
- to endorse experiments that allow for the development of more biological agriculture.

#### 5. General

In general we plead for a careful consumption pattern by avoiding luxury and, where possible, by making use of goods and services, that have cost minimal amounts of raw material and energy during the production process.

We ask the churches to support groups that initiate discussion about this subject in parishes and local communities and which make proposals to reach a different consumption pattern. Churches can also stimulate discussions on standards and values that underlie the present consumption society.

At the same time we ask the authorities

- to introduce an supplementary levy on the use of fossil fuel and a number of raw materials;
- to lower Vat-tariffs on environmentally sound services and means of production;
- to take measures to strongly curb advertising;
- to introduce measures that will result in people with very low incomes having to pay proportionally less for an ecologically and environmentally sound policy.

#### B. Council of Churches in the Netherlands

*Survey on Activities by the Churches in the Netherlands regarding Climate Change*

##### 1. Activities of the workgroup "Church and environment" of the Council of Churches

Mid-1990 a "halve-it!"-campaign was organised by the churches in close cooperation with the nationwide environment agency "Association of Environment Defence" (VMD) in connection with the national campaign of the Department for Environment (VROM), this in order to study and tackle the problem of the greenhouse effect. Its important core is a plea with church members to reduce by 50% the emissions of the main greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, the use of motor transport, the amount of waste; all this within the duration of the next fifteen years. Aiming at this objective, the workgroup comes close to the terms of reference, forthcoming from the analysis by the National Government in 1988 in its important report on the

environment, called "Zorgen voor morgen" ("The care for tomorrow"). In the "halve-it-appeal" the workgroup refers to the Ecumenical Conferences at Basel and Seoul and to the report by the so-called Brundtland Commission.

The desired change in behaviour pattern by church members is being advocated by the "halve-it-appeal" in the areas of traffic, use of energy and restriction-disposal of household waste. At this stage the areas of food and agriculture are not included as yet. To promote implementation of this greenhouse campaign by the Dutch churches at the local level, an application for subsidy has been submitted to the Department for Environment (VROM).

The aim of the "halve-it-appeal" is two-fold. On the one hand it serves as study- and discussion matter for local parishes and societies. On the other hand it will be useful as study material for national policy bodies, to start within the Council of Churches. Moreover, it is being offered to administrative bodies of member churches for use in discussions and policy-making. In part, these consultations have meanwhile taken place. The objective is to strengthen the movement "at the roots" and the discussion "at the top" so as to bring about a stimulating effect.

The intention is to further crystallize the already succinct content of the "halve-it-appeal", to be used at the second "National Day of Churches" in 1992. Prior to that day the work-group "Church and Environment", during its third national work-day on the 5th of October 1991 in Utrecht, gave the starting signal to intensify the "halve-it-action".

Apart from lectures and work-shops dealing with the issue, a manual will be offered to parishes and groups, containing concrete suggestions for studies and activities.

## **2. The Council of Churches and its Section of Social Issues**

This Council has notified us that the Report by the Dutch delegates to the Gwatt Conference will be placed on the agenda of the Ecumenical Meeting of Churches in Brussels in September. At that meeting two members of the workgroup "Church and Environment" have more extensively explained the Council's activities, in particular the "halve-it-campaign". Formally as well as informally, the Council is also represented on the "Platform Brasil", a co-operative body of independent organisations which is preparing the Dutch contribution to the Brasil-Conference to be held in 1992.

The Section "Social Issues" is about to organise on a national level a number of hearings on the subject of "sustainable development". During those sessions the section will meet with religious and social institutes and groups to discuss the question of what kind of contribution they can make towards sustainable development. In connection with the Gwatt-recommendation to develop a christian environment-spirituality, a powerful plea is made in this section in favour of taking seriously the theology dealing with the Universe, this in consultation with the relevant bodies within the Churches.

## **3. The Workgroup "Zorg voor de Schepping" ("Care for the Creation")**

Due to the participation by its secretary in the work-group "Church and Environment of the Council of Churches", the work-group "Care for the Creation" has been deeply involved in the preliminaries to the above mentioned "halve-it-action" within the Dutch churches. Together with another catholic member of the workgroup "Church and Environment", involved in catholic social activities, the workshop shall, whenever possible, strengthen the action's influence in catholic homes. Mid-May 1991 the workgroup presented to the Bishops' Conference a comprehensive dossier on the (inter)national

state of our environment wherein ample attention is being paid to the serious consequences of the greenhouse effect.

Various recommendations made at the conclusion of this document, are closely linked to some recommendations of the Gwatt Conference. The publication of this dossier has been an occasion for the work-group to submit its content, during two study-days, for discussion to a group of catholic policy executives in church and society.

The "halve-it-appeal" is also likely to come up for discussion here, as well as the religious and spiritual motivation to promote it as true Christians.

The subject: "The Universe and Christian Spirituality" still remains a factfinding endeavour of this work-group, as is the case with the environment project of the Franciscan Cooperation. The workgroup is moreover - together with the workgroup "Church and Environment" of the Council of Churches - a co-initiator in organising an ecumenical meeting of theologians, beginning 1992, dealing with the relations between the human being, environment and universe.

#### **4. Ecumenical Centre for Study and Action re Investments (OSACI)**

The Centre shall soon complete a study project on global population growth. A brochure, to be published in November, deals with this issue, as it relates to poverty, food-supply, the conditions of women and the problem of the environment.

#### **Closing remarks**

The present world situation calls for a renewed solidarity. Social problems are no longer removed by internal solutions. Industrialised countries as well as developing nations find themselves facing the task of bringing their mutual relations into line with the demands of social justice and ecological balance. More than ever this calls for an organisation, spanning the whole of humanity with the aim of securing for every human being an existence worthy of his dignity. The international development of the environment, the greenhouse effect in particular, appears to considerably accelerate the process of pollution. Moreover, this situation contains a special challenge for Christians to respect God's entire creation, to protect and to develop it.

The results of the Gwatt Conference and other initiatives, taken within church circles, are evidence that in this field Christians are on the right track. However, many more concrete measures ought to be taken to deepen their commitment to the state of God's earthly creation and to make it part and parcel of their religious and social life.

At present there is a wide range of opportunities to put this into practice. This because among Christians, living in our modern society, there evidently exists a need to establish new relations between religion, philosophy of life, and actual queries and problems, one of them being the threatening greenhouse effect. This is all the more true since in this matter the churches are in duty bound to pass on an evangelical message, offering inspiration and perspective to the faithful. The international dimension of the Roman Catholic Church opens in this respect interesting possibilities.

It therefore seems meaningful to us to stimulate - on national as well as on international level - the on-going initiatives of this Conference and to put them energetically into practice.

## IV.

## PACIFIC ISLANDS

A. Pacific Conference of Churches

*Letter to Heads of European Churches,  
Councils, Conferences and Partner Organisations  
(January 20, 1992)*

Dear Friends,

During the months of August and September of 1991, some 230 delegates from 30 Churches, Bishops' Conferences and Councils, gathered in Vanuatu for the Sixth General Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

Being mindful of the historic times we live in, where nations search for new identities in a world that still awaits an awareness that the work of the Creator demands honor and respect, the Assembly resolved that the total environmental issue of the stewardship of the Pacific inheritance, be the top priority of the Justice, Peace and Development Secretariat for the future.

In response to this mandate, we write to you our European friends to tell you that our ocean and its scattered small island nations cannot continue to be the victims of economic and environmental exploitation by larger world powers. The quest for development and security as perpetrated by the affluent nations of the world, assumes a self-assuredness bordering on the arrogant, when the less materially fortunate are forced to suffer the indignity of ravaged lands and seas. *Unfettered and profit oriented economic policies, coupled with uncontrolled consumerism and market dominance have determined that industrial countries have generated the greenhouse gases whereby potential global warming and sea level rise are now seen as the most serious environmental threat to the Pacific.* Our assembled leaders of national governments, affirmed this in their communique from the 22nd South Pacific Forum in July of this year.

We, of the south Pacific, cannot stand idly by and witness our environment become a chosen site for Star missile testing, toxic waste dumping and chemical munitions destruction. Of particular concern is the persistence of French governments in using its so-called Pacific territory as a site for its nuclear testing programmes.

This year was the twenty fifth year of testing. The Atolls of Mururoa and Fungataufa have been subjected to a total of some 174 nuclear test explosions. A tragic and distorted jubilee that quite unashamedly commemorates the Pacific as the backyard of the world.

Our spirits were gladdened, when representatives from the European Churches gathered at the Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches, declared that our Pacific concerns were their own. We cherish the memory of their solidarity, and we know that they would welcome us if we came to Europe and brought our story to their lands. We know that their prayer would be one with ours - that the Pacific may once again become the ocean of peace that the Creator intended it to be.

Let our common witness be a testimony for the generations to come that the earth may have its integrity safe in their keeping as it should have been in ours.

In peace,

Peter J. Salamonsen  
Secretary for Justice, Peace and Development; Pacific Conference of Churches

Patelasio P. Finau  
Bishop of Tonga; President of the Pacific Conference of Churches

**V.**

**SWEDEN**

The (Evangelical-Lutheran) Church of Sweden

*The Earth is the Lord's*

An Environmental Manifesto from the Bishops  
of the Church of Sweden (1989)

### *The Earth is the Lord's*

"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10)."

The issue of the environment is not only biological, political and economic but also, to a high degree, ethical and religious. We believe that the destruction of the biological, physical and spiritual environments go hand in hand and all three forms of destruction must be opposed...

We believe that the worldwide community of the church can be a positive force for deepened responsibility in terms of the environment as well as creating willingness to make sacrifices and act. We therefore encourage churches throughout the world to continue and intensify work for peace, justice and the integrity or holiness of creation...

...

### **The Ozone Layer**

Our ark in space is leaking.

Life on our planet is protected by the thin ozone layer, 25-30 kilometers above our heads. There shortwave radiation from the sun and other stars is stopped which would otherwise cause cancer in living cells, genetic mutations and other injuries. Without the ozone layer's "cosmic diaconia" life would be seriously damaged and partly extinguished, at least on land.

Alarming reports now constitute that the ozone layer thins out during the winter portion of the year, primarily over the South and North Poles. Among other causes, this is linked with emissions of Freon by human beings, an element used in refrigerators and freezers, upholsteries, heat pumps, insulation materials, packing materials, spray cans and such. Freon and halogens leak into the air and take

20 to 30 years to reach the ozone layer and cause damage there. Current effects are being caused by emissions during the 1960's.

About 30 nations have decided to decrease the use of Freon by 50% by the year 1999. The nations of the European Community have gone even farther by forbidding Freon in any new production from the year 1999. In Sweden, with one half percent of the world's total Freon use and emissions respectively, any use of Freon is forbidden from the year 1995.

*We are of the opinion and in agreement with numerous researchers, that the world's use of Freon must be reduced at a much faster rate than has been established to this point. We appeal to the government of Sweden for immediate prohibition of the use of Freon and halogens, with the possibility of a very restrictive granting of exemptions. The survival of life is not an issue for negotiation.*

### **The Climate**

Another issue of global survival concerns the climate. Through the burning of large quantities of coal, oil and natural gas and the decimation of the world's rain forests, the human race contributes to an increase in the level of carbon monoxide in the air. Thereby the atmosphere's heat preserving level - "the glass in the greenhouse" - thickens and at the current rate the average temperature may rise 2-5 degrees centigrade by the year 2050. This will lead to wider areas being stricken with drought and more hunger and famine. Lowlands may be flooded by rising sea levels caused by the melting of glaciers but also because the volume of water increases with higher temperatures. But the question of the climate is a complicated one and there are other possible future scenarios. One thing is certain though; we are changing the climate of the earth at a disturbingly rapid rate. The only way of stopping this development is by a major decrease in emissions of carbon monoxide.

*This in turn demands radical reduction of the use of energy partly through the development of energy saving technology and partly by the lowering of demand for a higher material standard of living in our part of the world. Furthermore, energy production must be directed towards a changeover to biofuels - grown on farms and in forests - and towards renewable energy resources like water, sun and wind. From now on everyone must be more observant of consequences for the environment.*

## Forests

The ravaging of the world's rain forests, as well as that of drier tropical forests, is a further serious problem. Poor farmers burn their way into the forest in order to obtain more land to cultivate. But the really hard exploitation is practiced by large corporations which are permitted by their governments to export hardwoods and beef to western consumers. An area equal to the large Swedish island of Gotland (3.000 squarekilometres) is cut and burned every week.

The rain forest is the world's most advantageous environments for plants and animals and supports far more species than other forms of natural environment. It accommodates millions of species. When it disappears many kinds of mammals, birds, insects, herbs and other organisms are threatened. There are species which are headed for extinction before humans have had time to discover that they have ever existed. This is a great ethical-moral problem, not least for those of us who believe that the Creator in his wisdom has placed these species within the slowly changing fabric of Creation. The "genetic banks" that these species represent disappear for ever. Many plants are also of considerable value for human beings providing medicines, useful chemicals and nutrients.

The great "green mass" of the earth's rain forest belt maintains the air's stable composition through use of carbon monoxide in the process of photosynthesis. When vegetation is cut down or burns

away the level of carbon monoxide rises, with climatic changes as a consequence. Once again we hear the cry from the Amazon. We are glad for the efforts of the World Bank when it demands a stop to this exploitation as a condition for new loans to governments concerned.

*Through the international organizations of the church we wish to work for a stop to the destruction of the rain forests, for land reforms and for powerful sanctions against exploitative timber and meat firms. We encourage Sweden's government and SIDA to "rent" rain forests and areas of water resources for example, and in this way give full economic support to the cancellation of plans for exploitation and to place ethical demands on Sweden's own imports from tropical areas.*

Another threat to the forests of the world comes from acid pollution and poisons which are principally affecting trees and forest areas in industrialized parts of the world. A few years ago a UN commission established the fact that 5 million hectares of forest in Europe showed more or less serious damage due to air pollution. The damage to Swedish forests is also obvious.

An effective emission control technology is demanded for burning of fuels both industrially and residentially - not least in coal burning eastern Europe - as well as radical emphasis on biofuels. New fuels for vehicles, better exhaust emission control and promotion of public transit and sharing rides are other necessary actions to reduce the emissions of polluting elements.

...

## VI.

## SWITZERLAND

A. Swiss Protestant Federation

*Global Warming and Climate Change*

Statement adopted by the Assembly of the  
Swiss Protestant Federation (October 1991)

B. Ecumenical Association "Church and Environment"

*Save the Earth's Skin*  
An Action Programme

## A. Swiss Protestant Federation

*Statement adopted by the Assembly of the Swiss Protestant Federation on October 29, 1991*

### 1. Introduction

Under the impact of the Ecumenical Assembly "Peace with Justice" held in Basle at Pentecost (1989) the Assembly of the Swiss Protestant Federation, meeting in Berne on September 25, 1989, commissioned the Executive Council "to give urgent attention to the issues involved in the greenhouse effect and to submit a proposal for future activities." The following year, the Assembly, meeting in Elm in June 1990, decided to hold two consultations on the topic, an international conference of church representatives from industrialised countries and a Swiss consultation enabling an exchange of views on measures to be taken in our country.

These two meetings have now been held. From 13 to 18 January 1991 about 70 representatives from North America and Europe (East and West) met at the Gwatt conference centre of the Reformed Church. The Swiss consultation, with about 60 participants, took place in the Franziskushaus, Dulliken, on 31 May and 1 June.

The Assembly which took place in Klosters on June 18, 1991 received the report and made the following statement:

"The Assembly takes note of the Gwatt conference report on "The Churches' Role in Protecting the Earth's Atmosphere." It is grateful for the efforts which have led to the commitment of the World Council of Churches in this matter at Canberra and requests the member churches to study the findings and to act on the recommendations."

It also endorsed the goals of the campaign "Save the Earth's Skin" (see below, p. 61).

"As an initial contribution to the UN Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992, the Assembly supports all efforts to gain acceptance in Switzerland of measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 2% p.a."

The Assembly underlined the following aspects:

### 2. Protection of the Earth's Atmosphere

Through its support for the conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, in which it is actively involved, the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches has repeatedly drawn the attention of congregations to the binding nature of the biblical witness to God, the Creator. We are aware that our own history - and that of the whole of humankind - is part of the story of God and human beings. This, according to the biblical promise, will end in the consummation of creation.

2.1 The biblical testimony reminds us that God made his covenant not just with "us" but with "every living creature", not just with people living "today" but with "your descendants" as well (Gen. 9:10). God binds himself as the guarantor of life to our fellow creatures too. They become our partners. We have to grant them their promised guarantees of rights and support.

This partnership relationship commits us then to work for the formulation of such guarantees on the basis of secular, earthly law, and to implement it - not just in our own interest but in the light of the right to life of coming generations.

- 2.2 The biblical testimony reminds us that the world recognised as God's creation has certain limits and boundaries. It has a right to the future of God's promise. We have to respect these limits and boundaries and thus to preserve life in its variety. We only help to solve the environmental crisis when we consider this in our own planning and way of life.
- 2.3 The biblical testimony reminds us that the special position of humankind, distinguished as "the image of God", implies a special responsibility. Human dignity does not only raise us above all other beings, it links us up with the dignity of all other living creatures. As God defined himself through his bond with creation as "our" God, so human beings shall - through their bond with the created world, through creaturely solidarity - fulfill their special human purpose. Their rights must be coordinated with the rights of nature, from whom, with whom and in whom they live. Human economic interests must be harmonised with the cosmic conditions of nature in which humankind has spread itself.
- 2.4 The confession of God the Creator compels us to understand growth only under these conditions. It encourages us to stand up and resist when the limited living space of creation is destroyed by boundless exploitation, when the consequences of this destruction are accepted, and when the quality of life of future generations is impinged on and curtailed.

We have only just begun to draw the required conclusions from these biblical insights and have a long way to go on this path. Responsibility for life on this planet prompts the Assembly today to set out the following goals for the member churches:

- 1) Climatic change through human intervention will, in the long term, prove one of the most dangerous aspects of the ecological crisis humanity is now undergoing. The emission of greenhouse gases, notably CO<sub>2</sub>, which is released through the combustion of fossil fuels, is irrevocably leading to a gradual rise in average temperature of the earth's atmosphere. Far-reaching climatic changes are the consequence: deserts are spreading and storms and flooding more frequent. Admittedly, the whole process cannot be forecast in detail with total certainty. However, the 2nd World Climate Conference (November 1990) declared that the remaining uncertainties should not tempt us to postpone the necessary action. The risk to which humanity is exposed is too great for us to ignore. Responsibility for coming generations compels us to act now.
- 2) The 2nd World Climate Conference urges that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions be reduced worldwide by 1-2%. We note with concern that so far no country has taken the measures necessary to reach this goal. Switzerland, too, is content to aim at stabilising emissions at the 1990 level by the year 2000. In our view, all measures to achieve the World Climate Conference aim should be supported and promoted.
- 3) Science and technology will play an important role here. Energy can be gained in alternative ways; environmentally sustainable technologies can and must be developed. It would be dangerous to expect the solution to the problem from science and technology alone. The reduction calls for a thorough change of lifestyle, both of society at large and of its individual members. This can only be enforced politically. The discussion about necessary measures is in full swing. It is apparent, for example, that the present energy prices do not reflect ecological truth. Raising prices will not just lead to a reduction in energy consumption but also release funds needed to handle ecological problems.

- 4) The personal contribution of all individuals is essential. Lowering energy consumption begins in small steps and in having many individuals indicate their readiness to try another lifestyle. The change connected with this is usually seen exclusively as loss and restraint. We think, however, that it can lead to a new and deeper quality of life.
- 5) Two thirds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are caused by industrialised countries, although their populations make up at most one quarter of humanity. The first victim of climatic changes will be Third World countries, however. The energy consumption of industrialised countries must thus be seen as a particular form of deprivation of the South by the North. The industrialised countries bear the greatest responsibility, being the greatest culprits. They must thus do more to cut energy consumption worldwide than the countries of the South. We support all efforts in the UNCED context to reach an effective world climate convention; in particular, we support the establishment of a world climate fund for the benefit of economically disadvantaged countries.

#### Recommendations:

1. The Assembly requests member churches to identify with these goals and reflect on the consequences for their own actions.
2. The Assembly welcomes the campaign launched by the Ecumenical Association Church and Environment (OeKU) and Physicians for Environmental Protection (AefU), known as "Save the Earth's Skin" ("La Terre doit sauver sa peau / Rettet die Haut der Erde"), and requests member churches to consider signing this appeal.

3. It commissions the board to take appropriate action in the light of this Statement and, in particular, to encourage the Swiss government to work for an effective world climate convention.

#### **B. Ecumenical Association Church and Environment (OeKU)**

##### *"Save the Earth's Skin" - a campaign to protect the earth's atmosphere*

In 1990 the OeKU decided to launch a campaign to protect the earth's atmosphere. The primary goal of this campaign is to motivate as many Swiss people as possible to sign a pledge, which reads as follows:

"By signing this appeal I declare myself willing

- a) regularly to monitor energy consumption (particularly fossil) under my personal control, and if possible to reduce it, in order to facilitate the goal of reducing consumption by 2% p.a.;
- b) not just to accept the consequences of reducing fossil fuel consumption for my own lifestyle, but to try to spread this approach among the people I meet;
- c) in discussion and cooperation with others to seek ways and means to bring about the necessary political action;
- d) to refrain from using CFCs.

The reduction of energy consumption will entail major changes in our lifestyle. It will call for a change of heart and behaviour. We see it primarily not as restriction and abstention, but are convinced that a simpler lifestyle will open the door to another, in the long run better, quality of life."

The association gained the support of the Swiss association "Physicians for Environmental Protection." Following their joint appeal, over 3'000 people had signed the pledge by the end of 1991. All participants receive a regular newsletter with suggestions about how to achieve the target of 2% saving p.a.; political initiatives and steps are also suggested.

The OeKU is an association of Reformed, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic and free church congregations, also comprising church agencies, cantonal churches and individuals in Switzerland.

The "Save the Earth's Skin" movement arose from the conviction that the churches and all Christians are committed by the Gospel to "resist the annihilation of God-given life and the self-destruction of humankind". It is one form of response to the call of churches from East and West Europe at the ecumenical assembly in Basle (May 1989).

## VII.

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### A. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

*Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*  
A Report adopted by the 202nd Assembly (1990)

#### B. American Baptist Churches U.S.A.

*Global Warming*  
Resolution adopted by the General Board of  
the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. (1990)

#### C. Church of the Brethren

*Global Warming and Atmospheric Degradation*  
Resolution adopted by the Church of the  
Brethren General Board (October 21, 1991)

## A. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*

A Report adopted by the 202nd General Assembly (1990)

#### **Call to restore the creation**

Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis.

- Abuse of nature and injustice to people place the future in grave jeopardy.
- Population triples in this century.
- Biological systems suffer diminished capacity to renew themselves.
- Finite minerals are mined and pumped as if inexhaustible.
- Peasants are forced onto marginal lands, and soil erodes.
- The rich-poor gap grows wider.
- Wastes and poisons exceed nature's capacity to absorb them.
- Greenhouse gases pose threat of global warming.

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

- respond to the cry of creation, human and nonhuman;
- engage in the effort to make the 1990's the "turnaround decade," not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God's creation; and
- draw upon all the resources of biblical faith and the Reformed tradition for empowerment and guidance in this adventure.

The church has powerful reason for engagement in restoring God's creation:

- God's works in creation are too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful, too good to be desecrated.
- Restoring creation is God's own work in our time, in which God comes both to judge and to restore.
- The Creator-Redeemer calls faithful people to become engaged with God in keeping and healing the creation, human and nonhuman.
- Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained.
- The love of neighbor, particularly "the least" of Christ's brothers and sisters, requires action to stop the poisoning, the erosion, the wastefulness that are causing suffering and death.
- The future of our children and their children and all who come after is at stake.

- In this critical time of transition to a new era, God's new doing may be discerned as a call to earth-keeping, to justice, and to community.

Therefore, the 202nd General Assembly affirms that:

- Response to God's call requires a new faithfulness, for which guidance may be found in norms that illuminate the contemporary meaning of God's steadfast love for the world.
- 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.
- Justice today requires participation, the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator's gifts for sustenance.
- Justice also means sufficiency, a standard upholding the claim of all to have enough - to be met through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end.
- Community in our time requires the nurture of solidarity, leading to steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies, and to the realization of the church's potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.

On the basis of these findings and affirmations the 202nd General Assembly (1990)

- recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level;
- understands this to be a new focus for initiative in mission program and a concern with major implications for infusion into theological work, evangelism, education, justice and peacemaking, worship and liturgy, public witness, global mission, and congregational service and action at the local community level;
- recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment, and which has profound implications for the life, work, and witness of Christian people and church agencies;
- approaches the task with covenant seriousness - "If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God ... then you shall live" (Deut. 30:16) - and with practical awareness that cherishing God's creation enhances the ability of the church to achieve its other goals.

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) believes God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to engage in the task of restoring creation in the "turnaround decade" now beginning and for as long as God continues to call people of faith to undertake these tasks.

## Part I

### Creation's Cry: The Crisis of Ecology and Justice

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#### H. Global Warming

The "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere are trapping heat at the earth's surface and, according to many climatologists, causing a gradual increase in global average temperatures. The phenomena involved are exceedingly complex, and scientific opinion varies with respect to the reliability of models indicating climate change. The lack of certainty about projections, however, should not be an excuse for complacency for two reasons. First, delay in responding to the threat in the hope that it is not real would mean loss of precious opportunity to reduce the danger if it is real. If we wait for certainty we shall wait too long. Second, the measures to be taken to forestall the danger would have benefits in terms of conservation, economic efficiency, and renewable energy development, quite apart from the matter of climate change. The paragraphs that follow assume that the buildup of the greenhouse gases is very dangerous and that the world cannot afford to postpone an appropriate response.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is by far the largest component of these gases. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methane, and nitrous oxides, however, have been increasing rapidly in concentration, and their combined effect by the year 2030 could equal that of CO<sub>2</sub> alone. Without early and stringent counter measures, the average temperature by sometime between 2030 and 2050 will likely be 3 to 8 degrees Fahrenheit higher than at present. In geologic terms this will be an extraordinary spurt. The consequences for climate change are likely to be both erratic and severe. Upper latitudes are projected to warm up at nearly twice the global average. Weather patterns will include new extremes in heat waves, droughts, storms, and hurricanes. The effects on agriculture will be very disruptive,

with main crop areas shifting poleward. As water warms, sea levels will rise; coastal areas will flood; and coastal cities will need to make massive investments in dikes to hold back the sea. Millions of people will become environmental refugees.

It is almost certainly too late to prevent some warming and disruption. Two crucial questions, however, remain to be determined: how much warming and how fast? Every degree of average warming prevented will mean less destruction and suffering. And the longer the time over which the change takes place, the more possible it will be for human and nonhuman creatures and systems to adjust without traumatic disruptions.

Substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions would delay and limit the warming of the planet. Obviously, this means (among other things) minimizing the burning of fossil fuels whose combustion releases CO<sub>2</sub>. But these are the energy sources upon which modern economies are founded.

Only in the past few years has global warming come widely to the fore of environmental consciousness. Reports of recent studies suggest that it is the gravest threat of all. If not addressed, it could overwhelm all other efforts to deal with environmental and social issues.

#### I. Ozone Depletion

Ozone, a form of oxygen spread very thinly in the upper atmosphere, shields the earth from excessive amounts of the sun's ultraviolet radiation. Natural forces continually break it down and replenish it. The rate at which it is broken down, however, has been increased by various gases released to the atmosphere by industrial processes and consumer products. The chlorofluorocarbons - widely used as coolants, propellants, solvents, and foam blowing agents - account for about 80 percent of ozone depletion.

The largest losses of ozone have occurred in the Antarctic spring over the South Pole, but small percentages of depletion are being documented all around the globe. Although there is much uncertainty in projecting future ozone levels and their effects, studies indicate that even small percentages of ozone loss will have very injurious results: a substantial increase in skin cancers, more eye disease (cataracts), impairment of the human immune system, degraded aquatic systems, reduced lifetimes for synthetic plastics and paints, possible crop losses, and more ground-level smog.

The ozone problem has led to the most notable instance to date of international action on an environmental threat. Nations representing more than two-thirds of the world's use of ozone-destroying gases have signed agreements (the Montreal Protocol of 1987, greatly strengthened at Helsinki in 1989) to phase out CFCs by the year 2000. The Helsinki Declaration commits them, also, to phase out or reduce the other ozone-depleting gases "as soon as possible," to accelerate development of environmentally acceptable substitutes, and to assist developing countries to comply with the pact by providing information, funding mechanisms, and technology transfers.

The international community has taken some major steps to address the ozone depletion problem. Additional nations, however, need to be brought into the pact. Its success will depend on the diligence and good faith with which governments and industries act in the years immediately ahead.

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## Part II

### Response to an endangered Planet

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#### Area 5: Overcoming Atmospheric Instability - Global Warming and Ozone Depletion

We note that the phenomena determining climate are very complex and that scientific opinion varies with respect to the reliability of models projecting temperature increases. The weight of evidence, however, justifies a serious response to the threat of global warming.

Ozone depletion and global warming have risen rapidly to head the list of concerns about the future of creation. They are significantly different from other problems in several respects. They have to do with global problems that lie ahead and cannot now be measured. No place on earth will be unaffected, however. Without united action worldwide, no nation can do much about global warming and ozone depletion. They represent the unintended consequences of proud industrial achievements. The gases released were not toxic. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) have had all sorts of beneficial uses, and we breathe air with CO<sub>2</sub> in it. Now in the upper atmosphere these gases are doing enormous damage. But we cannot get them down again. We can only stop sending them up and thereby limit the damage.

In the case of CO<sub>2</sub>, substantial reduction of emissions means changing the energy basis of our whole civilization. We knew that fossil fuels would not last indefinitely; but suddenly the danger is that they will last too long, that the world will not make the transition soon enough to simpler, more efficient, and renewable energy sources and technologies.

In 1989 the United Church of Canada and eight European churches came to a "Convenant Agreement Regarding the Threat of Global Warming." They did this in connection with the meeting in Basel, Switzerland, of Protestant and Catholic Christians from East and West Europe on the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation theme of the World Council of Churches. They agreed to work together on the problem of global warming and to give particular attention to the role of energy. They have already made an important approach to governments by advocating cooperation on reduction in the use of fossil fuels by means of energy-saving technologies and the development of renewable (solar) energy supplies. They presented comments and policy statements to the October 1989 environmental meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, of governments belonging to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

These are significant developments. An invitation has come to U.S. churches, through their representatives on the National Council of Churches' Eco-Justice Working Group and through their delegates to the 1990 World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul, Korea, to participate in this international cooperative effort of churches on global warming.

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) recommends:

A. Ecumenical Participation and International Participation

1. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) declares its serious concern, in concert with ecumenical partners, that the global atmospheric warming trend (the greenhouse effect) represents one of the most serious global environmental challenges to the health, security, and stability of human life and natural ecosystems; and

2. The church affirms its intention to participate in ecumenical efforts to address this challenge cooperatively with Canadian and European churches and the conciliar movement.
3. The General Assembly affirms its intention to participate in the United Nations International Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992, and requests a report to a subsequent General Assembly as appropriate.

B. Policies on Global Warming

1. The United States, as consumer of nearly a quarter of the world's energy, must take the lead in reducing its own combustion of fossil fuels and shifting to renewable sources of energy which do not contribute to the atmospheric buildup of carbon dioxide.
2. Appropriate response to the warnings of impending climate change requires an extended frame of reference for decision-making by governments, international agencies, industries, educational institutions, churches, and community organizations. The U.S. government, other governments, the United Nations, and appropriate scientific organizations should increase their capability to monitor and project trends in atmospheric temperature and to make broad environmental and social assessments.
3. The United States should work through the United Nations and appropriate diplomatic channels to reach firm international agreements for steady and substantial reduction of the gases causing climate change, and for halting deforestation and promoting reforestation. Some programs already in place should be given an enlarged role and increased funding - the U.N. Environment Programme, for example, and the U.N.'s programs on development and population.

4. The United States government should adopt legislation and administrative policies, with adequate funding, for vigorously stepped-up research and development of energy-efficient technologies.
5. The U.S. government should promote the introduction and use of energy-efficient technologies by applying carefully targeted incentives and disincentives.
6. Similarly, the U.S. government should adopt legislation and administrative policies, with adequate funding, to step up research and development on the various sources and technologies for solar energy. Appropriate incentives and disincentives to accelerate the transition to an economy based on renewable, safe, nonpolluting, affordable energy should be developed and implemented.
7. The United States and the other industrialized nations should assist developing countries to achieve the energy sufficiency necessary for the general improvement of living standards that these countries desperately need. This assistance should include appropriate technology transfers for pollution control and energy efficiency. In particular, assistance will be necessary to enable developing countries to find equitable solutions to the problems of debt and land use that figure heavily in the destruction of their forests.
8. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should act promptly to strengthen fuel economy and emission standards for automobiles, buses, and trucks by mandating and consistently enforcing a schedule of energy efficiency improvements, leading to a substantially higher standard of efficiency within a few years. Incentives and disincentives to encourage consumers to choose fuel-efficient vehicles will also be in order.

9. Comparable standard-setting and incentive-generating measures should be advanced by the U.S. Bureau of Standards with respect to efficiency improvements in lighting, heating, air-conditioning, appliances, building construction, the weatherization of existing buildings, and the cogeneration of heat and electricity (with legislation as necessary where the bureau's powers do not apply). As more efficient technologies become available, public policy should encourage and facilitate their adoption and use by individuals and businesses.
10. Public policy should encourage alternatives to private automobiles. Alternatives include municipal mass transit, railroads, bicycles, and walking.

#### C. Policies on Ozone Depletion

To a large extent the kinds of policies needed for reducing the emissions of chlorofluorocarbons and other ozone-destroying gases parallel the policies required for reducing the buildup of the greenhouse gases. The CFCs, which are the leading cause of ozone depletion, also add significantly to the greenhouse effect. To protect the ozone shield, there clearly is need for international action through

1. leadership by the United States, which is the largest contributor to the problem;
2. a longer-term and global frame of reference, with improved foresight capability by governments and international agencies;
3. strong international agreements and cooperative arrangements; specifically, firm adherence to the Montreal and Helsinki agreements on phasing out the production of CFCs by the end of the century and discontinuing the other ozone-destroying

chemicals as soon as possible, with continuing efforts to bring additional nations into the pact;

4. improved technologies and development of acceptable substitutes for the chemicals that must be phased out; rapid shifts in production processes;
5. assistance to developing countries by providing them with information, training, funding mechanisms, and technology transfers that will enable them to participate in the Montreal-Helsinki pact and have access to the improved technologies and substitute chemicals;
6. strict standards, in line with international agreements but enforced by governments;
7. incentives and disincentives that lead actors in a market economy to make environmentally rational decisions.

#### D. Church Support Through Personal and Institutional Practice

1. The American people, beginning with members of our churches, must be challenged to form personal habits consistent with the need to cut back on the emissions of the gases that are causing the greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer. This means energy conservation and cutting back on the use of fossil energy. It means avoiding foams made with CFCs and making sure that CFC-based coolant is not released when air conditioners are serviced.
2. The greenhouse and ozone problems reinforce the call to a less materialistic and wasteful style of life. It is unrealistic and self-serving to think that efficient and renewable energy technologies, now in the early stage of the transition, will take effect fast enough to provide sufficient insurance against the

potentially disastrous consequences of global warming - unless there is also a move away from unnecessary and wasteful production and consumption.

3. The church in its own life must teach, exemplify, and advocate the values and principles, policies and practices that foster energy efficiency, the transition to renewable sources, and the avoidance of products that break down the ozone. Obviously the church must be responsible in the construction and maintenance of its own buildings. If habits of conservation and responsible consuming are cultivated consistently, we shall discover many practical applications of our values.

As this report has repeatedly made clear, the affliction of the creation will not be healed unless the human part of creation undergoes significant personal and institutional transformation. Our recommendations suggest something of what the transformation may entail, but they fall far short of prescribing all that is needed. That will be the agenda for the coming years.

#### B. American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.

*Global Warming: Resolution adopted by the General Board (1990)*

##### The problem

The report from the Second World Climate Conference, held in Geneva from October 29 until November 8, 1990, stated: "If the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations is not limited, then predicted climate change would place stresses on the natural and social systems unprecedented in the past 10,000 years." It is

believed that increased levels of gases are gradually causing the earth's atmosphere and surface to become warmer. The effect is similar to that of the glass panels in a greenhouse that let some heat in but prevent much of it from leaving. Much of the increase in levels of gases is directly attributable to human industrial activity.

The first part of the Second World Climate Conference included over 700 scientists in different fields. A Ministerial Session followed in which 137 governments (82% of the United Nations) participated. The scientists reached substantial agreement on a wide range of issues. The Conference declared: "Emissions resulting from human activities are substantially increasing atmospheric concentrations of the greenhouse gases. These increases will enhance the natural greenhouse effect, resulting on average in an additional warming of the earth's surface."

The major greenhouse gases and their sources are:<sup>1</sup>

- carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) generated as a by-product of everyday energy consumption, accounts for 55% of all greenhouse gases.
- Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) found in solvents, air conditioning fluids, refrigerants, and foam products, constitute another 24% of total greenhouse gases.
- Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) emitted from animal waste, rice and other types of cultivation, and leaked or flared during the extraction of oil, gas and coal, amounts to 15% of greenhouse gases.
- The remainder consisting of nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) from nitrogen fertilization, nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and tropospheric ozone from

<sup>1</sup> The Churches Role in Protecting the Earth's Atmosphere: Report of an Ecumenical Consultation of Churches in Northern Industrialized Countries held at Gwatt, Switzerland, from January 13-18, 1991, page 5.

automobile exhaust, coal combustion and other sources, amounts to 6% of the total.

The particularly dangerous role of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) deserves special mention. These gases are the primary cause of the depletion of the ozone layer in the stratosphere and simultaneously contribute to warming. The ozone layer filters ultraviolet radiation. Its destruction leads to increased exposure and significantly increased levels of skin cancer.

Consequences of global warming include the partial melting of polar ice caps and the rise in sea levels. Such rises could inundate land that is densely populated and totally submerge island nations in the South Pacific and elsewhere. Approximately 50% of the world's population lives in coastal areas. Other impacts include increased storm intensity and frequency, changes in water condition and availability, stresses on health conditions, and variations in agriculture and food production. In the words of the Second World Climate Conference: "In many cases the impacts will be felt most severely in regions already under stress, mainly in developing countries."

Greenhouse gas emissions are closely tied to the extent and structure of development. Although the initial impact of these global warming trends will be felt by Less Industrialized Nations, 75% of all carbon dioxide emissions come from More Industrialized Nations.

### Theological Considerations

As American Baptist Christians we have been growing in our awareness of the implications of our faith related to ecological concerns. Our earlier Policy Statement on Ecology reminded us of our responsibility to God for the care of creation (Genesis 1:1, 11-12) and of God's displeasure with humanity's misuse of creation.

Further reflection calls us to consider more seriously the implications of God's call to "love your neighbor as yourself."

There is but one Creator. As travelers on this globe together, we are commonly dependent upon Earth for sustenance. We are interdependent with all of creation. We must learn to understand what it means to respect all that God has created and to be our neighbor's keepers. We need to expand our hearing of Jesus' "new commandment" to "Love one another." We must see the whole creation as our neighbor. Certainly the implications of this command exceed one culture, race, ethnic group, or species just as it exceeds one denomination.

Further, as human beings we are surrounded by and live in an environment we call air. It is in us as well as around us. When it is poisoned and polluted (Isaiah 24:5-6), we and all creatures are harmed. The Old Testament word for air is the same as "wind" and "Spirit." When we limit our understanding of God's Spirit, we limit our understanding and care for God's creatures and creation.

Therefore, based on our faith in the Creator God who makes us a part of a unified creation, the General Board of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., calls on national boards, regions, American Baptist institutions, congregations and individuals to:

- A. Join in ways to build a culture that can live in harmony with God's creation by:
  1. Deepening our biblical understanding of creation and our role in preserving the gifts God has given through such activities as use and production of educational materials, courses, special programs, and personal study.
  2. Developing a spirituality that embraces the dignity of the character of creation, connecting our understanding of personal salvation with stewardship of God's creation.

3. Acting with others to build a world community of cooperation to share justly the life-giving resources of the earth.
  4. Participating in multicultural bridge-building experiences.
  5. Learning about the causes of global warming through self education and inclusion of materials in church school and learning institutions at all levels, from nursery to university.
- B. Join in global, local and personal efforts to safeguard the world's atmospheric integrity and quality by:
    1. Building and renovating our homes and church facilities to be energy sufficient and beginning programs of energy conservation and awareness.
    2. Striving to eliminate the use of products that contain CFCs.
    3. Using public transportation, carpooling, and telephone conferencing.
    4. Becoming ecologically aware consumers by using products, including food, that consume less energy in production, transportation, packaging, and use.
  - C. Address the causes and reverse the consequences of global warming by:
    1. Advocating the passage of legislation at all appropriate levels to reduce carbon dioxide output and to set reduction targets for other greenhouse gases.<sup>2</sup>
    2. Supporting the passage of mandatory higher fuel efficiency for new vehicles and phasing out of older, less efficient vehicles.

<sup>2</sup> According to the "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" document, Seoul, Korea 1990, the target should be an annual reduction of 3%.

3. Supporting rail and other means of increased transportation efficiency including subsidies for public transportation.
4. Combating deforestation domestically and internationally through programs of preservation and reforestation and through responsible consumption.
5. Sponsoring and supporting shareholder resolutions to corporations on issues like reduction of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, phasing out of CFCs, increased energy efficiency and fuel conservation, environmental cost accounting and other issues affecting global warming.
6. Calling for an international treaty such as the Montreal Protocols on global warming with specific targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases.
7. Working to implement just intra- and inter-national trade and economic relationships (based on principles like the transfer of technical and economic resources, self-reliance, sustainable agriculture, and forms of development that do not exacerbate global warming).

#### Policy Base

American Baptist Churches Policy Statement on Ecology, June 1989

American Baptist Churches Policy Statement on Energy, June 1977

American Baptist Churches Policy Statement on Human Rights, December 1976

("The right to a secure and healthy environment, clean air, pure water, and an earth that can nurture and support present and future generations.")

American Baptist Churches Resolution on Environmental Concerns, March 1983

American Baptist Churches Resolution on Nuclear Power: Seeking Rational Solutions, December 1982

#### C. Church of the Brethren

##### *Global Warming and Atmospheric Degradation*

Resolution adopted by the General Board (October 21, 1991)

**Whereas** our vastly increased use of fossil fuels is substantially increasing the atmospheric concentrations of the greenhouse gases, thereby enhancing the strong possibility of catastrophic warming of the earth's surface, and

**whereas** the negative consequences of the greenhouse effect are likely to intensify human suffering especially in the developing countries, and

**whereas** the Annual Conference statement "Creation: Called to Care" challenges us to take seriously our role as stewards of the earth, and to work for the renewal of creation, and

**whereas** the General Board is committed to study and action on issues of justice, peace, and integrity of creation,

therefore be it resolved that the Church of the Brethren General Board, meeting in Elgin, Illinois on October 19-22, 1991, *commits itself and urges Brethren congregations, institutions, and members to:*

*Reaffirm our belief*

that we are called by God to live in harmony with all of creation, and that our covenantal relationship to care for the creation requires us to be aware of present and impending threats to our environment and to take action to preserve the integrity of creation.

*Join together*

in the search for ways to live together in harmony with God's creation;

in addressing the causes and dealing with the consequences of atmospheric destruction locally and globally; and

in praying for the strength to reduce consumption and reject the myths of unlimited resources and economic growth.

*Work together through global, local, and personal efforts to safeguard the world's atmospheric integrity and quality by*

increasing awareness of the negative ecological consequences of continuing reliance on fossil fuels, and by expanding ongoing educational efforts that lead to action;

encouraging the building and renovating of our homes and church facilities and camp buildings to be energy efficient and initiating new programs of energy conservation and awareness, including alternatives to fossil fuels;

striving to eliminate the use of products that contain ozone-depleting Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs);

using public transportation, carpooling, and telephone conferencing in order to reduce fossil fuel consumption; becoming ecologically aware consumers by using diets and products that consume less energy in production, transportation, packaging, and use;

devoting maximum effort to the separation and recycling of household goods, while also reducing waste and toxic materials;

encouraging office energy audits and recycling programs (particularly paper and paper products).

*Pledge ourselves to address the causes and reverse the consequences of global warming by*

advocating the passage of legislation, at all appropriate levels, that reduce carbon dioxide output and set reduction targets for other greenhouse gases;

supporting research and development of energy alternatives to fossil fuels. And supporting the passage of mandatory higher fuel efficiency for new vehicles and the phasing out of older, less efficient vehicles;

supporting the expansion and promotion of rail transportation and other systems of mass transit, including subsidies for public transportation;

combating forest destruction domestically and internationally through programs of preservation and reforestation and through responsible consumption of wood and wood products;

engaging with corporations in dialogue and shareholder resolutions on such issues as reduction of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse

gases, phasing out of CFCs, increased energy efficiency and fuel conservation, environmental cost accounting and other issues affecting global warming;

calling for the adoption of an international treaty to limit the production of greenhouse gases worldwide;

working to implement fair trade and economic relationships so that forms of development that minimize global warming are available to all nations.

*Further, the General Board commits itself to:*

support and participate in national and international networks of religious bodies and other non-governmental organizations addressing the greenhouse effect; and

continue through its program staff, within the context of a theology based on caring for the earth, an educational effort to acquaint the members of the Church of the Brethren with the nature, causes, and consequences of the greenhouse effect, including suggestions for individual and collective action to help address the problem. This will include the promotion of the use of the General Board's study resource *"Creation in Crisis: Responding to God's Covenant"* in all congregations. We will elicit the cooperation of District Executives as agents within each district to work directly with pastors to reach the membership of the church.

## VII.

### INTERNATIONAL STATEMENTS

#### A. World Council of Churches

1. *Declaration of the World Conference on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Seoul (Korea), March 1990*
2. *Climate Change Negotiations, Report of the Observers sent by the World Council of Churches to the Fourth Session of the International Negotiating Committee for a framework Convention on Climate Change (INC4) in Geneva (December 9-20, 1991)*

#### B. Roman Catholic Church

*Peace with God the Creator,  
Peace with all Creation*  
Message of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the World Day of Peace 1990

#### C. Church Leaders of the United States and Canada

*Joint Statement (January 26-27, 1992)*

**I. Declaration of the World Conference on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Seoul (Korea), March 1990**

For building a culture that can live in harmony with creation's integrity;

For preserving the gift of the earth's atmosphere to nurture and sustain the world's life;

For combatting the causes of destructive changes to the atmosphere which threaten to disrupt the earth's climate and widespread suffering

We commit ourselves to work, and to engage our churches to work:

1. To join in the search for ways to live together in harmony with God's creation,

through activities such as these

- 1.1 deepening our biblical understanding, rediscovering old traditions (e.g. the Patristic teaching on creation) and developing new theological perspectives concerning creation and the place of humanity within it; through opening ourselves to learn from the insights of indigenous peoples and people of other faiths and ideologies, as well as from the traditional wisdom of women,
- 1.2 promoting a spirituality in our church communities which embraces the sacramental character of creation and challenges consumerist attitudes,

- 1.3 developing educational programmes which help people to uphold the integrity of creation and through adopting in our churches a community life-style and ways of using resources which express and reinforce a growing respect for God's creation,

- 1.4 acting together globally and locally with environmentalists, scientists, social activists, young people, political leaders, economists and others from different backgrounds and religions who are searching for just forms of society, which help maintain the ecological balance of creation. This cooperation could be enacted in many ways, one example being church participation in "World Environment Day",

- 1.5 protection and celebration of God's gift of creation by sharing the resources of the earth in ways that enhance the lives of all people. By rejecting over-consumption and promoting models which encourage recycling, provide adequate shelter and appropriate transportation, provide sustainable forms of agricultural and industrial production, and meet the basic needs of all people,

- 1.6 rejecting and fighting hierarchical thinking which puts one race above another, men above women, or people above the natural environment; and accepting the responsibility of constant self-examination needed for building a more harmonious world.

2. To join in global, local and personal efforts to safeguard the world's atmospheric integrity and quality

Including the following actions:

- 2.1 through keeping ourselves and our churches informed of the crisis at hand from damage to the chemical balance of the atmosphere and from changing climate patterns,

- 2.2 through responding to the warnings of the scientific community, the wisdom of tribal peoples and those most likely to be affected by the changing climate,
  - 2.3 through creating, by way of ecumenical cooperation, specific policies and programmes that will mobilize Christians around the world in campaigns to save the stability of the atmosphere,
  - 2.4 through participating in networks with other churches, environmental organizations, popular movements, scientific associations, and other groups committed to education and action to resist the causes of atmospheric destruction,
  - 2.5 through supporting the efforts of international bodies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to propose treaties for the nations of the world which will protect the atmosphere for future generations.
3. To resist globally the causes and to deal with the consequences of atmospheric destruction

Using measures such as these:

- 3.1 through reducing the emission of carbon dioxide by 2% per year globally as recommended by recent international scientific conferences. This would require the industrialized countries that create the highest emissions to reduce by 3% or more annually, recognizing the legitimate needs for sustainable energy expansion within the developing countries; in order to achieve this, a corresponding regular reduction in the use of fossil fuels is required,
- 3.2 through banning the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and supporting their replacement by alternative technologies and

- through international collaboration to make substitutes available within developing countries in an economically just way,
- 3.3 through combatting deforestation, preserving forest ecosystems and encouraging the reforestation and planting of appropriate varieties of trees as an act of contemporary discipleship and by addressing the injustices and attitudes which fuel the destruction of the world's forests,
  - 3.4 through strengthening governmental measures to increase efficiency of both energy generation and use while encouraging transfer of environmentally relevant technologies from industrialized to developing countries so that the pressing need of developing countries for energy sufficiency may be met in a sustainable way. We support a fossil fuel tax for this purpose, in particular in industrialized countries, as a necessary part of governmental measures,
  - 3.5 through actively promoting strategies for renewable energy resources around the world as alternatives to increased coal, oil and gas use in the future, and in strict opposition to the multiplication of nuclear reactors, and to further disposal of nuclear wastes in the lands and waters of the earth,
  - 3.6 through proposing and supporting redesigned systems of transportation to dramatically curb atmospheric pollution and global warming from this source and by committing ourselves to use public rather than private transport and to restrict air travel whenever possible,
  - 3.7 through the establishment of an international fund of atmosphere solidarity supported by a tax on carbon dioxide emissions above the world average, to be used for the transfer to developing countries of technologies which are less harmful to the environment and to projects aimed at combatting deforestation and promoting reforestation,

- 3.8 through calling on corporations - public and private, national and international - to implement responsible environmental practices.
4. To call on our churches to lead in the indispensable reversal of the thinking which supports unlimited energy consumption and economic growth
- 4.1 through strengthening public acceptance for necessary measures in politics and economics to attain sustainable development,
- 4.2 through focussing on the ethical implications of setting longterm goals which will include an equitable quota of fossil fuel energy consumption for every world citizen,
- 4.3 through monitoring international negotiations regarding the Montreal Protocol (1987), the Helsinki meeting (1989) and the upcoming UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992) like the successful monitoring of the Helsinki Final Act (1975) on human rights,
- 4.4 through encouraging bilateral and multilateral development projects which include the full participation of those directly affected by the decision,
- 4.5 through educating our parishes and congregations by special programmes and radically reforming the life of our church communities, through conducting an ecological audit for the critical assessment of the design and use of church property, land and resources with an understanding of shared community life and the integrity of God's creation.

5. To commit ourselves personally to promote and facilitate the achievement of these goals
- 5.1 through our witness and lifestyle
- changing from private transport to public transport,
  - reducing travelling by air, whenever possible,
  - adopting living habits to reduce energy consumption,
- 5.2 through solidarity with those affected by climate change.

## 2. *Climate Change Negotiations*

Report of the Observers sent by the World Council of Churches to the Fourth Session of the International Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC4) in Geneva, December 9-20, 1991

1. Introduction
2. Overview
  - a) Summary of final results of INC4
  - b) Relations between developing and industrialized countries
  - c) Diversity among industrialized countries
  - d) Role of Non-Governmental Organizations
  - e) Role of The World Council of Churches (WCC)
3. Recommendations
  - a) Proposed Text of the World Climate Convention
    - specific targets and schedules
    - new additional and adequate funding for developing countries
  - b) Continued presence of WCC at INC sessions
  - c) Development of WCC Policy Statement on Climate Change
  - d) Working Session on Climate Change at WCC Ecumenical Gathering at UNCED to plan ecumenical strategies including

a possible project on ethical, moral and religious analysis of options for relations between industrialized and developing countries on climate change.

## 1. Introduction

From December 9-20, 1991, the 110 member countries of the United Nations met in Geneva in the 4th Session of the International Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC4). Previous sessions had been held in February (Washington), June (Geneva) and September (Nairobi). The task of INC4 was to continue the process of developing a World Climate Convention, an international treaty intended to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) and thereby lessen the potential of global warming. The hope is that a World Climate Convention will be negotiated in time for signing in June 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

The best available scientific evidence indicates that anthropogenic polluting gases (in particular, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide) are adding to the naturally occurring greenhouse effect in the atmosphere leading to increases in temperatures at the Earth's surface. Predicted consequences of such a warming trend include serious droughts in some regions, rising sea levels flooding many low-lying areas, and more frequent and severe storm activity. These climate changes would displace millions of people (environmental refugees), disrupt agricultural patterns in many regions, and produce wide-spread damage of sensitive ecosystems.

The global warming problem is related directly to the issue of sustainable development and the UNCED process. The overuse of natural resources and pollution by industrialized countries to feed their voracious appetite for energy and material consumption is the

main source of the emissions causing global warming. Strategies to tackle global warming must be focussed on the reduction of emissions. On the other hand, developing countries need to allow their people to attain a better quality of life. Those countries express strong concerns that international programmes dealing with global warming will impose restrictions on their ability to pursue further industrialized and developing nations about how to protect the global environment while allowing for sustainable economic development and justice for the poorer countries.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) views the issue of global warming not only as a serious threat to the well-being of God's whole Creation but also as an equity and justice issue since the problem is caused largely by the polluting lifestyle of industrialized countries while many of the most severe consequences will be experienced by the poorer developing nations. These convictions have been repeatedly expressed by the World Council of Churches - at the World Convocation on Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul (March 1990) and at the Assembly of the WCC in Canberra (1991). A special meeting of church representatives from industrialized countries conducted an intensive analysis of the issues involved (Gwatt, January 1991). The WCC has been following closely the negotiating process for a Climate Convention. The WCC has had observers at each of the sessions of the INC to provide a witness to the churches' concern about the impact of global warming on all of God's Creation: humanity, nature and future generations.

Documents related to climate change available from the WCC Sub-Unit on Church and Society include: *Now Is The Time* (World Convocation, Seoul, 1990), *The Churches' Role in Protecting the Earth's Atmosphere* (Report of Gwatt Consultation, January 1991), and a study paper *North/South and Global Warming: Toward an effective and equitable basis for negotiating climate change conventions and protocols*.

## 2. Overview

### a) Summary of Results of INC4

It is by no means certain that the INC will be successful in negotiating a World Climate Convention for UNCED in June 1992. Serious differences remain on some of the most critical issues in the Convention.

There was some progress made in moving from general discussion of concepts at previous sessions of the INC to debate on specific wording at INC4. The draft treaty is structured with sections for a preamble, a set of principles, an objective, general and specific commitments (on emission reduction, sinks, financial and technology transfers), and mechanisms for implementation and funding. There is agreement on some of the wording in these sections but a great deal remains bracketed, meaning consensus has not been reached.

In terms of what commitments countries should make, there is broad support for the concept of "common but differentiated responsibilities", i.e. all countries must be involved in global warming strategies though their approaches will vary greatly in relation to their responsibility for producing GHG emissions, their vulnerability to climate change impacts, and their economic status. However, when it comes to specific commitments to reduce emissions, the United States continues to oppose the proposal supported by almost all other countries that carbon dioxide emissions of industrialized countries be stabilized at 1990 levels by the year 2000. Unless the United States is prepared to drop their opposition to the inclusion of specific targets and schedules, the possibility of the INC producing an effective Convention is highly questionable. Although less detailed in their position, a number of other countries seemed to support the American opposition to targets and schedules including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

It is conceivable that the United States might demonstrate more flexibility under the glare of greater media attention and political pressure at INC5 which will be held in New York in February 1992 or at the Ministerial Meeting in April. Without such movement on the part of the U.S., the results will either be a very weakened compromise document or no Convention at all. Most other industrialized countries are likely to be reluctant to sign a Convention binding them to certain commitments if the massive American economy remains free of such restraints.

A second area of continuing disagreement is what mechanism should be used for the transfer of funds and technology to assist developing countries participate in response strategies related to climate change. Many industrialized countries support the use of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) which is a joint body of the World Bank, the UN Environment Programme and the UN Development Programme. One specific proposal discussed is to create a separate climate change fund under the GEF but make the decision-making process much more democratic than the GEF itself which is dominated by the donors as is the World Bank itself. There is a precedent for such a compromise in the Montreal Protocol Fund related to the depletion of the ozone level.

Most developing countries are very opposed to the use of the GEF as a framework for a climate fund. They are convinced that the World Bank's participation in the GEF dooms any chance for effective participation of developing countries in the decision-making regarding funding. The G-77 group of developing countries proposed alternate approaches at INC4 but no agreement could be reached.

#### b) Relation between developing and industrialized countries

The most serious divisions among countries occurred, not surprisingly, between industrialized and developing countries.

Developing nations stated forcefully and repeatedly, that the primary responsibility for global warming rests with industrialized countries because they have emitted over 80% of the GHG added to the atmosphere during the past 150 years, growing rich in the process. Though GHG emissions are increasing from developing countries, the discrepancy remains. At present rates, the U.S. population of 230 million is responsible for close to the same amount of GHG emissions as the 4 billion people living in developing countries.

Secondly, developing countries maintained that global warming must not be dealt with separately from development. Their involvement in strategies to control global warming cannot be made at the expense of their on-going attempts to eliminate the poverty in their countries. Full incremental costs for developing countries to participate in strategies related to global warming would need to be covered by new, additional and adequate funding from the industrialized countries.

The G-77 group of developing countries maintained a fairly unified position during the negotiations. China, India, Argentina and Brazil were particularly strong in articulating this consensus. Argentina and Brazil also explained a joint proposal of theirs for a funding mechanism to assist developing countries. Their suggestion is the creation of a fund directed toward sustainable development projects with the monies coming from a tax on consumption in industrialized countries particularly the use of fossil fuels.

The concerns of African countries closely reflected the principles enunciated in the "African Common Position on Environment and Development" adopted at a Ministerial Conference in November 1991. Of high priority in that document is the need to "alleviate constraints imposed by current international economic conditions and their debt burden" if African countries are to be able to pursue sustainable development and deal with ecological issues such as climate change.

The importance of these negotiations for developing nations was poignantly demonstrated by the departure half-way through of the delegate from the island state of Western Samoa. His country had just been hit by another severe tropical storm killing people and destroying 80% of this year's agricultural production. Storms of such intensity used to occur once every hundred years. However, they experienced one last year and another one now. Scientists have predicted that increased frequency and intensity of storm activity would be one of the consequences of climate change.

Most of the industrialized countries accepted the premise that they are the primary cause of global warming and have the responsibility for taking the leadership in reducing GHG emission. However, there were many specific issues on which there was considerable debate between industrialized and developing nations including:

- what, if any, commitments to address global warming should developing countries be expected to make;
- whether the right to development should be explicitly acknowledged as a principle in the Convention;
- what financial and technology transfer mechanisms should be included;
- the concept that GHG emissions from states should converge toward a common per capita level; because of the present vast difference in per capita emission levels, agreeing to such a seemingly sound ethical concept would mean a very dramatic reduction of emissions in industrialized nations and the flexibility for significant increases in emissions among developing countries.

### c) Diversity among the industrialized countries

The United States continued to be the industrialized country most vocally opposed to the inclusion in the Convention of specific targets and schedules for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. They maintained before such commitments could be undertaken, there was need for more scientific research and economic analysis of the implications of reduction strategies.

At the other end of the spectrum, the European Community (EC) particularly Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and the Scandinavian countries declared that they are prepared to make the most specific and far-reaching commitments to stabilize and reduce GHG emissions. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Japan affirmed the need for specific targets and schedules but fell somewhere in between the U.S. and the EC in terms of the actual commitments that they were prepared to undertake.

During a debate on specific commitments, Germany made the dramatic announcement that its Council of Ministers had, two days earlier, decided to reaffirm Germany's 1990 commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 25-30% from 1987 levels by the year 2005. Their delegate indicated that this decision was taken on the basis of a year of scientific, technical and economic analysis of the implications of their 1990 commitment. This presentation, coming immediately after the U.S. statement, undercut the American argument about the economic and technical impracticality of initiating significant emission reduction strategies.

The Norwegians and Germans also proposed interesting mechanisms whereby industrialized countries could gain further credit toward their reduction quotas through investments in developing countries intended to assist those nations reduce their own GHG emissions. Some of the developing countries expressed skepticism about these "joint implementation" proposals suspecting that such mechanisms would be used by some industrialized

countries to escape having to make significant reductions of their own emissions. Before the February meeting of INC5, Norway, the Netherlands and India will work together to develop more specific details about how such a plan could work without being abused by industrialized nations.

Throughout the negotiations, a few industrialized countries were regularly attempting to weaken the specific language through the regular insertion of such qualifying adjectives as "potential" and conversion of verbs from "will" to "may". On one occasion, the Committee was debating an introductory paragraph in the preamble which had been drafted to read:

Acknowledging that adverse change in the Earth's climate is a common concern of humankind since a sustainable climate is an essential condition that helps to sustain life, and that there is a differentiated responsibility of States in proportion to their contribution to the adverse effects of climate change.

In the debate on that paragraph, the Soviet Union wanted to delete the last seven words after "contribution", the United States asked for the dropping of the whole last phrase after "life", and Saudi Arabia wanted everything eliminated after "humankind" in the second line. Most other countries supported maintaining the full paragraph.

#### d) Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

There were about 30-40 participants from non-governmental organizations present during the negotiations representing primarily environmental and development groups. The World Council of Churches Monitoring Team was part of this NGO community. The NGOs met as a group at least once a day for information-sharing and strategy discussions.

Though not able to speak regularly in the negotiating sessions, the NGOs played a very important role discussing specific issues with country delegates, providing new analyses on global warming and emission reduction strategies, and circulating information that summarized and commented upon the negotiations.

The ECO Newsletter has been published by non-governmental environment groups at major international conferences since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. At INC4, daily publication of ECO provided the most public profile for the NGOs. Every morning piles of the 4 page newsletter would be snapped up by country delegates, NGO representatives, media and observers. ECO included reports and comments on the previous day's negotiations and analytic articles about issues coming up in the next few days. It provided a forum to advocate specific positions that NGOs felt important for inclusion in the Climate Convention. In addition to serving an important function at the negotiating sessions, ECO was also available to a worldwide audience through the APC computer networks. Every day it was put on the network and could be read and downloaded by interested groups so that they could get detailed, up-to-date information on the progress of the negotiations.

#### e) Role of the World Council of Churches

The WCC Monitoring Team is convinced that its presence at INC4 served a variety of useful purposes. Country delegates expressed surprise and appreciation that the churches are concerned about global warming. Of particular note is the relationship that has been established with the representative of the Holy See (Vatican) which participates in UN meetings with the status of a state. Extensive contact was also made by the WCC Monitoring Team with country delegates from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Greece and Switzerland and less intensive contact with other.

The witness of the churches was encouraging, and on occasion challenging, to the environment and development NGOs. The contacts established with country delegations and NGOs will have longer term benefits beyond this specific INC4.

Two issues of ECO carried articles written by the WCC Monitoring Team. In the first issue on the opening day, an article entitled "Churches Address Global Warming" described the history of involvement of the churches including reference to the October 1988 Consultation in Washington, the March 1990 World Convocation on Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation in Seoul, and the January 1991 Consultation of Churches from Northern Industrialized Countries in Gwatt, Switzerland. As a result of that article, numerous country delegates and NGOs made contact with the WCC Team and requested copies of the Gwatt Consultation Report and the WCC paper "North/South and Global Warming". Over 100 copies of each document were taken by delegates and NGOs.

On the Friday of the first week, the lead article on the first page was headlined "Churches Call for Specific Targets". In forceful language, the article called upon delegates not to disappoint their people who are looking for serious government action on global warming and sustainable development. In the article, the churches emphasized "the urgent need for industrialized countries to set specific targets and schedules to reduce their emission of greenhouse gases. Furthermore, churches believe international economic relations must be made more equitable for developing countries. Such changes are essential if those countries are to be able to pursue sustainable development strategies and respond to the problem of global warming."

### 3. Recommendations

#### a) Proposed Text of World Climate Convention

The WCC and Member Churches, especially in the industrialized countries, should emphasize publicly the need for a World Climate Convention based on real commitments by those countries. Both the WCC and the Churches should intervene with governments and insist on the need for commitments about emission reductions and financial support for developing countries. For the general public, the negotiating process is remote; little is known about the attitudes of the various countries. Churches can play an important role in pointing to the danger that humanity and the natural order will face if the opportunity for a Climate Change Convention at UNCED is missed. The WCC Executive Committee could possibly consider an open letter on this theme. In making such statements, the need for the following specific commitments should be emphasized:

#### i) Specific Targets and Schedules

The WCC and Member Churches with an interest in global warming should continue to encourage the national governments of industrialized countries to include in the Convention specific targets and schedules for reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. A minimum position should be to stabilize GHG emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000 and then start reducing emissions. A more progressive position related to carbon dioxide would be the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 20% from 1990 levels by the year 2000. The Seoul Convocation of the WCC (March 1990) and the Gwatt Consultation of Churches in Northern Industrialized Countries (January 1991) recommended a 3% annual reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by industrialized countries.

ii) New, Additional and Adequate Funding for Developing Countries

The WCC and Member Churches with an interest in global warming should press the national governments of industrialized countries to make commitments in the Convention, to provide funding to developing countries to assist them cover the full incremental costs for participating in strategies related to global warming. Such funding ought not to be a diversion from existing development monies committed by industrialized countries, but ought to be new and additional.

b) Continued Presence of the WCC at INC

The WCC should continue to have a presence at the Climate Negotiations, including INC5 in February 1992 in New York, and the anticipated Ministerial Meeting in April. The purposes of such a presence would include the continuity of witnessing the Churches' concern on global warming with country delegates, building further relationships with the NGO community, and compiling further information and analysis for the WCC as it develops a policy and programmes related to global warming.

c) Development of WCC Policy Statement on Climate Change

The WCC should initiate a process to develop a policy statement on climate change. A project has already been initiated to collect the various statements on climate change that have been issued by Churches around the world. The process of developing a WCC statement could include reviewing existing policy statements by Member Churches, preparing a draft using reflections from Monitoring Teams of INC sessions, soliciting input from Member Churches and NGOs particularly in developing countries, testing and revising the draft based on discussion at the WCC Ecumenical Gathering at UNCED in June 1992.

Subsequent to UNCED, the draft could be submitted to the appropriate WCC bodies for consideration.

d) Working Group on Climate Change at WCC Ecumenical Gathering at UNCED

The WCC should consider including in the Ecumenical Gathering at UNCED, an opportunity for a working group on climate change to hold at least four sessions. The working group would be made up of participants from Churches in developing and industrialized countries who have an interest in climate change. Its objectives could include:

- review, discussion and revision of the draft WCC Policy Statement on Climate Change.
- develop recommendations for WCC and Member Churches about programmes related to global warming (i.e. education strategies for Church Members, advocacy with governments, organizations, companies, etc.).
- establish a network of Churches from developing and industrialized countries interested in working cooperatively on the issue of global warming.

Planning for such a working group on climate change at the Ecumenical Gathering could be coordinated by the WCC Monitoring Team from INC4, supplemented by a few more members from developing countries including Brazil.

One of the longer term proposals that might be discussed by such a working group at UNCED is the idea of the WCC initiating a project which would examine from an ethical, moral and religious perspective a variety of options on how developing and industrialized countries might relate as they tackle global warming. For instance, developing countries have been pressing for an

agreement that strategies should be initiated that would allow per capita emission rates of countries to converge toward a common level. The concept has powerful moral weight. The industrialized countries have reacted with alarm recognizing the profound implications such a concept would have, if implemented.

The WCC could research and analyze from its own perspective this and other options for the relationships between developing and industrialized countries on climate changes. Strategies could include:

- requesting the writing of analytic papers by ethicists;
- organizing small working consultations;
- preparing resources that synthesize the finding;
- initiating dialogues with international organizations and national governments to share the Churches perspectives on these questions.

Such a project might be linked to the WCC study "Economy as a Matter of Faith".

## B. Roman Catholic Church

### *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation*

Message of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the World Day of Peace 1990

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#### II. The ecological crisis: a moral problem

6. Certain elements of today's ecological crisis reveal its moral character. First among these is the indiscriminate application of advances in science and technology. Many recent discoveries have brought undeniable benefits to humanity. Indeed, they demonstrate the nobility of the human vocation to participate responsibly in God's creative action in the world. Unfortunately, it is now clear that the application of these discoveries in the fields of industry and agriculture have produced harmful long-term effects. This has led to the painful realization that we cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations.

The gradual depletion of the ozone layer and the related "greenhouse effect" has now reached crisis proportions as a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs. Industrial waste, the burning of fossil fuels, unrestricted deforestation, the use of certain types of herbicides, coolants and propellants: all of these are known to harm the atmosphere and environment. The resulting meteorological and atmospheric changes range from damage to health to the possible future submersion of low-lying lands.

While in some cases the damage already done may well be irreversible, in many other cases it can still be halted. It is

necessary, however, that the entire human community - individuals, States and international bodies - take seriously the responsibility that is theirs.

...

9. The concepts of an ordered universe and a common heritage both point to the necessity of a more internationally coordinated approach to the management of the earth's goods. In many cases the effects of ecological problems transcend the borders of individual States; hence their solution cannot be found solely on the national level. Recently there have been some promising steps towards such international action, yet the existing mechanisms and bodies are clearly not adequate for the development of a comprehensive plan of action. Political obstacles, forms of exaggerated nationalism and economic interests - to mention only a few factors - impede international cooperation and long-term effective action.

The need for joint action on the international level does not lessen the responsibility of each individual State. Not only should each State join with others in implementing internationally accepted standards, but it should also make or facilitate necessary socio-economic adjustments within its own borders, giving special attention to the most vulnerable sectors of society. The State should also actively endeavour within its own territory to prevent destruction of the atmosphere and biosphere, by carefully monitoring, among other things, the impact of new technological or scientific advances. The State also has the responsibility of ensuring that its citizens are not exposed to dangerous pollutants or toxic wastes. The right to a safe environment is ever more insistently presented today as a right that must be included in an updated Charter of Human Rights.

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### C. Church Leaders of the United States and Canada

#### *Joint Statement on Global Warming and the World Climate Convention*

"Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war (International Conference on the Changing Atmosphere, June 1988, Toronto)."

We live in a global greenhouse. A delicate balance of naturally-occurring gases filters the sun, balances temperatures, and makes life possible on Earth. For a hundred years, the balance has been increasingly, and dangerously, skewed by greenhouse gas emissions produced by the energy-hungry lifestyle of the world's northern nations.

An international scientific consensus now exists that this accumulation of greenhouse gases is leading to global warming. The consequences of global warming will include droughts, rising sea levels, and more frequent and intense storm activity. Southern countries will experience the consequences of climate changes even more severely than the north.

North America is the main culprit. The United States is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in the world. Canada has the highest per capita rate of any industrialized country.

As church leaders, we ourselves have been slow to recognize the seriousness of the global warming problem. We now clearly see it as both an issue of spirituality and justice. Global warming threatens the well-being of God's whole Creation. Our poorer southern sisters

and brothers will suffer disproportionately from a crisis precipitated largely by the rich northern countries.

The international community of nations is now negotiating a treaty to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas. We hope this World Climate Convention will be ready to sign at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil this June. To be effective, the treaty will need to include a commitment by industrialized countries to specific targets and schedules for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. There will also need to be significant transfers of financial and technological resources to assist southern countries to continue development while participating in international strategies to address global warming.

Recognizing global warming as a moral issue, we stand together as church leaders from the United States and Canada in calling for action by both our countries.

The United States as the world's largest producer of global warming gases faces a special moral challenge. Other nations are ready to take action on this problem of global security. President Bush used his personal influence to help reduce global military tensions. We urge him to apply as he promised early in his term, the "White House" Effect to the "Greenhouse Effect". U.S. failure to act now will threaten not only the chance for a climate convention, but also future global environmental cooperation. The U.S. has become increasingly isolated from the rest of the industrialized world and the developing world by refusal to make meaningful commitments to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Climate negotiations are stalled. Time is running out. The next round of negotiations will be in New York during February. This issue is too important to our planet and to all who live on it to let these negotiations fail.

Failure to act now means that a climate convention will not be negotiated before the Earth Summit and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992.

The U.S. should take a leading role at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to promote signing by national governments of treaties and agreements that address issues critical to the environment and sustainable development.

We call upon the U.S. to make a commitment to the following:

1. The U.S. can and should set targets and timetables for the reduction of carbon dioxide. The U.S. Department of Energy's own analysis suggests that the U.S. could stabilize its carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000 at essentially no cost. We believe that a higher target such as a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by the year 2005 should be the U.S. target at this time. A recent study by the Union of Concerned Scientists concluded that increased use of renewable energy and energy efficiency and conservation could save U.S. consumers and businesses hundreds of billions of dollars while reducing U.S. carbon dioxide emissions by up to 70% over the next 40 years.
2. The U.S. should commit itself to transfer technologies for reducing greenhouse/global warming gases to other nations and to make them available to low-income persons in the United States.

Canada is the highest per capita producer of global greenhouse gases in the industrialized world. This joint meeting of Canadian and American church leaders welcomes Canada's commitments to stabilize its emissions of carbon dioxide at 1990 levels by the year 2000 and to the provision of new and additional financial resources for developing countries. But commitments are only effective if implemented.

1. Canada should prepare a comprehensive plan outlining strategies to meet that commitment of stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Furthermore, Canada should initiate plans to move beyond the stabilization commitment and agree to actual reductions of greenhouse gas emissions as some members of the European Community have done. An initial target should be a 20% reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 2005.

#### Joint Actions by U.S. and Canadian Churches

We confess that the churches are late in recognizing that the global environmental issues are moral issues. Our various denominations and national councils have already begun work on global warming, but greater coordination at continental level is needed.

As leaders in our ecumenical and denominational bodies, we continue to raise the issues of global environmental change as a key moral issue of our time. U.S. and Canadian religious leaders will meet in May with scientists, Congressional leaders, and Administration officials, including President Bush. We will seek a meeting with the Prime Minister Mulroney.

At the base of North American credibility on environmental issues will be steps to reduce our consumptive energy wasting practices. As church leaders we will renew our efforts to urge our members to see the challenges of these times not as something to be feared or regretted, but as an opportunity toward life abundant, full and free, for all humanity. We recognize the devastating ecological effects of our wasteful consumer lifestyle in North America. We will seek to convince our church members that life will be more abundant with less attention to material accumulation and more dependence on spiritual, intellectual and artistic resources.

We will continue to urge our legislatures to pass national legislation to reduce carbon dioxide output and set reduction targets for other greenhouse gases. This will require national energy policies which

place higher emphasis on energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy.

We commit ourselves to a teaching ministry that lifts up in the lives of our congregations and our nations a theology of caring for the present and future creation. We celebrate our belief that faith calls us to be neighbors to all life.

## Previous Publications in the same series

- Nr. 1 *Kommunitäten und evangelische Kirchen.* Bericht einer Tagung (April 1982, Nidelbad Rüsclikon), 1982, 32 p.
- Nr. 2 *Die orthodoxen Kirchen in der Schweiz.*  
Eine Übersicht 1983, 2. Aufl. 1984, 40 p.
- *Les Eglises Orthodoxes en Suisse.*  
Un aperçu (Translation of Nr. 2), 1985, 38 p.
- Nr. 3 Lukas Vischer: *Die ordinierten Dienste in der Kirche.* 12 Überlegungen zum Text der Kommission für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung über das Amt, 1984, 28 p., vergriffen
- Nr. 4 *Was bekennen die evangelischen Kirchen in der Schweiz?* Eine Übersicht über die Bekenntnisgrundlagen der evangelischen Kirchen, Freikirchen und Gemeinschaften in der Schweiz, 1987, 147p.
- Nr. 5 *Das Millennium der russisch-orthodoxen Kirche.* Eine Schwesterkirche feiert ihr tausendjähriges Bestehen, 1987, 60 p.
- Nr. 6 *Lessie Newbigin, Christliches Zeugnis in einer pluralistischen Gesellschaft,* 1988, 47 p.
- Nr. 7 Lukas Vischer: *...sie wissen nicht, was sie tun.* Neun biblische Betrachtungen über Gefolterte, Folterer und christliche Hoffnung, 1989, 62 p.
- Nr. 8 *Die syrisch-orthodoxe Kirche - ihre Geschichte und Herkunft - ihre Situation in der Schweiz,* mit Beiträgen von Reinhard Kuster, Hans-Urs Köppel u.a., 1989, 45 p.
- Nr. 9 *Rechte künftiger Generationen - Rechte der Natur.* Vorschlag zu einer Erweiterung der Allgemeinen Erklärung der Menschenrechte, 1990, 74 p.
- *Rights of Future Generations - Rights of Nature.* Proposal for enlarging the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1990, 68 p.
- Nr. 10 *Gefolterte, Folterer, Christliche Hoffnung.* Tagung der "Aktion der Christen für die Abschaffung der Folter" (ACAT) (26.-28. October in Basel), 1991, 133 p.

- Nr. 11 *Missionsland Schweiz,* Ein Gespräch unter evangelischen Christen, Berichte des I. und II. Evangelischen Forums (1988 u. 1990), 1991, 32 p.
- *La Suisse - terre de mission.* Un dialogue à l'intérieur du protestantisme. Rapports du 1er et du 2ème Forum protestant (1988 et 1990), 1991, 31 p.
- Nr. 12 *Christliches Zeugnis auf Taiwan,* 1991, 38 p.
- Nr. 13 *Christsein in der Schweiz - weltweit herausgefordert,* Anstöße aus den internationalen Versammlungen von San Antonio, Manila, Seoul und Canberra, 1992, 68 p.
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