

Faithful Solutions to Global Warming and Climate Change

1 WHEREAS the biblical tradition stresses the connection in covenant between the community of faith,
2 the created order, and the Creator, so much so that Paul explains that “For all creation waits with
3 eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Romans 8:19), and
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5 WHEREAS God calls us to *Care for Creation with Vision, Hope, and Justice* (1993 Evangelical
6 Lutheran Church in America social statement) in ways that protect the fruitfulness and viability of the
7 Earth and the sustainability of human communities, and
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9 WHEREAS James Hansen, chief environmental scientist for NASA, says that “We have at most ten
10 years...to alter fundamentally the trajectory of global greenhouse emissions,” that allowing such
11 emissions to grow at the current rate will result in “a far more desolate world”... “for all foreseeable
12 generations,” and that “our children, grandchildren, and many more generations will bear the
13 consequences of choices that we make in the next few years,”¹ and
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15 WHEREAS probable consequences of climate change include drastic changes in global weather
16 patterns with unpredictable impacts on both water supply and food production across the earth, and
17 the intensification of social dislocation of peoples and political strife between nations in an intensified
18 struggle for control of scarce resources; and
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20 WHEREAS there are practical solutions to the problem of global warming, therefore be it
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22 RESOLVED that the Minneapolis Area Synod Council in partnership with the Office of the Bishop
23 and in cooperation with Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota (LCPPM) train
24 professional staff to help prepare them for leading congregations, youth groups, and other ministries
25 in moral deliberation concerning global climate change and its impacts and solutions, and be it further
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27 RESOLVED that the Minneapolis Area Synod Partnership Table in cooperation with LCPPM and
28 Congregations Caring for Creation (C3MN) provide training to help congregation members address
29 global climate change in the personal, parish, and political contexts, and be it further
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31 RESOLVED that the Minneapolis Area Synod Partnership Table in cooperation with LCPPM and
32 C3MN form a local chapter of the Lutheran Earthkeeping Network of the synods, identifying contact
33 people within each conference to serve as a resource for congregations seeking to get involved, and
34 be it further
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36 RESOLVED that the staff of the Office of the Bishop direct Minneapolis Area Synod congregations
37 to resources so that when planning any building project, they may include environmentally-conscious
38 and sustainable designs, and maintain their facilities with renewable, recyclable, and
39 environmentally-friendly products, and be it further
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41 RESOLVED that the Office of the Bishop engage in public policy advocacy to significantly reduce
42 emissions that cause climate change in the following five sectors: homes, transportation, energy
43 production, commercial and industrial applications, and be it finally
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45 RESOLVED, that the 2007 Minneapolis Area Assembly memorialize the 2007 ELCA Churchwide
46 Assembly to direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to authorize production of materials and
47 development of strategies for environmental education, advocacy, and action throughout the ELCA.

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The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of this resolution.

¹ James Hansen, "The Threat to the Planet," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 53, Number 12, July 13, 2006. Available on-line at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19131>.

Background Information

Examples of steps to take for reducing emissions for the five sectors:

- Homes: use of high-efficiency furnaces and compact fluorescent light bulbs;
- Transportation: increasing automobile fuel efficiency standards;
- Energy production: increasing the production of electricity from renewable sources like wind;
- Commercial: use of waste heat for cogeneration; and
- Industrial applications: use of waste heat for cogeneration.

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Quotes:

A group of leading U.S. evangelicals, such as Rev. Rick Warren, Rev. Jim Ball, and Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr., in an open letter calling for legislative initiatives, said, "Millions of people could die in this century because of climate change, most of them our poorest global neighbors."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that unless urgent steps are taken to slow carbon emissions, the earth's average temperature will rise between 2.5 and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit during this century.

Britain's highly respected Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research in its September 2006 report noted that "The message is stark...The real challenge is making a radical shift within four years and driving down carbon intensity at an unprecedented nine percent a year for up to 20 years."

British economist Sir Nicholas Stern in a report commissioned by the British government, reports that the cost of curbing global warming amounts to about one percent of global gross domestic product forever.

Practical resources include:

- The American Institute of Architects' Committee on the Environment: www.aia-mn.org/COTE.cfm
- The Green Institute: www.greeninstitute.org
- U.S. Green Building Committee, Minnesota Chapter: www.usgbcmn.org
- Living Green Institute: www.livinggreen.org
- Lutheran Earthkeeping Network of the Synods: www.webofcreation.org/LENS/index.html
- Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota: www.lcppm.org
- Congregations Caring for Creation: www.c3mn.net
- Minnesota Environmental Partnership: www.mepartnership.org
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: <http://www.elca.org/stewardship/EarthKeeping/earthkeeping2.pdf>