



Declaration of Climate Emergency

**The Lord God took the human and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.
Genesis 2:15**

Moses adds, that the custody of the garden was given in charge to Adam, to show that we possess the things which God has committed to our hands, on the condition, that being content with a frugal and moderate use of them, we should take care of what shall remain. Let him who possesses a field, so partake of its yearly fruits, that he may not suffer the ground to be injured by his negligence; but let him endeavor to hand it down to posterity as he received it, or even better cultivated. Let him so feed on its fruits that he neither dissipates it by luxury, nor permits to be marred or ruined by neglect. Moreover, that this economy, and this diligence, with respect to those good things which God has given us to enjoy, may flourish among us; let everyone regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses. Then he will neither conduct himself dissolutely, nor corrupt by abuse those things which God requires to be preserved
– John Calvin, Commentary on Genesis 2:15

We are in the midst of a climate crisis. The planet's surface temperature has risen by about one degree Celsius since the late 19th century. Most of this warming has taken place in the last thirty-five years with the last five years being the warmest years on record. This has resulted in the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets decreasing in mass as well as clearly noticeable glacial retreats across the globe. Sea levels have risen about 8 inches with islands in the Pacific threatening to go under sea levels in the very near future.

There is clear consensus that this climate crisis is the result of human activity. It is the clear outcome of a global economic system that has placed profit over life and plundered the Earth. An economic system that has indulged the myth of unlimited growth has sought the exploitation of life as a means to the accumulation of wealth for the few through conquest, competition and chaos. In the Accra Confession (2004) the WCRC already declared: "Therefore, we reject the current world economic order imposed by global neoliberal capitalism ... which defy God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable and the whole of creation from the fullness of life. We reject any claim of economic, political and military empire which subverts God's sovereignty over life and acts contrary to God's just rule."

At the 2017 General Council, a decision was made to write to the G20 nations calling for adherence to the Paris agreement. The General Council in its statement lamented that "our destructive changes to the environment leave us in a teetering world where both drought and flood result in human climate refugees and extinctions of species".



A clear discernment of the signs of the times requires us to join in the call to declare a climate emergency. This is a call to repentance and a turning away from our death dealing ways and to a covenant for justice with the economy and the earth.

There is a need for radical and immediate action to start on our journey to resolve this climate emergency. The truth is that we are facing a human created crisis with catastrophic consequences both economically and environmentally. An emergency of this nature requires radical change and urgent steps to salvage what is left of the earth.

We call on our member churches and the wider ecumenical community to:

- Educate your congregations and communities and advocate for the care of God's creation through worship, study and ecumenical and systemically transformative political activism on the basis of the agreed rejection of imperial capitalism.
- To advocate and encourage sustainable living
- Use the occasion of the Season of Creation (Sept. 1 to October 4) to enter into a time of discernment, confession, witness and reformation over issues of Climate Crisis
- Join our inter-ecumenical initiative for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) that addresses the climate issue in the following years: 2019 will seek to address *Inequality* and *Climate Change* through addressing taxation and reparation, 2021 will address *De-Growth Challenges and Spiritualities* through addressing *lifestyles and alternatives*.
- Support and invest in renewable energy and other measures to combat climate change.
- Advocate for an end to global greenhouse emissions and move towards reaching net-zero carbon emissions
- Share resources and actions that are directed towards an economy of life and sustainable ecological life
- Address the challenges of inequality, poverty, war and conflict, water, food security and famine through specifically working with Climate migrants, advocating with national governments to end war, militarization and military spending and joining the Zacchaeus Campaign that calls for just taxation to address inequality and ecological debt.

The Time to act is NOW!

Najla Kassab
President

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