



## Church of the Brethren General Board

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# Resolution on Global Warming/Climate Change

March 10-13, 2001

**WHEREAS** the church, as the people of God, is called to be environmentally responsible in caring for God's creation as God's gift; 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 renewal of creation; and

**WHEREAS** our vastly increased use of fossil fuels has the potential to bring about irreversible changes in the climate and immense suffering for the poor and for people living in the coastal areas around the world;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Church of the Brethren General Board, meeting in New Windsor, Maryland on March 10-13, 2001, affirm the following principles:

1. Human societies must learn to draw on energy sources in ways that do not damage ecosystems or compromise the capacity of the Earth to meet the needs of current or future generations;
2. The generation and use of energy must be determined primarily by the needs of all people for a good quality of life, placing priority on appropriate and accessible energy for the world's poor;
3. Compliance with international trade agreements should not be given precedence over compliance with international environmental agreements or prevent the US from adopting measures to reorient its energy policy;
4. Energy policy in the US be based on ethical principles of respect for and justice within the One Earth Community, focusing not on expanding supply through megaprojects but on managing the demand and development of renewable, alternative sources. Specifically, the US should:
  - move beyond its dependence on high carbon fossil fuels that produce emissions leading to climate change,
  - ratify the Kyoto Protocol under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,
  - concentrate on reducing carbon dioxide emissions within the US and not rely on mechanisms such as emission trading with other countries to meet our targets for emission reductions under international agreements,
  - reduce our reliance on nuclear power, a technology for which there are still unresolved problems such as the safe disposal or safe storage of high level waste of nuclear reactors,
  - manage demand through high priority on conservation and energy efficiency,
  - significantly increase research and development into such renewable energy sources as solar, wind, biomass, etc.,
  - support development and utilization of appropriate technologies for small-scale, decentralized energy systems, and
  - provide necessary support for individuals, families, and communities adversely affected by a transition away from fossil fuels, nuclear power, and large-scale hydro in order to allow for alternative economic development, retraining, relocation, etc.

As members of the Church of the Brethren, we are encouraged to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels; to build and renovate our homes, church facilities, and camp structures to be energy efficient; to initiate new programs of energy conservation and awareness; to use public transportation, carpooling, and teleconferencing to reduce fossil fuel consumption; to become ecologically aware by using diets and products that consume less energy in production, transportation, packaging, and use; to separate and recycle household goods and to reduce waste and toxic materials.

God redeems us to live in community with the created Earth. We will care for God's Earth in ways that are sustainable (Statement on Simple Life, 1996 Annual Conference minutes, p.#326).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Board ask staff to give priority to the issue of global warming/climate change; and provide models and educational resources for congregations, institutions, and members to study the issues; and take commensurate actions.

### **Church of the Brethren policy base for the resolution**

Ecology (Annual Conference, 1971)

Energy Crisis (General Board, 1973)

Concern on the Use of Energy and Resources (General Board 1975)

Justice and Nonviolence (Annual Conference, 1977)

Christian Lifestyle (Annual Conference, 1980)

A Quest for Order (Annual Conference 1987)

Global Warming and Atmospheric Degradation (General Board, 1991)

Creation: Called to Care (Annual Conference, 1991)

Simple Life (Annual Conference, 1996)

*\*From the Third Assessment Report (January 2001) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.*