

# Global Warming from a Religious Perspective

## What is global Warming and What Causes It?

Global warming is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere. Many renowned scientists have determined that the Earth's climate is indeed heating up due to human activities, and will continue to do so through this century. Carbon dioxide emissions and other heat-trapping gases are the main cause of global warming. The increase in carbon dioxide emissions comes from many sources, including:

- Burning fossil fuels for driving vehicles
- Clearing and cutting down forests
- Heating homes with oil and natural gas
- Using electricity from coal-fired plants



## Impacts of Climate Change

- 2005 was the hottest year on record since 1880, the earliest year for which records were available (Union of Concerned Scientists USA)
- The coral reefs in east Florida are dying because of rising ocean temperatures
- Rising temperatures in the Arctic are causing the permafrost—a thick layer of snow and ice—to melt, wreaking havoc on humans and the rest of the natural world
- Extreme weather events such as severe storms, hot temperatures, intense dry spells are more prevalent
- 160,000 people die each year due to the effects of global warming
- Insects that carry diseases such as malaria and west nile virus are spreading

## Why is Global Warming a Faith Issue?

- As Psalm 24 states, “the Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.” Humans do not own the Earth, but are called to care for it as a sacred trust. Global warming will hurt God’s creation.
- As God’s people we are “our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers” and are to attend to the well-being of our neighbors. Global warming will hurt God’s people.
- God requires us “to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly...” Because we of the industrialized nations created the increase of greenhouse gases, and because global warming will affect the world’s poorest communities with much more severity, we have a special responsibility to do something about it.

## What can we do, as people of faith, to curb global warming?

- Take responsibility for dealing with global warming in our own actions before expecting or demanding this of others.
- Planting a tree saves 2,000 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.
- Reduce our use of energy and items that require energy for production—Buying a hybrid car can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 16,000 lbs
- Help those in need improve their quality of life without using more energy from damaging sources
- Inform ourselves about public policy relating to global warming at the local, regional, national and international



National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program, 110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 108,  
Washington, DC 20002, [www.nccecojustice.org](http://www.nccecojustice.org)