



Interfaith Power & Light

A Religious Response to Global Warming

‘Let Everything that Breathes ...’

A sermon by Kirk Nave

Delivered at River Road United Methodist Church, Richmond VA

April 29, 2007

Scriptural references: Job 12:7-10; Psalm 148; Psalm 150

What’s our place in the world?

Genesis 1:27-31

27So God created humankind* in his image,

in the image of God he created them;* male and female he created them.

28God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the

earth.’ 29God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you

shall have them for food. 30And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was

so. 31God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

God has given creation to us, and we are stewards of creation. It is given to us to enjoy, but if we abuse it, it will be gone.

Illus. Maggie and the Otter

Only 2400 remain along the North American Pacific Coast- humans have changed their habitat.

What do you love about creation?

What’s your favorite “God moment” in experiencing creation. Where have you unquestionably known that there is a God just by looking at God’s handiwork?

Illus. after Mama’s funeral- the snow on the blue ridge as the sun set in the SW- the alternating white/black on the ridges.

These are moments when you understand the psalm: “Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.” All creation speaks of God’s glory every moment of everyday. Just walk through your neighborhood in the morning with an attentive ear, and you will hear God’s creatures.

Illus. moonrise over the ocean at Whalebone Junction- I was so small and yet, held in the palm of God’s hand.

A Campaign of The Regeneration Project

220 Montgomery Street, Suite 450, San Francisco, CA 94104

Phone 415-561-4891 • Fax 415-561-4892 • Web www.InterfaithPowerandLight.org

The outer banks have traditionally been Virginia's vacation spot of choice. Which brings us to the issue of global warming.

Define global warming

Increase in the global average surface temperature resulting from enhancement of the greenhouse effect, primarily by air pollution. In 2001 the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that by 2100 global average surface temperatures would increase 2.5 to 10.4 °F (1.4 to 5.8 °C), depending on a range of scenarios for greenhouse gas emissions. Many scientists predict that such an increase would cause polar ice caps and mountain glaciers to melt rapidly, significantly raising the levels of coastal waters, and would produce new patterns and extremes of drought and rainfall, seriously disrupting food production in certain regions. Other scientists maintain that such predictions are overstated. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

"The science," says Christine Todd Whitman, former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (epa), "now is getting to the point where it's pretty hard to deny." Indeed it is. Atmospheric levels of CO₂ were 379 parts per million (p.p.m.) in 2005, higher than at any time in the past 650,000 years. Of the 12 warmest years on record, 11 occurred between 1995 and 2006. (Time Magazine, March 29, 2007)

The earth is getting warmer. Is that a bad thing? Well, yes. Severe, famine-causing droughts, more frequent and more powerful hurricanes. One of the scariest things, which has already begun, is that the polar ice caps are melting. You may have seen pictures of polar bears in the artic, drowning because the ice is melting beneath their paws. As ice melts, the entire quantity of ice joins with the ocean. That means that ocean levels will rise. The real problems with that is that the enormous amount of frozen water contained in glaciers and on land in the Antarctic will flow into the ocean, making the ocean rise much higher. Some predictions are that the ocean will rise about 7-23 inches feet in the next century or so (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report). The rise of the ocean, combined with an increase in the frequency of major storms, will cause major destruction in coastal areas.

Since most of us don't really become aware of issues like this until they affect us...

Say goodbye to our beach houses on the outer banks of North Carolina. Say goodbye to our riverfront properties. And because more than 2 thirds of the world's large cities are built around harbors, 634 million people will have to be relocated (AP report in Times-Dispatch of March 27, 2007). Say goodbye to much of Manhattan, L.A., Shanghai and Hong Kong. Much of China's economic success will be at risk. The levees currently being reconstructed to protect the city of New Orleans will be useless.

It's a stark portrait of the future. In doing my research for today, I wanted to hear where the controversy is about global warming. What I found in reputable publications was that there is no controversy over whether or not global warming is real. The theory was advanced over a hundred years ago. The research shows that we have already raised the average temperature of the planet about 1 degree. Since the IPCC's first report in the 90's, they have produced two more reports- 2,000 scientists confirming- now more accurately how our industry and consumer habits are changing our environment.

Where scientists differ seems to be over how fast it will occur.

Ceteris paribus

Compare with economic predictions about the price of gasoline. When I started driving

in 1976, the price of gas was about \$1.50 per gallon. Economists were predicting that gas prices would rise to around \$5.00 per gallon in the next decade or so. It didn't happen. It's not that they weren't correct, but we have done some things that have altered that ceteris paribus rule. We have significantly improved gas mileage since then. Improvements have been made in the discovery of oil resources and in the production of oil. We are using other types of fuel to produce energy.

You and I are the factor that must change the predictor models.

We do not have to be resigned to the flooding of coastal areas.

Go back to the beginning.

Praise the Lord with the carpool

Praise the Lord with the walk or the bicycle

Praise the Lord with using public transportation

Praise the Lord by using less fertilizers and herbicides

Praise the Lord by turning off the light switch

Praise the Lord by planting trees

Praise the Lord with compact fluorescent light bulbs

Praise the Lord with support for developing alternative sources of energy

Let everything that breathes, be allowed to breathe easier, and continue to praise the Lord.

Job 12:7-10

7'But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

8ask the plants of the earth,* and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

9Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?

10In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.

Psalms 148

Praise for God's Universal Glory

1Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

2Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

3Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

4Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

5Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

6He established them for ever and ever;

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.*

7Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea monsters and all deeps,

8fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

9Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

10Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

11Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

12Young men and women alike, old and young together!

13Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

14He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are

A Campaign of The Regeneration Project

220 Montgomery Street, Suite 450, San Francisco, CA 94104

Phone 415-561-4891 • Fax 415-561-4892 • Web www.InterfaithPowerandLight.org

close to him.
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150

Praise for God's Surpassing Greatness

1 Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!*

2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

3 Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

5 Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!