

210th Annual Meeting
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ
October 16 and 17, 2009
DCU Center and Hilton Garden Hotel
Worcester

**Resolution to Reverse Climate Change and Protect God's
Creation**

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Submitted by the Commission for Mission and Justice Ministries of the MACUCC at the request of the Environmental Ministries Committee.

The Bible begins with the creation stories in Genesis ---God calls all of creation good and shows us that the earth, air, sea, land and all of life upon them are sacred and loved by God. The Bible is also filled with invitations, calls and commands “to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8), “to love our neighbors as ourselves” (Luke 10:27), and to create a just and loving society for all of God’s beloved.

Whereas: the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference has, over its 209 year history, demonstrated a deep commitment to advocating for the poor and oppressed, creating a just and loving society and extending justice and protection to all of Creation, including the very least among us; and

Whereas: A growing number of scientists, research institutions and governmental agencies (including the U.S. Army, the United Nations, the World Bank and 2,700 experts worldwide) warn that failure to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation and other contributors to global climate change risks causing the “collapse of civilization”¹; and

Whereas: This collapse would include loss of life, water and food supplies, agricultural productivity², homes and communities; devastation of coastal areas that include 196 of the world’s cities with populations over 1 million³; loss of many complex and ecologically essential ecosystems and species⁴; loss of health, jobs, transportation, infrastructure and the economic well-being and security for much of the world⁵; and

Whereas: Scientists have documented that to retain a world similar to what human beings have known for the past 10,000 years we must reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from our current level of 390 parts per million to below 350 parts per million as soon as possible, and that to achieve this level requires reductions in emissions in the range of 90% by 2050 in order to achieve the 350 ppm goal no later than 2100⁶;

Whereas: Research suggests that it is within human technological and social potential to provide energy for food, water, shelter and many goods and services for essential needs of the world’s current population by transitioning from wasteful, polluting technologies to high-efficiency and less consumptive alternatives⁷, decentralized energy and food production systems⁸, and safe, clean, renewable energy sources⁹;

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Whereas: The nations of the world are convening in Copenhagen in December, 2009, to negotiate a global climate protection treaty;

Whereas: Failure to act now will lead to even greater climate change with devastating impacts on all people, especially the poor, and ecosystems; and

Whereas: Japan and the European Union have pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25-30% below 1990 levels by 2020 if the nations of the world make substantial commitments¹⁰;

Therefore, be it further resolved that the 210th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ calls upon congregations and members:

- a) to sign the Interfaith Call for 350 (www.350.org/interfaithcall) and share it with other communities of faith, and
- b) to organize or participate in the global day of witness on or around October 24, 2009 (www.350.org), and
- c) to continue to educate themselves and their communities on these issues; and
- d) to take action, individually and institutionally, to reduce their carbon footprint; and

Be it further resolved that the 210th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ recommend that the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Conference to register with 350.org this Annual Meeting's endorsement of the goal of 350 parts per million; and

Be it further resolved that the 210th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ calls upon local churches, Associations, and the Board of Directors of the Conference to urge our elected leaders to commit to energy policies that:

- a) reduce emissions of greenhouse gases with the goal of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere below 350 parts per million; and
- b) immediately adopt the practical goal of cutting emissions by 25% by 2020; and

Be it further resolved that the 210th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ invites Christian communities worldwide to join together to call upon all governments to commit to a climate treaty in Copenhagen, in December, 2009, that will bring the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere back down to 350 parts per million, and do so in ways that ensure safe, clean, renewable, and sustainable forms of energy production, end large-scale deforestation and increasing reforestation, transition to high-efficiency technologies, and include access by the poor to affordable, low-carbon, environmentally-sustainable and just energy sources and food supplies.

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End notes

¹ 2009 *State of the Future* report, by Jerome C. Glenn, Theodore J. Gordon, and Elizabeth Florescu, **The Millennium Project, August, 2009**, <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/sof2009.html>. **London Independent, July 12, 2009**, “The planet's future: Climate change 'will cause civilisation to collapse’”, www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/the-planets-future-climate-change-will-cause-civilisation-to-collapse-1742759.html

² Food & Agriculture Organization of the U.N.: “High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy”, www.fao.org/foodclimate/hlc-home/en/. “**Asian Development Bank: Climate Change Threatens Water, Food Security of 1.6 Billion South Asians**”, www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2009/12973-south-asian-climates-changes. “**Climate-induced food crisis seen by 2100**”, *World Science*, Jan. 10, 2009, www.world-science.net/othernews/090107_climate.htm

³ Calculated by the Sustainability Institute, www.sustainer.org, using data from NOAA on Low Elevation Coastal Zones that are less than 10 meters (30 feet) above sea level. See: http://sos.noaa.gov/datasets/Ocean/sea_level.html

⁴ www.irreplaceablewild.org

⁵ **Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**, Core Writing Team, Pachauri, R.K. and Reisinger, A. (Eds.), IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland. pp 104. Web link: to **The IPCC 4th Assessment Report** – the latest report by the Nobel-prize winning United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, supported by the world's leading climatologists: www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm

⁶ Hansen, James, et al. **Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim?** Submitted April 7, 2008. NASA climate scientist James Hansen's paper about the 350ppm target. <http://arxiv.org/abs/0804.1126> and <http://arxiv.org/abs/0804.1135v3>

⁷ “Toward a 2,000 Watt Society” and “1-ton CO₂ Society” Swiss Council of the Federal Institute of Technology, <http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/2000-watt-society/>

⁸ McKibben, Bill, “Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future, Henry Holt & Co., 2007. Also: www.postcarbon.org/ and www.transitionus.org

⁹ “Wind, water and sun beat other energy alternatives, study finds”, Dr. Michael Jacobson, Stanford University, <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/january7/power-010709.html> and <http://www.rsc.org/Publishing/Journals/EE/article.asp?doi=b809990c>. Also: Energy [R]evolution: A Sustainable World Energy Outlook, www.energyblueprint.info.

¹⁰ Japan has pledged to aim to cut emissions by 25% by 2020 compared with 1990 levels. The European Union has promised a 20% cut in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020, compared with 1990 levels. It has said that the target will be increased to 30% if there is a satisfactory international agreement. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8142342.stm>