

The Prophetic Voice of the Orthodox Church

In 1989 His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch +Dimitrios declared that humanity's abuse of the creation was leading the world into "apocalyptic self-destruction."

Since that time a stream of commentary has poured forth from across the spectrum of Orthodox churches on the critical importance of restoring humanity's right relationship to God's creation.

Despite the harmony of voices from Orthodox patriarchs, many clergy and parish members still do not hear the message of Christian responsibility for the earth. When failures of this sort arise, parish members fail to hear the voice of the Church. Then, the institutional administration of Christianity abrogates its duty to discern truth regarding the conditions of the world.

Let us then pay close attention to their words which follow this chapter introduction. They guide and direct us into a vigorous engagement with all that is tearing down the integrity of creation and they urge us into a lifestyle that is Christian and healing, transforming and soul saving.

HAH Ecumenical Patriarch DIMITRIOS I
Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



The abuse by contemporary man of his privileged position in creation and the Creator's order "to have dominion over the earth" (Gen. 1.28) has already led the world to the edge of apocalyptic self-destruction, either in the form of natural pollution which is dangerous for all living beings, or in the form of the extinction of many species of the animal and plant world, or in other forms.

Scientists and other men of learning warn us of the danger, and speak of phenomena which are threatening the life of our planet, such as the "greenhouse phenomena" whose first indications have already been noted.

In view of this situation, the Church of Christ cannot remain unmoved. It constitutes a fundamental dogma of faith that the world was created by God the Father, who is confessed in the Creed to be "Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible."

[Encyclical Letter Proclaiming the Day of Protection of the Environment](#)

September 1, 1989



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Our first task is to raise the consciousness of adults who most use the resources and gifts of the planet.

Ultimately, it is for our children that we must perceive our every action as having a direct effect upon the future of the environment....

We invite Orthodox Christians to engage in genuine repentance for the way in which we have behaved toward God, each other and the world....

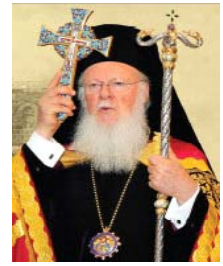
For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation... [to cause] changes in its climate... [or] injure others with disease..., for humans to contaminate the Earth's waters, land, air and life with poisonous substances, these things are sins.

Religion, Science and the Environment,
Santa Barbara, California,
November 8, 1997



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



The oceans are the earth's major shapers of climate.... But the health of the oceans and seas is severely threatened. We overfish. We pollute. We have nearly exhausted our seas. Once we were few and the sea seemed vast; but now we are exceedingly numerous, and yet the Baltic has not grown. Our species has harmed the life of this beautiful and once-bountiful sea.

What we do to the oceans, God's vast blue Creation, we do to God's other creations, including ourselves. Once we humans did not know that we could harm God's Creation. The oceans are in peril. They cannot protect themselves. But God has endowed humankind with knowledge to rectify our mistakes, and we are each given the choice of what we will do.

To harm them, even if we are ignorant of the harm, is to diminish His Creation. We can stop over-fishing and destructive fishing methods so that the miracle of the fishes will endure for future generations. We can stop pollution so that the seas can recover from poisoning and life-choking nutrients produced by our cities, farms and industries.

[Declaration on the World's Oceans](#)

Stockholm, Sweden,

June 7, 2003



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Climate change affects everyone. Unless we take radical and immediate measures to reduce emissions stemming from unsustainable – in fact unjustifiable – excesses in the demands of our lifestyle, the impact will be both alarming and imminent.

Climate change is much more than an issue of environmental preservation. Insofar as human-induced, it is a profoundly moral and spiritual problem. To persist in the current path of ecological destruction is not only folly. It is no less than suicidal, jeopardizing the diversity of the earth that we enjoy and share.

Moreover, climate change constitutes a matter of social and economic justice. Those who will be most directly and severely affected by climate change will be the poorer... nations as well as future generations (the world of our children, and of our children's children).

Statement on Climate Change,

August 12, 2005



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



If there is one message which we have heard during our symposium, it is this: “time is short.” The ice of the Arctic is shrinking at a frightening pace. If all the ice in Greenland melts, the consequences for Greenland and the world could be devastating: a Biblical catastrophe in the most literal sense. Some scientists tell us that we have [a short time] to limit the emission of greenhouse gases and hence limit the extent of global warming. Humanity does not have the luxury of quarreling over economic or racial or religious differences; it must act together, and it must act now.

As Orthodox Christians, we use the Greek word “*kairos*” to describe a moment which has eternal significance. When Our Lord Jesus Christ began his preaching, he declared that a decisive moment, a “*kairos*,” (Mark 1:14) had arrived in the relationship between God and mankind....

As individuals we are often conscious of a *kairos*, a moment when we make a choice that will affect our whole lives. For the human race as a whole, there is now a *kairos*, a decisive time in our relationship with God’s creation. We will either act in time to protect life on earth from the worst consequences of human folly, or we will fail to act. On behalf of all of us, allow me to offer up a public prayer: “May God grant us the wisdom to act in time.”

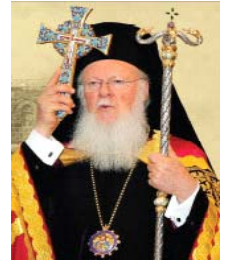
Symposium on the Arctic: “The Mirror of Life”

Narsarsuaq, Greenland

September 12, 2007



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Environmental scientists emphasize that climate change has the potential to disrupt and destroy the entire ecosystem, which sustains not only humans, but also the entire wondrous world of animals and plants.... The choices and actions of what is otherwise civilized modern man have led to this tragic situation, essentially comprising a moral and spiritual problem....

Especially disturbing is the fact that the poorest and most vulnerable members of the human family are being affected by environmental problems which they did not create.

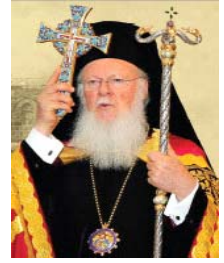
Beloved brothers and children in the Lord, we know this destruction actually comprises self-destruction. Therefore, we invite all of you, irrespective of position and profession, to remain faithful to a natural use of all God's creation, "offering thanks to the God, who created the world and granted everything to us." To Him is due all glory and power to the ages.

[The Day of Prayers for the Creation](#)
September 1, 2008



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Our hope and prayer has been that the various ecological initiatives developed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate would result in the parallel creation of “green parishes” and “green priests” throughout the world.

Foremost in our mind and heart has always been the transformation of our own church communities and Orthodox faithful, which has ironically proved to be the most difficult task to achieve.

What is needed in our parishes [is] our faithful to understand not only the theological and spiritual vision behind ecological awareness, but also the practical and tangible ways which can realistically be adopted by Orthodox Christians in larger and smaller parishes alike, in both more comfortable and struggling communities.

Foreword to “Greening the Orthodox Parish”

September 1, 2011



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Dear friends, if we do not live more simply, we cannot learn to share.
And if we do not learn to share, then how can we expect to survive?

Each of us is called to draw a distinction between what we want and what we need, or – more importantly – what the world needs. Greed and gratification reduce the world to a survival of the fittest; whereas generosity and gratitude transform the world into a community of sharing.

We are invited to pursue a way of sacrifice – not a sacrifice that is cheap, but a sacrifice that is costly. We must be prepared to make sacrifices – material and financial – that are genuine and even painful. And in this regard, whether we like it or not, more is demanded from the rich than from the poor.

[Keynote Address at the 2012 Halki Summit](#)

Halki Theological School

June 18, 2012



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



We know what needs to be done [to address global climate change] and we know how it must be done. Yet, despite the information at our disposal, unfortunately very little is done.

It will take no less than a high-profile crusade by religious leaders and civil society to force change among our political leaders. We must persistently remind our political leaders that there is no way of endlessly manipulating our environment that comes without cost or consequence.

There is no doubt in our mind that this is a movement as critically urgent and as morally imperative as any campaign for fundamental human and civil rights.

[Keynote Address at the 2012 Halki Summit](#)

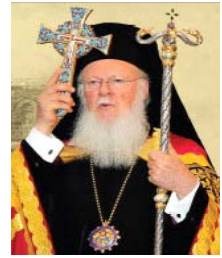
Halki Theological School

June 18, 2012



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Today, there is hardly a religious leader in the world who is not concerned about the challenges posed by pollution and climate change.

Discussion of climate change frequently focuses on political, economic, and technical issues.... The truth is that creation care is a profoundly religious, even spiritual matter.... Climate change is not just a theory; it is a stark and dangerous reality.

When we visit this pristine part of the planet, we cannot hide our eyes from the beauty of God’s creation or the changes which human folly has generated. Nor can we avoid pondering the terrible consequences for the future of the world.... In order to change what we see, we have to change how we see it. We have to change how we perceive and treat the world.

At a time when climatic emergencies are affecting hundreds of millions of people, we have no moral choice but to “bear one another’s burdens...”

Address Before the Assembly of the Arctic Circle

Reykjavik, Iceland

October 14, 2017



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



Climate change is an issue closely related to our model of economic development. An economy that ignores human beings inevitably leads to an exploitation of the natural environment. Nevertheless, we threaten humanity's existence and deplete nature's resources in the name of short-term profit and benefit.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has long highlighted the spiritual and moral roots of the ecological crisis.... Moreover, it has underlined the need for spiritual transformation of human beings and their attitude toward creation.... The destruction of the natural environment can only be reversed through a radical change of our perspective towards nature that results from a radical change of our self-understanding as human beings.

For the Orthodox Church, creation care — the preservation of nature and the protection of all people—emanates from the essence of our faith. Every Christian is called to be a steward, protector and 'priest' of creation.

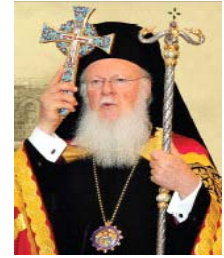
Dear friends, all of us are called to change the way that we consume in order to learn how to conserve for the sake of our planet and for the benefit of all its people.

Symposium Address: *Toward A Greener Attica*
Athens Acropolis Museum
June 5, 2018



HAH Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome



The greatest threat to our world is climate change and its destructive consequences for our survival on the planet....

Venerable hierarchs and beloved children in the Lord: The ecological culture of the Orthodox faith is the realization of its Eucharistic vision of creation, summarized and expressed in its church life and practice. This is the Orthodox Church's eternal message on ecology.

The Orthodox believer cannot remain indifferent to the ecological crisis. Creation care and environmental protection are the ramification and articulation of our Orthodox faith and Eucharistic ethos. Human beings are encouraged to act as stewards, protectors and 'priests' of creation....

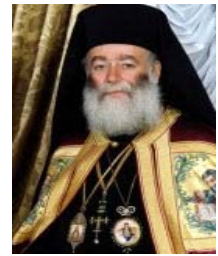
Adhering to this tradition, the Mother Church calls upon its Archdioceses and Metropolises, as well as its parishes and monasteries, to develop initiatives, coordinate projects, organize conferences and activities that foster environmental awareness and sensitivity, so that our faithful may realize that the protection of the natural environment is the spiritual responsibility of each and every one of us. Special attention must also be directed to the organization of Christ-centered educational programs for our youth in order to cultivate an ecological ethos.

Day of Prayer for the Creation
September 1, 2018



HB Patriarch Theodoros II

Pope of Alexandria and All Africa



As Christians we should find ways to work together to protect the Creation of God. Our Planet is the common residence for the whole of Humanity. The risk of our planet being changed into a dangerous hot-house constitutes a visible threat for all of us, like the plants of a hothouse which wither, dry-up and die, unless we take active steps today.

Only when man accepts the teaching of our Church, that God is the Creator of all things, can he love the whole of Creation and protect it. Man is invited by God to continue the work of creation, and to look after it, to care for it and push for its advancement to whatever protects it as far as its survival is concerned.

As Christians, we should respond to our responsibility to save our Planet. Thus we can honorably provide a united front in our peaceful battle for survival, which begins with the degree to which we are prepared to struggle for a reign of justice in the world as the only means which will lead us to in live God's real peace.

Man – The Custodian of Creation
International Ecumenical Conference
on Orthodox Spirituality,
Alexandria, Egypt,
September 8, 2012



HB Patriarch IGNATIUS IV

Primate, Antiochian Orthodox Church



We are beginning to realize that the suicide of humanity is a possibility, when we see disasters such as Chernobyl and the determination of the great financial organizations to destroy the forests of the Amazon....

Driven by asceticism and exorcism, Christians must call upon humanity to come together in a united effort for the safeguarding of the earth, and for its revitalization....

Yes, let us call humanity to a common task, drawn by the love of man as the image of God and of the universe as the creation of God. It will be a common task if all Christians take part and share their experience....

Christians will act by giving a cosmic dimension to their prayer, their hearing of the Word, their sacramental life, and their asceticism. Christians will act by example, showing the cultural, social and ecological richness of traditional ascetic values.... This will be a common task if, on the initiative of Christians, the two “spiritual hemispheres” of humanity meet and collaborate....

This joint effort of revitalization will provoke a spiritual revolution, the repercussions of which will gradually be inscribed in social and economic life. We shall find our dwelling place in Christ. For it is Christ Who unites heaven and earth, and it is the Church which in its depths is the world on its way to deification.

[The Responsibility of Christians](#)

Lecture to the Swiss Conference of Catholic Bishops
Lucerne, Switzerland,
March 12, 1989



HB Patriarch ALEXEY II of Moscow and All Russia
Primate, Russian Orthodox Church



THE HUMAN IS ON EARTH, NOT AS A STRANGER who came to receive profit, but as a careful owner who cultivates the earth for future generations and takes care, not only of his own profit, but also of the good of his neighbors and those far off.

Moreover, the care of protecting the Creation of God in all its beauty and harmony is not only our practical task but also a spiritual and religious duty, a fulfillment of the commandment of God and a trail of moral feeling.

We must understand the need to work together for the transfiguration of this wonderful piece of land, for the improvement of the condition of the Black Sea, the pearl of our planet....

Protecting the Creation of God

Yalta, Crimea,

September 24, 1997



HB Patriarch +ALEXEY II of Moscow and All-Russia Russian Orthodox Church



The Orthodox Church, aware of her responsibility for the fate of the world, is deeply concerned about the problems generated by contemporary civilization. Ecological problems occupy a prominent place among them. Today the face of the Earth has been distorted on a global scale.

The ecological balance is violated. All this happens against a background of unprecedented, unjustified growth of public consumption, especially in the most highly developed countries, where the search for wealth and luxury has become a norm of life. As a result, the entire Earth finds itself on the verge of global disaster.

The ecological crisis compels us to review our relations with the environment.... Solutions are to be found in the human heart, not in the economy, biology, technology or politics. Nature is transformed or dies, not by itself, but under the impact of man. Man's spiritual condition is decisive for it always exerts some influence upon the environment.

The Orthodox Church... calls people to intensive cooperation in actions to protect God's creation.... For a humanity blinded by sin, despite colossal technological resources, these cannot help, for, being indifferent to the meaning, mystery and wonder of life, these resources cannot be beneficial and sometimes are even detrimental....

The transformation of nature begins with the transformation of the heart and soul. According to Saint Maximos the Confessor, man can turn the earth into paradise only if he carries paradise within himself.

The Church and Ecological Problems:

The Declaration on the Social Policy
of the Russian Orthodox Church
Moscow, Russia, 2000



HB Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow and All-Russia

Primate, Russian Orthodox Church



All of humanity is responsible for the state of nature – God's creation. Resource depletion and environmental pollution amid rising world population raise this issue with special urgency to preserve the variety of life, the diligent use of natural resources and the prevention of environmental disasters provoked by human activities....

Clergy and laity are called to protect the environment. Only through restraint, respect for others and personal responsibility, based on the commandments of God, will humanity overcome its environmental problems.

Environmental programs can be... a component of the pastoral, missionary, and youth ministry. Monasteries and parishes find great potential for the practical implementation of the Orthodox approach to ecology....

The efforts to protect nature by the Russian Orthodox Church are open to co-operation with community, national and international institutions.... Of particular importance is the dialogue of the Church with the experts and policy makers on the strategy of urban, agricultural, and industrial development, and... deployment of clean technologies, alternative energy sources, conservation of natural systems....

In a dialogue with representatives of society, the Russian Orthodox Church considers it its duty to promote among the people... a sense of shared responsibility for the safety of God's creation.

[The Church and Ecological Problems](#)

Moscow, Russia

February 4, 2013



HB Patriarch TEOCTIST
Primate, Romanian Orthodox Church



A SPECIAL EMPHASIS must be put on the spiritual and religious aspect [for improving the environment]. One will meet ecological concerns from a religious point of view if one takes into account the words of Genesis which witness to the spirit of God in creation.

It is in this sense that the Romanian people emerged in history as a Christian people, understanding God as a Sun that sends out light, life and love, the uncreated energies, over the whole of creation....

Both God's transcendence beyond creation and his immanence in creation are very important for the efforts we make for preserving the integrity of the environment.

Comments on Ecological Concern

Constanta, Romania

September 25, 1997



HB PATRIARCH MAXIM

Primate, Bulgarian Orthodox Church



THE BULGARIAN COMMUNITY, whether represented by its state authorities... or its religious and cultural organizations, is conscious of its responsibility for the reduction and elimination of effluents that harm the Black Sea. ...

In our community the harmful exploitation of nature, the creation of God, is no longer tolerated. It is incumbent on us to use the material world which God has entrusted to us in a beneficial way [and] not to exploit it mercilessly.

We should hand it on to the generations that come after us, not as a wasteland, but enhanced and with a greater capacity for supporting life.

Varna, Bulgaria
September 26, 1997



His Holiness Pope Shenuda III

Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria



THE CREATION IS A LIVING GIFT FROM GOD TO ALL, a marvelous expression of divine love and wisdom.

Through the human encounter with nature, a realization of the divine becomes manifest. In our own personal life, the vast wilderness of the Egyptian desert and its beauty have long been a cherished place for prayer and contemplation.

The life of our Church not only encourages an appreciation of nature, but places a duty upon all people to protect the environment and to prevent its every increasing destruction.

The Creation as a Living Gift from God

Cairo, Egypt
2003



His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios

Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America



We are called and commanded from the Book of Genesis, where our respect toward creation is mandated in detail. This foundational scriptural emphasis led to our liturgical conviction that God, the Holy Spirit is “everywhere present and filling all things,” allowing for a vision of all things as being sanctified by God and inviting transfiguration by humankind....

We must maintain everything as stewards, and not misuse them as proprietors. Therefore, we embrace a world filled with God’s sacred presence.

The recent scientific report on climate change, issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC), raised a number of dire conclusions which we cannot ignore. These include unequivocal deductions concerning climate change in the form of global warming, rising sea levels, and melting ice sheets. The human influence on the climate system is evident from a variety of observations and analyses....

As I said some ten years ago: “The commitment of our Orthodox Church to protecting the environment must become a part of the local ministry of our parishes.” Our faithful must learn how to apply Orthodox theology and ecological principles to their lives. Bishops and clergy must teach them about the eucharistic and ascetic ethos of our Church tradition in order that our faithful may learn to give thanks to God for all things, while treating the earth’s resources respectfully and sensitively.

On Earth As It Is In Heaven

Saint Sophia’s Cathedral,

Washington, DC

November 11, 2013



His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios

Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America



Several studies outline the wide-ranging impacts that climate change will have. People living in already warm climates or coastal areas will be most vulnerable and are expected to bear the brunt of climate change impacts.

The long-term impacts of today's greenhouse gas emissions are clearly indicated in studies. Many of the changes we are witnessing today are essentially irrevocable. To quote the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report: "Most aspects of climate change will persist for many centuries even if emissions of carbon dioxide are stopped." ...

We must address the environmental priorities and needs in our own parishes and among our faithful. Alongside prayer, we can initiate education programs on all levels, from Sunday Schools to catechetical instruction as well as the preaching of sermons and the preparation of materials.

We must also embrace a more ascetic and simple way of life and share with "the least of our brothers and sisters." ... The commitment of our Orthodox Church to protecting the environment must become a part of the local ministry of our parishes.

On Earth As It Is In Heaven

Saint Sophia's Cathedral,
Washington, DC

November 11, 2013



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros

Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America



As Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has written: “Climate change affects everyone. Unless we take radical and immediate measures to reduce emissions stemming from unsustainable excesses in the demands of lifestyle, the impact will be immediate and alarming.”

Therefore, each parish and individual should seek out ways of practicing prayer and care for God’s creation by applying the principles of scripture, theology and tradition with regard to our relationship with the natural environment by considering changes in our attitudes and habits with regard to food and travel, by reducing consumption of fossil fuels and choosing alternative sources of energy with regard to lighting and heating, as well as by raising and promoting awareness with regard to the gifts of water and air.

Every parish and community is invited and encouraged to open a fruitful dialogue on this challenge of our generation.

Protocol No. 22/19, New York, NY
September 1, 2019

His Beatitude Archbishop ANASTASIOS

Albanian Orthodox Church



IT is important to cultivate the consciences of our people and the Church should become increasingly sensitive to issues of the environment. This will be challenging for the people in the Church, but I think that we have now begun the process....

One problem that we have identified [among parish members] is indifference towards God's creation. One of our tasks is to make the people who come to church more aware that this passive attitude or indifference toward ecological issues is wrong, and that they should become more appreciative of the integrity of creation; in other words, the integrity of God's work....

The fact is that there is already a sensitivity toward these issues among many lay people in the Church.

The Role of the Church in
Concerns for the Environment

Iraklion, Crete
November, 1995



HE Archbishop LAZAR

Serbian Orthodox Church in Canada



God gave man a clear responsibility for the condition of the earth. If Orthodox Christians are the most exact followers of God and His commandments, then Orthodox Christians have the greatest responsibility for their attitudes and actions with regard to the condition of the earth and its atmosphere.

One of the more pressing ecological problems of our day is the destruction of the ozone layer in our atmosphere.... Man is attacking and destroying something that God created especially to protect us – and Orthodox Christians are just as guilty as everyone else in this terrible sin.

What can we do? We can, and must, do our part in fighting this problem. If everyone leaves the action to “someone else,” then nobody will do anything, and we will be joining in a mass suicide caused by greed, selfishness and indifference. What can we do?

Remember, God entrusted the earth to our care. He did not give us a license to destroy it, but we are. Each one of us will have to give an account to God for our stewardship over His creation. To sin against the ecology of our earth is to sin against our neighbor and against all mankind. We will surely have to answer to God for that....

While most of us are aware of the ecological crisis around us, few of us realize that our Orthodox faith is profoundly concerned with ecology on the highest order. Indeed, if we actually tried to live our faith, we would be the foremost ecologists as well.

Living in the 20th Century

Chilliwack, British Columbia,
December, 1989



HE Metropolitan + NICHOLAS of Amissos

Primate, American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church



Orthodox Christians see the world as belonging to God, and under the stewardship of human persons. And we shall give an account for our stewardship. As human persons are redeemed from sin and brought to life in the light of God's love, so shall the world be set aright, even as the Apostle Paul writes (Romans 8:19-23).

Ecological sin is sin because it defaces God's creation, even as sin defaces the image of God granted to every human person. In fact, personal sin, in its most ontological sense, precedes ecological sin, even as intention precedes action.

The human person and the created world are inextricably intertwined, even dependent on one another. Since the first and ultimate purposes of humankind are to love (both God and our neighbor), then it is only in the context of this love that we shall be able to discover the ways and means to find healing for the natural world, as well as the proper, spiritual and eucharistic/meditative use of the created order.

There certainly is an Orthodox Christian ecological ethic.... This ethic is not optional for Orthodox faithful... for it proceeds directly from our doctrine. The Orthodox ecological ethic calls... the ecologist to pursue the spiritual life. [This] ethic testifies that the legacy of the ecological curse can be stopped [and] ...things put right when Christians thank God for every gift, and pray that its use may be true to grace. In this way... man can be a blessing, and not a curse.

Public Statement to the President
Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives
The White House,
Washington, DC
May 20, 2002



HE Metropolitan Serafim of Zimbabwe

Global Climate Change has been on the Orthodox Christian agenda for over twenty five years. Orthodox leaders have taken strong positions on climate change. Foremost among the voices describing climate change is His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. In Durban, South Africa, he declared climate change is much more than an environmental issue. “We are dealing with a profoundly moral and spiritual problem.” He asked leaders to contemplate the following challenges:

(i) A first challenge is to surmount national and regional concerns. Climate change is a global problem. Any solution demands the ability to think for the whole world.

(ii) The second challenge is sacrifice. Personal sacrifice is needed to arrive at a successful conclusion. When will we sense that the continent [of Africa] that has scarcely contributed to global warming is bearing the most repercussions, even though it is the least equipped to cope with its consequences?

(iii) A third challenge is moral leadership. Climate change presents an unprecedented threat to life on earth. We have already denounced ecological abuse as sin against God; we should recognize how it is also a crime against humanity....

The moral leadership required is to become the solutions we advocate. We invite you to make a personal commitment to transform... the details of daily life, especially in how we deal with energy and relate to the poor.

Global Climate Disruption

June 18, 2014

Alexandria, Egypt



HE Metropolitan Serafim of Zimbabwe

Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria
Director, The Orthodox Climate Office



Climate change is a result of greed, inequality and wanton destruction of God's Earth, the repercussions of which are felt by all, most especially by the poor.

We are in the midst of a climate emergency.... The world is nowhere near meeting emission reduction targets and the latest IPCC report highlights that "only with rapid and far-reaching" transitions in the world economy, on a scale and at a rate without historical precedent, can the 1.5° climate [goal] be achieved. It is therefore a time to reconcile ourselves with creation through concrete repentance and urgent action. ...

During this critical and trying time, we acknowledge ...this current crisis and affirm ourselves as prophetic witnesses. Jesus has given us a choice between God and mammon and for those who choose to obey, we have no choice but to pursue Justice (Micah 6:8).

Witnesses to Climate Emergency

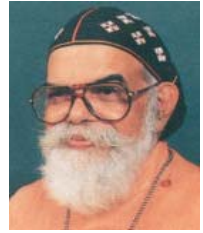
Harare, Zimbabwe

December 3, 2019



HE Metropolitan + Mar PAULOS GREGORIOS

Primate, Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church



An Orthodox Christian View of Nature

Christian Literature Society, Madras, India

1980

THE PARADOX IN OUR PRESENT ECOLOGICAL CRISIS [is] that humanity forms an intrinsic part of nature... Therefore, in the redemption of man, the redemption of nature is directly implied.

The concept of “nature” is alien to the Hebrew tradition.... The Hebrews had no concept of something “out there” which they were to be desacralizing and then dominating.

In the Old Testament tradition, nature is not conceived of as an entity to be dominated. The concept of nature as the non-human part of the universe is primarily Indo-Hellenic in origin and becomes prominent in an alienated society, that is, one which has lost its direct sense of dependence on and derivation from God. ...

“We now need charismatic communities cutting
across the borders of church and world...”

The affairs of the world are largely in the hands of people who are expert at making money, waging war, and playing politics. Our age is characterized by the absence of true charisma among the leadership of the nations and churches of the world. ... We know too that our vision of reality is defective because of too much reliance on science and technology.... Spiritual sight can be restored only with the return of moral health, and clearing the fog requires spiritual penetration. It is important that people begin talking about how the eyesight has been lost and what caused the fog. ...

The future does not promise charismatic leaders who will take us to our destination. It is more reasonable to hope for charismatic communities that pioneer the interests of humanity.... The Church of Jesus Christ is a community set within the human community. We need now charismatic communities cutting across the borders of church and world....



His Beatitude Paulose Mar Milithios

Primate, Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church



Climate change can seem complex..., [but] there are a wide variety of actions that [we] can take to make a difference.

World Environment Day is the day to give a human face to environmental issues; to empower people to become active agents of sustainable development; to promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues....

World Environment Day is also a popular event with colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, tree planting, and poster competition. The theme of this year's environment day is "Your Planet Needs You – Unite to Combat Climate Change!"

We in Kerala are worried about the sporadic rains in this season of heavy and incessant downpour. It is explicitly felt that the rhythm and the balance in nature is being disturbed. Although the issue of climate change can seem like a complex issue, there are a wide variety of simple actions that individuals and communities can take to make a difference. A few of the possible actions which we can employ are energy conservation, education programmes, planting trees, less use of petrol and diesel vehicles and recycling projects.

I exhort all Church members to unite to combat climate change and make this planet a commodious dwelling place for posterity.

Unite to Combat Climate Change

Delhi, India
March 22, 2010



HE Metropolitan John of Pergamon

Metropolitan Bishop of Pergamon,
Patriarchate of Constantinople



Every Person is a Priest of God's Creation.

In the Orthodox Church, behind whose tradition lie long battles against ancient Greco-Roman paganism, a spirituality involving a deep respect for nature is strongly conditioned by the view that nature acquires sacredness only in and through the human person. This gives humanity decisive importance and responsibility.

A human is the Priest of creation as he or she freely turns it into a vehicle of communion with God and fellow human beings. This means that material creation is not treated as a means of obtaining pleasure and happiness for the individual, but as a sacred gift from God which is meant to foster and promote communion with God and with others.

Such a 'liturgical' use of nature by human beings leads to forms of culture which are deeply respectful of the material world while keeping the human person at the center.

“Production and Consumption”
April, 1996