

Call to Restore the Creation
Excerpted from *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*
Adopted by the 202nd General Assembly (1990), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis.

- Abuse of nature and injustice to people place the future in grave jeopardy.
- Population triples in this century.
- Biological systems suffer diminished capacity to renew themselves.
- Finite minerals are mined and pumped as if inexhaustible.
- Peasants are forced onto marginal lands, and soil erodes.
- The rich-poor gap grows wider.
- Wastes and poisons exceed nature's capacity to absorb them.
- Greenhouse gases pose threat of global warming.

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

- respond to the cry of creation, human and non-human;
- engage in the effort to make the 1990s the "turnaround decade," not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God's creation; and
- draw upon all the resources of biblical faith and the Reformed tradition for empowerment and guidance in this adventure.

The church has powerful reason for engagement in restoring God's creation:

- God's works in creation are too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful, too good to be desecrated.
- Restoring creation is God's own work in our time, in which God comes both to judge and to restore.
- The Creator-Redeemer calls faithful people to become engaged with God in keeping and healing the creation, human and nonhuman.
- Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained.
- The love of neighbor, particularly "the least" of Christ's brothers and sisters, requires action to stop the poisoning, the erosion, the wastefulness that are causing suffering and death.
- The future of our children and their children and all who come after is at stake.
- In this critical time of transition to a new era, God's new doing may be discerned as a call to earth-keeping, to justice, and to community.

Therefore, the 202nd General Assembly affirms that:

- Response to God's call requires a new faithfulness, for which guidance may be found in norms that illuminate the contemporary meaning of God's steadfast love for the world.
- Earth-keeping today means insisting on sustainability—the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to

practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servant hood that we have in Jesus.

- Justice today requires participation, the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator's gifts for sustenance.
- Justice also means sufficiency, a standard upholding the claim of all to have enough—to be met through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end.
- Community in our time requires the nurture of solidarity, leading to steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies, and to the realization of the church's potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.

On the basis of these findings and affirmations the 202nd General Assembly (1990)

- recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level;
- understands this to be a new focus for initiative in mission program and a concern with major implications for infusion into theological work, evangelism, education, justice and peacemaking, worship and liturgy, public witness, global mission, and congregational service and action at the local community level;
- recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment, and which has profound implications for the life, work, and witness of Christian people and church agencies;
- approaches the task with covenant seriousness—"If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God . . . then you shall live" (Deut. 30:16)—and with practical awareness that cherishing God's creation enhances the ability of the church to achieve its other goals.