

## Excerpts of Faith Statements

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### *Islam*

*From the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change*

- ...He raised the heaven and established the balance  
 So that you would not transgress the balance.  
 Give just weight—do not skimp in the balance.  
 He laid out the earth for all living creatures...

So set your face firmly towards the (natural) Way  
 As a pure, natural believer  
 Allah's natural pattern on which He made mankind  
 There is no changing Allah's creation.  
 That is the true (natural) Way  
 But most people do not know it...

Do not strut arrogantly on the earth.  
 You will never split the earth  
 Nor will you ever rival the mountains' stature.

- We recognize that we are but a miniscule part of the divine order, yet within that order, we are exceptionally powerful beings, and have the responsibility to establish good and avert evil in every way we can. We also recognize that: we are but one of the multitude of living beings with whom we share the Earth; We have no right to oppress the rest of creation or cause it harm; Intelligence and conscience behoove us, as our faith commands, to treat all things with care and awe (*taqwa*) of their Creator, compassion (*rahmah*) and utmost good (*ihsan*).

### *Judaism*

*From 'A Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis'*

- As Jews, we ask the question whether the sources of traditional Jewish wisdom can offer guidance to our political efforts to prevent disaster and heal our relationship with the Earth. Our first and most basic wisdom is expressed in the Sh'ma and is underlined in the teaching that through Shekhinah the Divine presence dwells within as well as beyond the world. The Unity of all means not only that all life is interwoven, but also that an aspect of God's Self partakes in the interwovenness.

We acknowledge that for centuries, the attention of our people – driven into exile not only from our original land but made refugees from most lands thereafter so that they were bereft of physical or political connection and without any specific land – has turned away from this sense of interconnection of *adam* and *adamah*, toward the repair of social injustice. Because of this

history, we were so much pre-occupied with our own survival that we could not turn attention to the deeper crisis of which our tradition had always been aware.

But justice and earthiness cannot be disentangled. This is taught by our ancient texts – teaching that every seventh year be a Year of Release, *Shmittah*, *Shabbat Shabbaton*, in which there would be not only one year's release of Earth from overwork, but also one year's sharing by all in society of the Earth's freely growing abundance, and one year's release of debtors from their debts.

- The unity of justice and Earth-healing is also taught by our experience today: The worsening inequality of wealth, income, and political power has two direct impacts on the climate crisis. On the one hand, great Carbon Corporations not only make their enormous profits from wounding the Earth, but then use these profits to purchase elections and to fund fake science to prevent the public from acting to heal the wounds. On the other hand, the poor in America and around the globe are the first and the worst to suffer from the typhoons, floods, droughts, and diseases brought on by climate chaos.

So we call for a new sense of *eco-social justice* – a *tikkun olam* that includes *tikkun tevel*, the healing of our planet. We urge those who have been focusing on social justice to address the climate crisis, and those who have been focusing on the climate crisis to address social justice.

## ***Christianity***

*From Pope Francis' Encyclical on ecology, 'Laudato Si'*

- Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she groans in travail. We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

- The lack of physical contact and encounter, encouraged at times by the disintegration of our cities, can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality. At times, this attitude exists side by side with a “green” rhetoric. Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it much

integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

- The notion of the common good also extends to future generations. The global economic crises have made painfully obvious the detrimental effects of disregarding our common destiny, which cannot exclude those who come after us. We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity.

Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. Since the world has been given to us, we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.

- It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.

*From A Southern Baptist Declaration on Environment and Climate Change*

- God’s command to tend and keep the earth did not pass away with the fall of man; we are still responsible. Lack of concern and failure to act prudently on the part of Christ-followers reflects poorly to the rest of the world. Therefore, we humbly take responsibility for the damage that we have done to God’s cosmic revelation and pledge to take an unwavering stand to preserve and protect the creation over which we have been given responsibility by Almighty God Himself.

*From the Episcopal Church, Church of Sweden, and the ELCA—Sustaining Hope in the Face of Climate Change*

- We commit to being the voice and hands that will witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and build the moral and political will that prompts action from our elected leaders. As international churches with congregations in many nations, we can and will use our global networks to promote a political framework to limit climate change, while in a unified voice we speak to the world about the urgency of committed climate work. We commit to leading a conversion of epic scale, a metanoia, or communal spiritual movement away from sin and despair toward the renewal and healing of all creation.

## ***Buddhism***

*From The Time to Act is Now—A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change*

- There has never been a more important time in history to bring the resources of Buddhism to bear on behalf of all living beings. The four noble truths provide a framework for diagnosing our current situation and formulating appropriate guidelines—because the threats and disasters we face ultimately stem from the human mind, and therefore require profound changes within our minds. If personal suffering stems from craving and ignorance—from the three poisons of greed, ill will, and delusion—the same applies to the suffering that afflicts us on a collective scale. Our ecological emergency is a larger version of the perennial human predicament...
- From a Buddhist perspective, a sane and sustainable economy would be governed by the principle of sufficiency: the key to happiness is contentment rather than an ever-increasing abundance of goods. The compulsion to consume more and more is an expression of craving, the very thing the Buddha pinpointed as the root cause of suffering.

## ***Interfaith***

*From an Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change*

- The nurturing and respect for Life is a central doctrine of all faiths on Earth... The extraordinary delicacy of Nature's balance is becoming increasingly apparent, even as human actions inflict ever larger, more dangerous and potentially irreversible changes on the indivisible web of atmosphere, earth, ocean and life that is creation. Today our faiths stand united in their call to care for the Earth, and to protect the poor and the suffering. Strong action on climate change is imperative by the principles and traditions of our faiths and the collective compassion, wisdom, and leadership of humanity.
- We recognize that just as climate change presents us with great challenges, so too it offers great opportunities. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions can stimulate economies sustainably, protect our planet, lift up the poor, and unite to a common cause people threatened by a common danger. Assisting vulnerable communities and species to survive and adapt to climate change fulfills our calling to wisdom, mercy, and the highest of human moral and ethical values.

We commit ourselves to action- to changing our habits, our choices, and the way we see the world- to learning and teaching our families, friends, and faiths- to conserving the limited resources of our home, planet Earth, and preserving the climate conditions upon which life depends.

In this spirit, we call upon our leader, those of our faiths, and all people of Earth to accept the reality of the common danger we face, the imperative and responsibility for immediate and decisive action, and the opportunity to change.

## ***Baha'i***

*From: Shared Vision, Shared Volition: Choosing Our Global Future Together*

- Setting humanity on a more sustainable path to the future involves transformation in attitudes and actions. Reform of institutional structures will be critical, and indeed this is a central focus of those gathered at COP 21. Yet ultimately it is people, whatever their role or place in society, who implement the policies of a central administration or ignore them, who participate in well-conceived programs or continue patterns of life as before. We all have agency and none of our decisions are without consequence. Establishing sustainable patterns of individual and collective life will therefore require not only new technologies, but also a new consciousness in human beings, including a new conception of ourselves and our place in the world.

From where will this consciousness arise? And where will the volition and self-discipline needed to embody it in countless cities, towns, and villages be found? Qualities such as the capacity to sacrifice for the well-being of the whole, to trust and be trustworthy, to find contentment, to give freely and generously to others derive not from mere pragmatism or political expediency. Rather they arise from the deepest sources of human inspiration and motivation. In this, faith has shown itself to be key, whether in the efficacy of sustainability efforts or the capacity of the human race.