

Epistle on Global Warming

The earth is growing hotter as a result of choices we have made. The signs are all around us in rising yearly average temperatures, melting glaciers, expanding deserts, increasing rates of extinctions, and weather extremes. There is unity within the scientific community that this is serious, that it is caused by human activity, and that the consequences of a failure to address global warming will be catastrophic.

We have a small window of opportunity. Over the course of the next nine years, if humanity fails to significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions, the result is likely to be a sea level rise of 10 to 13 feet per century until the level stabilizes at 80 feet above today's level. Loss of productivity in ecosystems and crops worldwide will also occur, resulting in mass starvation.

We appeal to Friends to make this concern a priority in our families, communities, and meetings, and to commit ourselves to learn more about this urgent planetary crisis, so that each of us may discern further actions that will be required of us.

Some actions that we can recommend at this time include:

- Reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions by 10% in the coming year by cutting driving, flying, and residential energy use. Walk and bicycle more, use mass transit and fluorescent light bulbs.
- When we have cut our own use of fossil fuel, labor with others to help them do the same.
- Labor with our legislators and if that doesn't work, replace them.

We urge Friends as individuals and as meetings to engage the conversation and stay with it. Meetings should institute quarterly threshing sessions to discern how we are led corporately to act.

Some of the changes that concern us deeply we can not escape. But others we can if we act responsibly now and into the future. The consequences of not acting are unthinkable for us, our children, and our grandchildren.

Friends, we urge you to attend to our call. For the love of everything you hold most dear, please take up this concern now and carry it back to your meeting.

* Shared with Friends at the Concluding Meeting for Worship,
2006 Friends General Conference
Tacoma, July 7, 2006

Many references are available on this topic such as www.climatecrisis.org, www.pathsoflight.us/musing, and the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found at www.unep.ch/ipcc. This document can be found on www.LeavesofGrass.org.