

# The Interim

PLUS + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

Curriculum Supplement For Schools

**The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.**

Editor: Dan Di Rocco

Editorial Board: Dan Di Rocco

Design & Production: David Bolton

*The Interim Plus* is published Bi-Monthly by

*The Interim Publishing Company*

104 Bond St. Toronto, ON M5B 1X9

416-204-1687

interimplus@theinterim.com

March 2020: Volume 21 No. 2

Contents:

Climate change, faith and moral ethics	1
Editorial: Climate change is church's No. 1 pro-life issue	4
Climate and Population	5
Seizing the Opportunity: Redefining the challenge of climate change	
Initial Considerations of the Baha'i International Community	6
The Time to Act is Now	10
Joint Message	12
Presented for Consideration to the Convocation of Hindu	
Spiritual Leaders Parliament of the World's Religions	13
UK Professor: Only Way to Save Planet Is to 'Let Humans Become Extinct'	15

## Climate change, faith and moral ethics

It is important once again to state the complex nature of the climate change debate. A very good introduction to the topic is a book by William James Burroughs, *Climate Change: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (Cambridge, 2001). Although almost two decades old, the book holds up well in its analysis of the complexity of the discussions. In the Preface, Burroughs cautions that "We are all inclined to take climate for granted... It is all too easy to forget how much of this comfort depends on the fact that our buildings, food and energy supplies, health and transport systems and leisure activities are carefully designed to meet the challenges of the local climate. But, when extreme events occur, it becomes acutely apparent how vulnerable much of the infrastructure of society is to climatic fluctuations."

Burroughs helped explain that the increased interest in climate change stemmed from scholarly work drawing from information in "both instrumental records and documentary sources" as well as in examples of "environmental change, including tree rings, ice cores, pollen records and ocean sediments". He explains that there has been a growing understanding of the "mechanisms driving natural climate fluctuations", things like air and ocean currents and solar sunspots, radiance and irradiance of heat and cooling in the various layers of earth's atmosphere. Within this sophisticated natural flow there has been also a "growing realization... that recent climate change may well be at least partly the result of human activities. If this is the case, it has major implications for economic and social development".

Burroughs insists that "the first thing to get straight is that there is nothing simple about how climate changes". Rather, "from the outset it pays to appreciate that the behaviour of the Earth's climate is governed by a wide range of factors all of which are interlinked in an intricate web of physical processes." Part of the challenge is to determine which factors matter most, when they come into play and where and to what extent human activities have any influence on these large and yet delicate processes (climate variability, climate change, timescales involved, solar and terrestrial radiations and earth's energy balance, ocean currents, atmosphere-ocean interactions, etc.). In his conclusion, Burroughs restated the unpredictability of climate change and the need to take a "wide view" of what is happening, being neither overly gloomy or dismissive of possible harm. In his opinion, such a wide view may well "reinforce a sense of wonderment for the immensity and complexity of the Earth's climate". In summary, Burroughs takes a fairly objective, neutral view of climate change and whether there are practical approaches to be taken in mitigating potential harmful consequences of human activities.

But, inevitably, the topic of climate change/global warming (anthroponegically caused) takes on ethical dimensions. People on either side of the debate call on their religious faith and ethical belief systems to provide some guidance as to how they should respond to the increasingly popular and almost strident "call for action" to fight climate change. In this curriculum resource, we present some views of different religious faiths and try to indicate: what are their primary concerns; why they are concerned; what proposals they make to address the perceived problems; whether their recommendations are revolutionary in nature; and what may be obstacles in the way of their being adopted. The articles and statements are presented independently; and yet, one can't help but be struck by a common sense of absolute urgency and demand for immediate action that permeate them.

This site <http://fore.yale.edu/climate-change/articles-on-religion-and-climate-change/> lists many links to articles that deal with religious faiths' concern for the climate/environment under siege and rapidly deteriorating before our eyes.

The themes of these articles are wide-ranging from specific religious statements, political campaign platforms, employment



issues, pension investments, stock market performance, poverty and other economic considerations. The complexity of the problems and the issues related to climate change may even impact religious daily devotions and Lenten practices, education objectives, philosophical and cultural conflict, and migration of peoples. The list is quite comprehensive.

One must note that just as there are many points of view about the science and ramifications of perceived climate change/global warming on the part of scientists, economists, politicians, and ordinary people, likewise there is great diversity among religious groups and faiths. Not all agree or accept the views portrayed in most of the articles cited. For a variety of reasons, many people of deep religious faith have grave doubts or are outright dismissive of climate change/global warming claims. They are not only cautious but suspicious of the real motivation behind the claims and what the real end game is. Some critics, for example, see the whole climate change debate as a distraction at best or a devious scam to redistribute wealth among nations and bring about a totalitarian one world government. (See the article at the end of this resource dealing with a truly extreme view of an anti-natalist philosophy professor.) Needless to say these skeptics of climate change are very distrustful of efforts to impose a radical agenda and force a conformity of life style while placing restrictions on economic and political freedoms.

Here are a few samples of the websites and specific articles:

## News Articles Related to Pope Francis, Climate Change, and the Environment

**This search link itself yields many more individual articles dealing with the topic, mostly from a liberal theological approach.**

### Catechism will be updated to include ecological sins, pope says

By Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service  
*National Catholic Reporter*  
November 15, 2019

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/earthbeat/catechism-will-be-updated-include-ecological-sins-pope-says>  
[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)



*Papal Encyclical Laudato Si*  
"On Care for Our Common Home" May 24, 2015

### Climate Change Resource List

#### Georgetown University says it will divest from fossil fuel companies

By Susan Svrluga  
*Washington Post*  
February 6, 2020

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/02/06/georgetown-university-pledges-divest-fossil-fuel-companies/>

#### Preventing Climate Change Is a Human Rights Issue

By Andrew Gilmour  
*Bloomberg*  
February 2, 2020

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-02-02/preventing-climate-change-is-a-human-rights-issue>

#### Tu B'Shvat: Reforesting Earth to Heal Both Poverty & Climate

By Rabbi Gilah Langner  
*The Shalom Center*  
January 21, 2020

<https://theshalomcenter.org/tu-bshvat-reforesting-earth-heal-both-poverty-climate>

#### Goldman Sachs agreed to stop funding Arctic drilling. Will other banks join them?

By Bernadette Demientieff  
*The Guardian*  
January 3, 2020



<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/03/goldman-sachs-arctic-drilling-gwichin-banks>

## **Lessons for COP 26 from the Amazon Synod**

By Felicio Pontes Jr.  
*National Catholic Reporter*  
December 26, 2019

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/earthbeat/lessons-cop-26-amazon-synod>

## **Climate Policy Should Reflect the Resilience of Northern Indigenous Communities**

By Mylène Ratelle & Francis Paquette  
*Truthout*  
December 14, 2019

<https://truthout.org/articles/climate-policy-should-reflect-the-resilience-of-northern-indigenous-communities/>

## **Spreading the climate-gospel: The rise of ‘green churches’**

By James Clasper  
*Deutsche Welle*  
January 21, 2020

<https://www.dw.com/en/green-gospel-climate-change-church-religion/a-51929960>

## **Latin American Church Calls for ‘Incisive’ Action Against Climate Change**

By Thomas D. Williams, Ph.D.  
*Breitbart*  
December 9, 2019

<https://www.breitbart.com/environment/2019/12/09/latin-american-church-calls-for-incisive-action-against-climate-change/>

## **If Muslims Put Climate Change At The Centre Of Their Faith, We Can Make A Difference**

By Afzal Khan  
*Huffington Post*  
October 19, 2019

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/climate-change\\_uk\\_5da9a355e4b0e0f0378a5a21](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/climate-change_uk_5da9a355e4b0e0f0378a5a21)

## **Katharine Hayhoe reconciles Christianity and climate science**

By Peter Segall  
*Juneau Empire*  
September 14, 2019

<https://www.juneauempire.com/news/katharine-hayhoe-reconciles-christianity-and-climate-science/>

## **Faith pledges push global fossil fuel divestments over \$11 trillion**

By Brian Roewe  
*National Catholic Reporter*  
September 13, 2019

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/environment/faith-pledges-push-global-fossil-fuel-divestments-over-11-trillion>

## **Cultural preservation and climate justice**

By Nick Lunch  
*The Ecologist*  
July 18, 2019

<https://theecologist.org/2019/jul/18/cultural-preservation-and-climate-justice>

## **Indigenous researchers plant seeds of hope for health and climate**

By Kim Anderson  
*The Conversation*  
February 12, 2019

<http://fore.yale.edu/news/item/indigenous-researchers-plant-seeds-of-hope-for-health-and-climate/>

## **How Climate Change Is Driving Central American Migrants to the United States**

By Gus Bova  
*Texas Observer*  
December 8, 2018



<https://www.texasobserver.org/climate-change-migration-central-america-united-states/>

## **International Rights of Nature Tribunal in Bonn Finds Legal Systems Incapable of Preventing Climate Change and Protecting Nature**

Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature  
November 10, 2017

<https://therightsofnature.org/international-rights-of-nature-tribunal-in-bonn-finds-legal-systems-incapable-of-preventing-climate-change-and-protecting-nature/>

## **Climate change: The moral case for Christian action**

By Joseph Sapati Moeono-Kolio  
*Christian Today*  
July 19, 2018

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/climate-change-the-moral-case-for-christian-actionexecute1/130033.htm>

## **Politics, culture or theology? Why evangelicals back Trump on global warming**

By David Gibson  
*Religion News Service*  
June 9, 2017

<http://religionnews.com/2017/06/09/politics-culture-or-theology-why-evangelicals-back-trump-on-global-warming/>

## **Catholic Moral Traditions and Energy Ethics of the Twenty-First Century**

By Erin Lothes Biviano, David Cloutier, Elaine Padilla, Christiana Z. Peppard, and Jame Schaefer  
*Journal of Moral Theology*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2016):1-36.

[http://msmary.edu/College\\_of\\_liberal\\_arts/departments-of-theology/jmt-files/Energy%20Ethics.pdf](http://msmary.edu/College_of_liberal_arts/departments-of-theology/jmt-files/Energy%20Ethics.pdf)

## **Environmental challenges – a forceful argument for global citizenship**

*UN News Centre*  
May 31, 2016

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54091#.V0-rLOT6WCQ>

## **Faith & Climate Change: A guide to talking with the five major faiths**

*Climate Outreach*  
February 2016

<http://climateoutreach.org/download/7005/>

## **Editorial: Climate change is church's No. 1 pro-life issue**

May 20, 2014 ( a redacted version for the sake of space)  
by NCR Editorial Staff

.....The science, as it has developed, may not be perfect, but it is long past time that the question turn from whether human activity is causing climate change to what do we do about it. The Catholic church should become a major player in educating the public to the scientific data and in motivating people to act for change.



.....While the church has taken it on the chin for centuries-old condemnations of scientific truths, the reality today is that it stands uniquely in a position to not only aid the science but also to engage in the ethical discussions essential to any consideration of global warming.

If there is a certain wisdom in the pro-life assertion that other rights become meaningless if the right to life is not upheld, then it is reasonable to assert that the right to life has little meaning if the earth is destroyed to the point where life becomes unsustainable.

.....[climate change] is a human life issue of enormous proportions, and one in which the young should be

fully engaged. The Climate Assessment document as well as the recent discussion at the Vatican are excellent starting points for developing curricula materials for education programs in parishes and schools.

Catholic high schools and colleges have the freedom to explore these vital issues from both the scientific and ethical perspectives. They can bring theological perspectives to bear on the issues. Educators and students could devise ways to become active at all levels, from homes, to communities, to states, to advocating for legal measures to offset the effects of global warming.

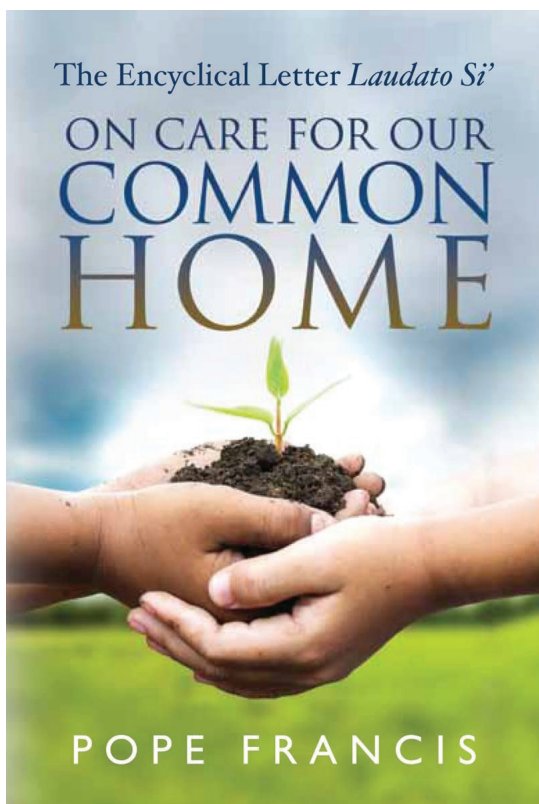
Finding a fix for climate change and its potentially disastrous consequences, particularly for the global poor, is not the work of a single discipline or a single group or a single political strategy. Its solution lies as much in people of faith as in scientific data, as much or more in a love for God's creation as it does in our instinct for self-preservation.

<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/teachings/climate-and-population>

## Climate and Population

The Holy Father and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recognize climate change as a moral issue that threatens creation, places added burdens on poor people, and compromises the common good of all. The Church also maintains that acceptable means to address climate change must meet the Church's standards of morality. These standards include official Church teaching that excludes abortion, artificial contraception, and/or sterilization, and which *forcefully reaffirm[s] the inviolability of human life at every stage and in every condition, the dignity of the person and the unique mission of the family, where one is trained in love of neighbor and respect for nature.* (Pope Benedict XVI, **2010 World Day of Peace Message, #12**)

Some individuals and organizations have called for population control and artificial means of family planning as a way to address climate change, arguing that fewer people on the planet would reduce the amount of climate-changing greenhouse gases. However, as Cardinal Justin Rigali pointed out in his 2009 Statement for Respect Life Sunday:



*As used by population control advocates, the innocuous term 'family planning' includes abortifacient contraceptives, sterilization, and manual vacuum aspiration abortions. He went on to conclude that, Death is not a solution to life's problems. Only those who are blind to the transcendent reality and meaning of human life could support killing human beings to mitigate economic, social or environmental problems.*

In order to act on the moral imperative to address on climate change, the Church is primarily focused on the lifestyles, industries and consumption habits of industrialized nations and their citizens as these are the primary drivers of climate change. For example, the average American's energy use leaves a carbon footprint that is 2,000 times larger and deeper than a person living in poverty in Africa. Additionally, 80 percent of global emissions come from just 20 percent of the world's population. Yet, as Pope Francis has observed:

*Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate . . . To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption. (Laudato Si', #50)*

This same sentiment was echoed by Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United States, in his address to Fiftieth Session of the Commission on Population and Develop-

ment: "While it is true that an unequal distribution of the population and of resources creates obstacles to development and a sustainable use of the environment, it must also be recognized that demographic growth is fully compatible with shared prosperity. Resources are sufficient, but they are often inefficiently used and improperly distributed. The developed world, with high levels of consumption and low levels of poverty, is often responsible for the imbalances in trade, the inequitable distribution of resources and environmental degradation." ([HolySeeMission.org](http://HolySeeMission.org))

As with other social concerns, the protection of human life and the promotion of human dignity are guiding principles that call us to action and provide a vital framework for discerning among options by which to address climate change.



## Questions

1. Can one be pro-life and pro-active to stop climate change?
2. Why are many climate change proponents seemingly also pro-choice when it comes to abortion and euthanasia and other life issues?
3. How does the editorial writer view pro-life and climate change?
4. Is there consistent logic in the position?
5. Why are churches actively involved in tackling this contentious issue?
6. How does the Catholic Church's position address the climate change challenge?
7. What are the moral problems associated with climate change?
8. How does the Church attempt to reconcile climate change and the pressures from population growth?
9. What does the Church reject as unacceptable solutions to the "problem"?

## Seizing the Opportunity: Redefining the challenge of climate change Initial Considerations of the Baha'i International Community

Poznan, Poland—1 December 2008

Once the domain of scientists and negotiators, the discourse on climate change has become a core part of informed debates about the future direction of the affairs of humankind. Authoritative assessments that global warming is "unequivocal" and directly linked to human activity; that it constitutes the "widest-ranging market failure ever seen"; and that it represents the "defining human development challenge of the 21st century" have seized the attention of governments and peoples alike. Yet the search for solutions to climate change has revealed the limits of traditional technological and policy approaches and has raised difficult questions about justice, equity, responsibility and obligation. As communities and policy-makers worldwide have wrestled with these questions, they have brought us all to the threshold of a tremendous opportunity. It is the opportunity to take the next step in the transition from a state-centered mode of interacting on the world stage to one rooted in the unity which connects us as the inhabitants of one biosphere, the citizens of one world and the members of one human civilization. The nature of this step, its significance and some of the means for its accomplishment are the focus of the Baha'i International Community's contribution to forging a path out of the climate change challenge.

Decades of research, advocacy and policy-making have provided a strong scientific basis for action on climate change, have raised public awareness and have provided norms and principles to guide decision-making. Building on this foundation, the governments of the world have embarked on a major negotiating effort aimed at charting the course of cooperative action on climate change. The negotiations focus on a shared vision for long-term cooperative action as well as a long-term global goal for emission reductions, which is to be met through mitigation of climate change, adaptation to its impacts and the mobilization of technological and financial resources. The process seeks to pave the way for an agreed outcome at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2009. As negotiations proceed to set the rules and establish the mechanisms that will determine how governments assist vulnerable countries and approach this global challenge, they will test the resolve of the international community to address comprehensively and justly the shared threat of climate change.

Yet, in the face of the destructive impacts of climate change - exacerbated by the extremes of wealth and poverty - a need for new approaches centered on the principles of justice and equity is apparent. A dynamic and burgeoning discourse on the ethical



dimensions of climate change has brought to the fore the role of ethical inquiry in overcoming some of the most difficult substantive and process-related challenges. The fundamental questions it seeks to address include: Who is responsible for the consequences of climate change?; Who should pay for the damages?; How should target levels of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere be determined?; What procedures will ensure fair representation in decision-making?; and, if nations have a responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, how do those responsibilities devolve onto the various units of government, organizations, individuals and non-state actors? The challenge before the world community, then, is not only a technical one but a moral one, which calls for the transformation of thoughts and behaviors so as to allow our economic and social structures to extend the benefits of development to all people.

To contribute to this important discourse, we assert that According to the Bahai statement what must become the primary principle. This principle does not seek to undermine national autonomy or suppress cultural or intellectual diversity. Rather, it makes it possible to view the climate change challenge through a new lens - one that perceives humanity as a unified whole, not unlike the cells of the human body, infinitely differentiated in form and function yet united in a common purpose which exceeds that of its component parts. This principle constitutes more than a call for cooperation; it seeks to remold anachronistic and unjust patterns of human interaction in a manner that reflects the relationships that bind us as members of one human race. The earnest consideration of the place of this principle in international relations should not be seen as an abstract exercise; it is precisely this level of analysis that must be undertaken and this level of commitment secured in order to forge a coherent ethic for the resolution of the climate change crisis. In order to progress beyond a world community driven by a largely economic and utilitarian calculus, to one of shared responsibility for the prosperity of all nations, such a principle must take root in the conscience of the individual. In this way, we come to recognize the broader human agenda - which subsumes those of climate change, poverty eradication, gender equality, development, and the like - and seeks to use both human and natural resources in a way that facilitates the progress and well-being of all people.

A response to climate change will require profound changes at the level of the individual, the community and the nations of the world. These will no doubt be informed by continuing progress in the arenas of science, technology, economics and policy. To complement the processes of change already underway, we consider the concrete ways in which the principle of the oneness of humanity could be operationalized at the above-mentioned levels and could serve to build momentum, support and intellectual capacity for more integrated and just approaches to the solution of the challenge before us.

### **The Individual Level: Engaging children and youth**



A fundamental component of resolving the climate change challenge will be the cultivation of values, attitudes and skills that give rise to just and sustainable patterns of human interaction with the environment. The engagement of children and youth will be particularly important as this population will be called upon to exercise leadership and address the dramatic and complex challenges of climate change in the decades to come. It is at a young age that new mind-sets and habits can be most effectively cultivated. The important role of education and

public awareness has been highlighted in the UNFCCC as well as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), which promotes the integration of “principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.”

In practical terms, this means that girls and boys must be afforded access to the same curricula, with priority given to the girl child who will one day assume the role of educating future generations. The curriculum itself must seek to develop in children the capacity to think in terms of systems, processes and relationships rather than in terms of isolated disciplines. Indeed, the problem of climate change has powerfully demonstrated the need for integrated and systemic approaches. Students must also be given the concrete skills to translate their awareness into action. This can be accomplished, in part, through incorporating an element of public service

into curricula, thereby helping students to develop the ability to initiate projects, to inspire action, to engage in collective decision-making and to cultivate their sense of dignity and self-worth. Overall, the curriculum should strive to integrate theoretical and practical considerations as well as to link notions of individual progress with service to the broader community.

### **The Community Level: Advancing gender equality and encouraging dialogue between science and religion**

On the community rests the challenge of providing the setting in which decision-making can occur peacefully and individual capabilities can be channeled through collective action. One of the most pervasive social challenges besetting communities around the world is the marginalization of girls and women - a condition further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. Around the world, women are largely responsible for securing food, water and energy for cooking and heating. Scarcity of resources arising from climate change intensifies the woman's burden and leaves less time to earn an income, attend school or care for the family. Moreover, natural disasters exact a heavier toll on women given their lack of access to information and resources, and, in some cases, their inability to swim, drive or even leave the house alone. It would be a mistake, however, to cast women as the victims or simply as under-resourced members of society; they represent perhaps the greatest source of untapped potential in the global effort to overcome the challenges of climate change. Their responsibilities in families, in communities, as farmers and as stewards of natural resources make them uniquely positioned to develop strategies for adapting to changing environmental conditions. Women's distinct knowledge and needs complement those of men, and must be duly considered in all arenas of community decision-making. It is in relationship and consultation with one another that the most effective strategies for mitigation and adaptation can be devised.

In light of this reality, the United Nations must give more attention to the gender dimensions of climate change. Neither the principal legal nor scientific framework guiding climate change negotiations - the UNFCCC and the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - makes reference to gender. To begin to remedy this situation, we call on the United Nations and member states to include a gender dimension in their response to climate change and in their ongoing and future negotiations of climate change agreements. As a starting point, a gender component could be included in national reports to the UNFCCC; the presence of gender experts on UNFCCC delegations would further strengthen the gender analysis. Efforts to give due attention to this critical dimension of climate change, however, cannot be limited to ad hoc measures. Instead, they must be reinforced by efforts to include and raise up the voices of women in all arenas of human endeavor so as to create the social conditions in which the most fruitful collaboration and innovation can take place.

Given their tremendous capacity to mobilize public opinion and their extensive reach in the most remote communities around the world, religious communities and their leaders bear an inescapable and weighty role in the climate change arena. By many measures, increasing numbers of religious communities are consistently lending their voice and resources to efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change - they are educating their constituencies, providing a scriptural basis for ethical action and leading or participating in efforts at the national and international levels. This role, however, must now unfold in the context of an emerging conversation - a rapprochement - between the discourses of science and religion. The time has come for the entrenched dichotomy between these two systems of knowledge to be earnestly re-examined. Both are needed to mobilize and direct human energies to the resolution of the problem at hand: methods of science facilitate a more objective and systematic approach to problem solving while religion concerns itself with those moral inclinations that motivate action for the common good. In an age yearning for justice and equality, religious doctrines will need to be carefully examined. Those that encourage social exclusion, passivity or inequality between the sexes will fail to engage the peoples of the world while qualities of justice, compassion, trustworthiness, humility and generosity - common to all religious traditions - will be even more urgently needed to forge the patterns of progressive community life.

### **The National and International Levels: Building foundations for cooperative action**

At a basic level, governments bear the responsibility of adhering to stated commitments and abiding by the rule of law. This level of commitment is essential for the cultivation of trust and relationship-building among nations, particularly as governments embark on the negotiation of a new global climate change agreement. Attention to the integrity of the negotiating process itself represents another important trust-building measure. Negotiations need to ensure that all stakeholders - both industrialized and developing economies representing mitigation and



adaptation concerns respectively - are included.

While it is acknowledged that any effective climate change policy needs to be rooted in a global perspective, even this enlargement of the sphere of responsibility has not sufficiently moved governments to act. This perspective must now evolve to reflect the essential connectedness and common fate of humanity that for too long has struggled against a worldview that emphasized sovereignty, ascendancy and competition. Efforts to reconceptualize sovereignty, from an absolute right to a responsibility, signal that a shift in consciousness towards greater degrees of global solidarity is already underway. To be sure, the solution to climate change exceeds the capacities and resources of any one nation and requires the full cooperation of all nations, each according to their means.

Governments now need to forge an agreement commensurate with the problem at hand and one which meets the needs of societies most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The agreement needs to put in place the requisite institutional frameworks as well as establish international mechanisms capable of mobilizing financial resources and accelerating innovation needed to transition to a low carbon society. The more economically developed nations need to display leadership consistent with their historic responsibility and economic capacity and commit to significant emission reductions. Developing nations, in a manner consistent with their capacities and development aspirations, must contribute through efforts to transition to cleaner development pathways. This is the time for leaders from all spheres of human endeavor to exercise their influence to identify solutions, which make it possible for mankind to address this challenge and, in so doing, chart a sustainable course to global prosperity.



Much has been said about the need for cooperation to solve a climate challenge that no nation or community can solve alone. The principle of the oneness of humankind presented in this statement seeks to move beyond utilitarian notions of cooperation to anchor the aspirations of individuals, communities and nations to those of the progress of humanity. In practical terms, it affirms that individual and national interests are best served in tandem with the progress of the whole. As children, women, men, religious and scientific communities as well as governments and international institutions converge on this reality, we will do more than achieve a collective response to the climate change crisis. We will usher in a new paradigm by means of which we can understand our purpose and responsibilities in an interconnected world; a new standard by which to evaluate human progress; and a mode of governance faithful to the ties that bind us as members of one human race.

<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/religious-statements-on-climate-change/>

the site contains links to statements made by various religions on the climate issue

## Questions

1. According to the Baha'i faith's statement on climate change how does the global challenge raise "difficult questions about justice, equity, responsibility and obligation"?
2. What opportunity does the "crisis" present to humanity?
3. What fundamental questions must be addressed as part of the process of stopping/fighting climate change?
4. Is the Baha'i approach revolutionary inasmuch as it calls for "the transformation of thoughts and behaviors"?
5. According to the Baha'i statement why must "the principle of the oneness of humankind become the ruling principle of international life"?
6. In what way is education to play an important role? How are gender inequalities to be addressed and how would that help in fighting climate change?
7. What can religious faiths and institutions contribute to the solutions?

8. According to the Baha'i statement what must happen on the level of international cooperation? How is national sovereignty to be "reconceptualized"?
9. Which nations are not likely to heed any of these recommendations calling for restriction of national sovereignty and a move toward the establishment of one world government" under the pretense of fighting climate change? What would be their justification for their position in favour of national sovereignty?

## The Time to Act is Now

A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change  
May 14, 2015

Today we live in a time of great crisis, confronted by the gravest challenge that humanity has ever faced: the ecological consequences of our own collective karma. The scientific consensus is overwhelming: human activity is triggering environmental breakdown on a planetary scale. Global warming, in particular, is happening much faster than previously predicted, most obviously at the North Pole. For hundreds of thousands of years, the Arctic Ocean has been covered by an area of sea-ice as large as Australia—but now this is melting rapidly. In 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forecast that the



Arctic might be free of summer sea ice by 2100. It is now apparent that this could occur within a decade or two. Greenland's vast ice-sheet is also melting more quickly than expected. The rise in sea-level this century will be at least one meter—enough to flood many coastal cities and vital ricegrowing areas such as the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

Glaciers all over the world are receding quickly. If current economic policies continue, the glaciers of the Tibetan Plateau, source of the great rivers that provide water for billions of people in Asia, are likely to disappear by mid-century. Severe drought and crop failures are already affecting Australia and Northern China. Major reports—from the IPCC, United Nations, European Union, and International Union for Conservation of Nature—agree that, without a collective change of direction, dwindling supplies of water, food and other resources could create famine conditions, resource battles, and mass migration by midcentury—perhaps by 2030, according to the U.K.'s chief scientific advisor.

Global warming plays a major role in other ecological crises, including the loss of many plant and animal species that share this Earth with us. Oceanographers report that half the carbon released by burning fossil fuels has been absorbed by the oceans, increasing their acidity by about 30%. Acidification is disrupting calcification of shells and coral reefs, as well as threatening plankton growth, the source of the food chain for most life in the sea.

Eminent biologists and U.N. reports concur that "business-as-usual" will drive half of all species on Earth to extinction within this century. Collectively, we are violating the first precept—"do not harm living beings"—on the largest possible scale. And we cannot foresee the biological consequences for human life when so many species that invisibly contribute to our own well-being vanish from the planet.

Many scientists have concluded that the survival of human civilization is at stake. We have reached a critical juncture in our biological and social evolution. 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. Both as individuals and as a species, we suffer from a sense of self that feels



disconnected not only from other people but from the Earth itself. As Thich Nhat Hanh has said, “We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness.” We need to wake up and realize that the Earth is our mother as well as our home—and in this case the umbilical cord binding us to her cannot be severed. When the Earth becomes sick, we become sick, because we are part of her.

Our present economic and technological relationships with the rest of the biosphere are unsustainable. To survive the rough transitions ahead, our lifestyles and expectations must change. This involves new habits as well as new values. The Buddhist teaching that the overall health of the individual and society depends upon inner well-being, and not merely upon economic indicators, helps us determine the personal and social changes we must make.

Individually, we must adopt behaviors that increase everyday ecological awareness and reduce our “carbon footprint”. Those of us in the advanced economies need to retrofit and insulate our homes and workplaces for energy efficiency; lower thermostats in winter and raise them in summer; use high efficiency light bulbs and appliances; turn off unused electrical appliances; drive the most fuel-efficient cars possible, and reduce meat consumption in favor of a healthy, environmentally-friendly plant-based diet.

These personal activities will not by themselves be sufficient to avert future calamity. We must also make institutional changes, both technological and economic. We must “de-carbonize” our energy systems as quickly as feasible by replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources that are limitless, benign and harmonious with nature. We especially need to halt the construction of new coal plants, since coal is by far the most polluting and most dangerous source of atmospheric carbon. Wisely utilized, wind power, solar power, tidal power, and geothermal power can provide all the electricity that we require without damaging the biosphere. Since up to a quarter of world carbon emissions result from deforestation, we must reverse the destruction of forests, especially the vital rainforest belt where most species of plants and animals live.



It has recently become quite obvious that significant changes are also needed in the way our economic system is structured. Global warming is intimately related to the gargantuan quantities of energy that our industries devour to provide the levels of consumption that many of us have learned to expect. 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.

Instead of an economy that emphasizes profit and requires perpetual growth to avoid collapse, we need to move together towards an economy that provides a satisfactory standard of living for everyone while allowing us to develop our full (including spiritual) potential in harmony with the biosphere that sustains and nurtures all beings, including future generations. If political leaders are unable to recognize the urgency of our global crisis, or unwilling to put the long-term good of humankind above the short-term benefit of fossil-fuel corporations, we may need to challenge them with sustained campaigns of citizen action.

Dr James Hansen of NASA and other climatologists have recently defined the precise targets needed to prevent global warming from reaching catastrophic “tipping points.” For human civilization to be sustainable, the safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is no more than 350 parts per million (ppm). This target has been endorsed by the Dalai Lama, along with other Nobel laureates and distinguished scientists. Our current situation is particularly worrisome in that the present level is already 387 ppm, and has been rising at 2 ppm per year. We are challenged not only to reduce carbon emissions, but also to remove large quantities of carbon gas already present in the atmosphere.

As signatories to this statement of Buddhist principles, we acknowledge the urgent challenge of climate change. We join with the Dalai Lama in endorsing the 350 ppm target. In accordance with Buddhist teachings, we accept



our individual and collective responsibility to do whatever we can to meet this target, including (but not limited to) the personal and social responses outlined above.

We have a brief window of opportunity to take action, to preserve humanity from imminent disaster and to assist the survival of the many diverse and beautiful forms of life on Earth. Future generations, and the other species that share the biosphere with us, have no voice to ask for our compassion, wisdom, and leadership. We must listen to their silence. We must be their voice, too, and act on their behalf.

[http://fore.yale.edu/files/Buddhist\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Statement\\_5-14-15.pdf](http://fore.yale.edu/files/Buddhist_Climate_Change_Statement_5-14-15.pdf)

### Questions

1. What is the nature of the climate change problem according to the Buddhist statement?
2. What do they cite as evidence of these terrible consequences of global warming if left unchecked? Is this evidence incontrovertible or not?
3. “We need to wake up and realize that the Earth is our mother as well as our home— and in this case the umbilical cord binding us to her cannot be severed. When the Earth becomes sick, we become sick, because we are part of her.” How would some people find great difficulty accepting this philosophy, one which seems to equate human beings with the planet itself?
4. The Buddhist statement makes the claim that “our lifestyles and expectations must change”. What do they mean by this phrase and how practical a claim is it? What kind of daily activities are they referring to?
5. In response to the Buddhist analysis some *people might say: We are not willing to forego these wealth indicators. We have faith in man’s ability to create new technologies that make life more comfortable and less demanding while still preserving the way of life people we are accustomed to.* What would the Buddhist have to say to those who might respond in this way?
6. What final plea does the Buddhist declaration make?



The Dalai Lama

## Joint Message

### On the World Day of Prayer for Creation

The story of creation presents us with a panoramic view of the world. Scripture reveals that, “in the beginning”, God intended humanity to cooperate in the preservation and protection of the natural environment. At first, as we read in Genesis, “no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up – for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground” (2:5). The earth was entrusted to us as a sublime gift and legacy, for which all of us share responsibility until, “in the end”, all things in heaven and on earth will be restored in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:10). Our human dignity and welfare are deeply connected to our care for the whole of creation.

However, “in the meantime”, the history of the world presents a very different context. It reveals a morally decaying scenario where our attitude and behavior towards creation obscures our calling as God’s co-operators. Our propensity to interrupt the world’s delicate and balanced ecosystems, our insatiable desire to manipulate and control the planet’s limited resources, and our greed for limitless profit in markets – all these have alienated us from the original purpose of creation. We no longer respect nature as a shared gift; instead, we regard it as a private possession. We no longer associate with nature in order to sustain it; instead, we lord over it to support our own constructs.

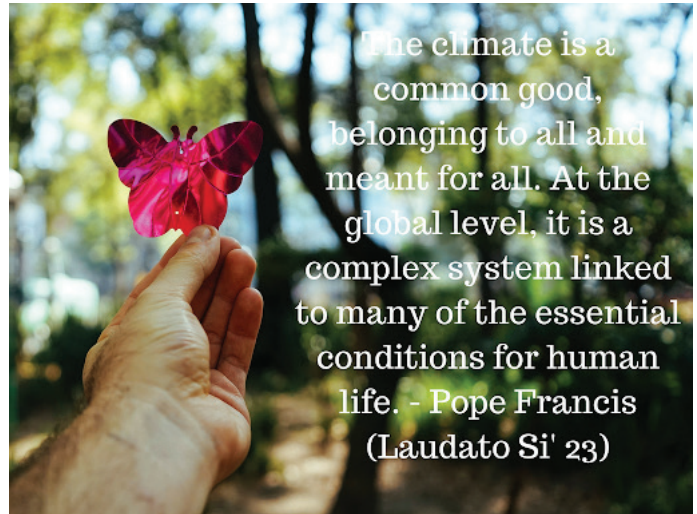
The consequences of this alternative worldview are tragic and lasting. The human environment and the natural environment are deteriorating together, and this deterioration of the planet weighs upon the most vulnerable of its people. The

impact of climate change affects, first and foremost, those who live in poverty in every corner of the globe. Our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly implies the recognition of and respect for all people and all living creatures. The urgent call and challenge to care for creation are an invitation for all of humanity to work toward sustainable and integral development.

Therefore, united by the same concern for God's creation and acknowledging the earth as a shared good, we fervently invite all people of goodwill to dedicate a time of prayer for the environment on September 1<sup>st</sup>. On this occasion, we wish to offer thanks to the loving Creator for the noble gift of creation and to pledge commitment to its care and preservation for the sake of future generations. After all, we know that we labor in vain if the Lord is not by our side (cf. Ps. 126-127), if prayer is not at the center of our reflection and celebration. Indeed, an objective of our prayer is to change the way we perceive the world in order to change the way we relate to the world. The goal of our promise is to be courageous in embracing greater simplicity and solidarity in our lives.

We urgently appeal to those in positions of social and economic, as well as political and cultural, responsibility to hear the cry of the earth and to attend to the needs of the marginalized, but above all to respond to the plea of millions and support the consensus of the world for the healing of our wounded creation. We are convinced that there can be no sincere and enduring resolution to the challenge of the ecological crisis and climate change unless the response is concerted and collective, unless the responsibility is shared and accountable, unless we give priority to solidarity and service.

*From the Vatican and from the Phanar, 1 September 2017*  
*Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*



### Questions

1. How do the Pope and the Patriarch read the situation as generally negative, that certain developments "have alienated us from the original purpose of creation"?
2. If man is a fallen creature and subject to suffering, pain and fated to wring a livelihood from the earth, does that not explain the real negative consequences and inequalities in systems of production and distribution of products and foods?
3. The two Christian leaders call for real care of the environment and the people who live in it. What do they mean by their "invitation for all of humanity to work toward sustainable and integral development"? Cooperation? On what? At what level – within a family, a community, a nation, a system of alliances, a continent, a whole planet?
4. How does their plea - *there can be no sincere and enduring resolution to the challenge of the ecological crisis and climate change unless the response is concerted and collective, unless the responsibility is shared and accountable, unless we give priority to solidarity and service* - echo that of the other faith statements?

[https://www.hinduismtoday.com/pdf\\_downloads/hindu-climate-change-declaration.pdf](https://www.hinduismtoday.com/pdf_downloads/hindu-climate-change-declaration.pdf)

## Presented for Consideration to the Convocation of Hindu Spiritual Leaders Parliament of the World's Religions

Melbourne, Australia, December 8, 2009.

*Earth, in which the seas, the rivers and many waters lie, from which arise foods and fields of grain, abode to all that breathes and moves, may She confer on us Her finest yield. Bhumi Suktam, Atharva Veda xii.1.3*

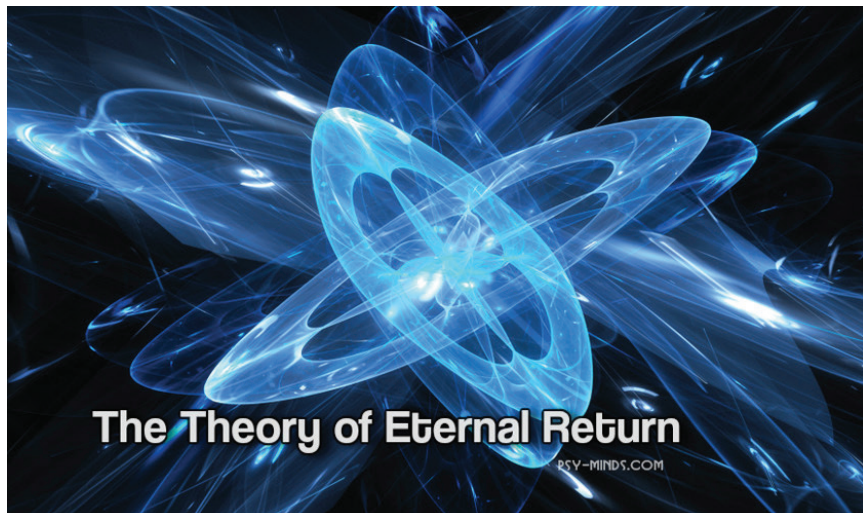
The Hindu tradition understands that man is not separate from nature, that we are linked by spiritual, psychological and physical bonds with the elements around us. Knowing that the Divine is present everywhere and in all things, Hindus strive to do no harm. We hold a deep reverence for life and an awareness that the great forces of nature—the earth, the water, the fire, the air and space—as well as all the various orders of life, including plants and trees, forests and animals, are bound to each other within life's cosmic web.



Our beloved Earth, so touchingly looked upon as the Universal Mother, has nurtured mankind through millions of years of growth and evolution. Now centuries of rapacious exploitation of the planet have caught up with us, and a radical change in our relationship with nature is no longer an option. It is a matter of survival. We cannot continue to destroy nature without also destroying ourselves. The dire problems besetting our world—war, disease, poverty and hunger—will all be magnified many fold by the predicted impacts of climate change.

The nations of the world have yet to agree upon a plan to ameliorate man's contribution to this complex change. This is largely due to powerful forces in some nations which oppose any such attempt, challenging the very concept that unnatural climate change is occurring. Hindus everywhere should work toward an international consensus. Humanity's very survival depends upon our capacity to make a major transition of consciousness, equal in significance to earlier transitions from nomadic to agricultural, agricultural to industrial and industrial to technological. We must transit to complementarity in place of competition, convergence in place of conflict, holism in place of hedonism, optimization in place of maximization. We must, in short, move rapidly toward a global consciousness that replaces the present fractured and fragmented consciousness of the human race

Mahatma Gandhi urged, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." If alive today, he would call upon Hindus to set the example, to change our lifestyle, to simplify our needs and restrain our desires. As one sixth of the human family, Hindus can have a tremendous impact. We can and should take the lead in Earth-friendly living, personal frugality, lower power consumption, alternative energy, sustainable food production and vegetarianism, as well as in evolving technologies that positively address our shared plight. Hindus recognize that it may be too late to avert drastic climate change. Thus, in the spirit of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, "the whole world is one family," Hindus encourage the world to be prepared to respond with compassion to such calamitous challenges as population displacement, food and water shortage, catastrophic weather and rampant disease.



Sanatana Dharma envisions the vastness of God's manifestation and the immense cycles of time in which it is perfectly created, preserved and destroyed, again and again, every dissolution being the preamble to the next creative impulse. Notwithstanding this spiritual reassurance, Hindus still know we must do all that is humanly possible to protect the Earth and her resources for the present as well as future generations.

## Questions

1. What do all these religions have in common regarding their respective view of man and his relationship to nature? What are some of the basic assumptions that all of them make with respect to the state of the planet and its climate? (Mostly doom and gloom of war, disease, poverty and hunger)?
2. How would one characterize these "statements" of concern in the context of Burroughs' prudent study regarding the complexity of climate change, mentioned in the first part of this resource?
3. Is this analysis or reading of the situation true to the facts when one considers that there is less hunger today than ever before, more educated people than ever before, higher life expectancy rates, numbers of people who work, women who are educated and employed outside the home, more nutritious diets and higher consumption of food, the spread of material comforts (homes, books, computers, travel, television, running water, medicine, hospitals, etc.)?
4. Why would their insights still be pertinent to the situation? What is the transition that the Hindu declaration calls for?
5. What is the nature of the transition? What does it imply? What does it demand of people? How realistic is such a call to change?
6. Is the Hindu viewpoint reconcilable with a belief in an eternal cycle of creation and destruction?



## UK Professor: Only Way to Save Planet Is to ‘Let Humans Become Extinct’

By Thomas D. Williams, Ph.d.

17 Feb, 2020



Giving birth to a child is “the worst thing you can do” to the climate, says philosophy professor Patricia MacCormack of Anglia Ruskin University.

The professor, author of *The Abhuman Manifesto: Activism for the End of the Anthropocene* who describes herself as an “old school goth,” says that the only way to save the planet is to stop having children and allow humans to become extinct.

According to the official description of the book, MacCormack “actively embraces issues like human extinction, vegan abolition, atheist occultism, death studies, a refusal of identity politics, deep ecology, and the apocalypse as an optimistic beginning.”

Due to global overpopulation, giving birth is the worst thing you can do to the planet, MacCormack sustains, while insisting that she is not advocating wiping out the

existing population but rather letting it die off.

“Far from advocating mass death, genocide or eugenics, my manifesto is antinatalist,” says MacCormack. “It boycotts human reproduction due to the damage humans have perpetrated on the Earth and its other inhabitants.”

“The manifesto simply asks that humans no longer reproduce – no life is lost, no being is mourned,” she states. “If we no longer reproduce, we can care for all inhabitants already here, human and non-human, as well as care for the Earth itself by mitigating the damage already caused. It’s an activism of care.”

A native Australian, MacCormack says her opinions have been manipulated and misunderstood.

“I simply propose people not reproduce, and it automatically translated into acts of violence,” she has said.

“So, somehow, I want to kill children, which is ridiculous. Somehow, I’m proposing eugenics or some kind of ethnic population control,” she declares, “and I think that what that shows is there is an anthropocentric — or a human — impulse to read acts of grace as, automatically, acts of violence.”

“And that says a lot more about the people not reading the book and just taking over the message,” she states.

MacCormack, who moonlights as a London DJ, said that her position can be “triggering” because it forces people to confront an idea that contradicts their fundamental view of the world.

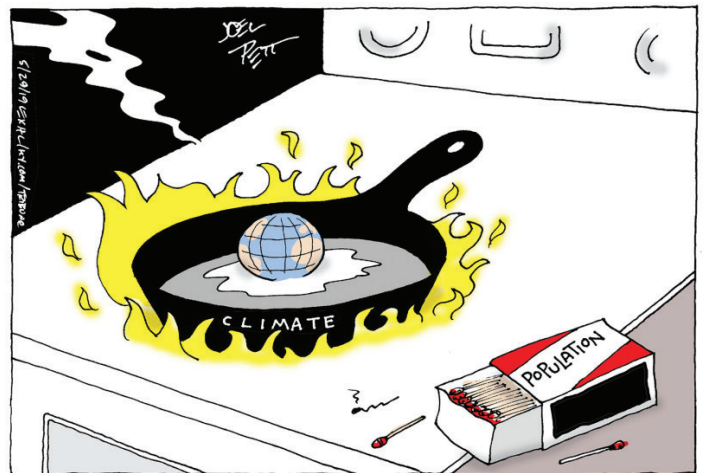
Along with her opinions regarding the human population, MacCormack advocates overcoming “human privilege” through what she calls “abolitionist veganism,” or the notion that no sentient being should be treated as property of another.

According to MacCormack, her manifesto “questions the value of human exceptionalism, asking are humans really the ‘best’ forms of life, or should we dismantle our understanding of life as a hierarchy for a more ecological, interconnected scheme of living things?”

“There are people living in the apocalypse right now — especially non-human animals — who have born into an apocalypse. They live to suffer and then they’re murdered,” she said.

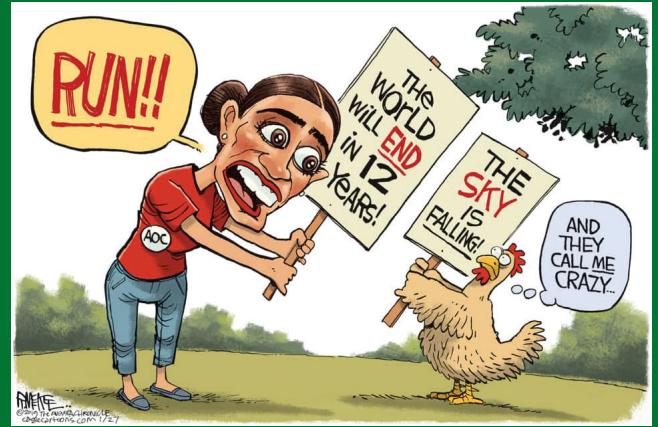
Among other climate action groups, MacCormack says that those like the protest group Extinction Rebellion have the right idea but are not going far enough.

“Even Extinction Rebellion only focus on the effect this will have on *human life*, when climate change is something that will affect every living being on the planet,” she states.



## Questions

1. What is the professor's preferred solution to climate change? Should this professor's views regarding the solution to climate change be considered seriously?
2. What basic assumption is she working from? Is it a sound assumption? (overpopulation)
3. What, if any redeeming quality, is there about her proposed solution?
4. Is it an optimistic viewpoint as she claims?
5. Why do her suggestions harm the cause of climate change proponents?
6. What is the point being made in each cartoon respectively?
7. Are they portraying the truth?
8. What does the chicken in the third cartoon suggest?



## THE TOP 15 CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENTISTS: CONSENSUS & SKEPTICS

