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There Is No Planet B

Net-Zero Emissions Is Admirable, but More Can Be Done

Apr 30, 2021 | Arkansas United Methodist



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In a recent statement, 11 General Agencies of The United Methodist Church pledged to achieve net-zero emissions across ministries, facilities, operations, and investments by the

year 2050.

The pledge, "[Our Climate Commitment to Net-Zero Emissions](#)," is signed by General Secretaries for each of the 11 Agencies. Two of the Agencies, The General Commission on Religion & Race and The United Methodist Publishing House, have not yet signed on to the pledge, but a press release stated that other Agencies were actively considering endorsing the statement.

The press release for this pledge was sent out on Earth Day, April 22, no doubt chosen as a symbolic date where people across the globe pledge to be better stewards of the Earth in various ways, such as recycling, reducing waste, planting trees, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and, yes, achieving a net-zero emissions goal.

You might be wondering what [net-zero emissions](#) means, and how it fits into the global fight against climate change. To put it simply, countries and organizations that pledge net-zero emissions will attempt to balance the number of greenhouse gases released by the amount taken out, therefore adding no additional greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The signees cite strong Biblical reasoning for why all of us should be good stewards of our planet — "The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it." Genesis 2:15 — as well as [Charles](#) and [John Wesley](#)'s own words on the sacredness of nature and God's creation.

United Methodists know the importance of taking care of our planet. In 2009, the Council of Bishops released a challenge for our Church, called [God's Renewed Creation: A Call to Hope and Action](#), that urged all United Methodists to seek ways in which we can care for God's creation in a more sustainable and Holy way.

I applaud these General Agencies for taking a firm stance on protecting the planet from the greenhouse gases and carbon emissions that have rapidly warmed our planet to its hottest temperatures in history and caused massive climate change disasters around the world.

These climate events, caused in large part by human activity, have been identified by world leaders and climate scientists around the world as the biggest threat our planet has ever faced. It's why nations all over the world, including the United States, have pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, with some countries going even further to achieve this by 2030.

In our Conference office, we have taken small steps to reduce our waste and impact on the environment as well, with cardboard, plastic, and aluminum recycling bins available for people to reduce and reuse their waste.

But I know, as do many others, that it's still not enough. More needs to be done, and I hope that we see new policies implemented in our Conference office and in churches across our connection, to reduce the harmful impact of human waste on our environment.

Despite this historic pledge by our General Agencies and nations across the globe, I also know that many scientists and climate activists have warned that achieving net-zero emissions does not yet go far enough to save our planet from an impending climate emergency. It's not enough simply to offset greenhouse gas emissions in our atmosphere; there must also be pledges to reduce and remove the harmful gases that are already destroying our planet.

Planting more trees, switching to renewable energy sources, recycling and reusing our waste, reducing meat and dairy consumption, investing in new ways to plant and harvest produce, and keeping our waterways, forests and the air clear of pollutants are just a few of the ways we can reduce the harm to our planet and invest in our future.

But I have faith that with more world leaders, businesses, and individuals taking action to reduce our human impact on the planet, we will very soon be able to say that we saved our sacred planet from a climate disaster. As I've heard it said many times before, there is no "Planet B." We have one shot to save the planet that God gave us. Let's do it together.

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