

gratitude
respect
moderation

**Climate Programme of
the Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Finland**

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respect,
moderation**

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PREFACE

We, who live right now, are carrying unprecedented responsibility for the future. Whatever we now do or leave undone influences the life of the future generations, our children and grandchildren, as well as the entire creation of God. Some respected experts estimate that we have only ten years to turn the direction of destructive development and to take action to mitigate climate change by considerably limiting greenhouse emissions. If within that period of time we fail to take this challenge seriously, even more difficult and radical measures will be required. Still, there would be no guarantees that they would work.

Along with other Christian churches, our church has taken the challenge of climate change seriously. Already for years, churches have considered climate change the worst of environmental crises. The concern rises from the experiences of the worldwide church. Climate change impacts first and hardest the people and peoples, who are already the most vulnerable. It causes flooding and drought that endanger the life of millions of poor people in the South.

The climate programme has concrete recommendations to the church's central administration, congregations and also members. They allow us to carry some of the responsibility for mitigating climate change. These instructions do not necessarily differ from the instructions given by other actors, but they are important to the church and its members.

However, the church can also make its own contribution for the climate. This is exactly the issue: com-

mon striving of the entire humankind. In addition to reason, our Christian faith resonates in our hearts.

There are three words in the title of the climate programme: gratitude, respect, moderation. Guilt is paralysing, it makes us stop. But gratitude for the good gifts of God is a mobilising power. Gratitude gets us to respect nature's own balance in our solutions and to praise our Creator for His gifts. Another important word is respect. The climate programme notes that the God that is present in creation shares His holiness with creation. Our attitudes towards what is holy are respect, wonder and also fear. Respect is something other than unlimited utilisation of creation.

This attitude allows us to see ourselves as part of nature; it limits our greed and directs our attention to a more responsible life as a member of creation.

Climate change is a challenge to the individual Christian to reconsider his or her lifestyle. The Christian message has emphasised for centuries that the prerequisites of good life are not primarily dependent on material consumption. When certain basic needs are satisfied, the real joy in life comes from people we love and the richness of the creation around us, which are God's great gifts to us. That is why in our seeking for material wealth, we should aim for moderation.

The climate programme of the church urges church members to reconsider the ways they can change their lifestyles to answer the challenge presented by climate change. In these instructions, the church relies on experts on environmental issues.

The climate programme of the church calls the congregations, church central administration and church members to work together for the climate. Fortunately, we do not start from scratch. The church has an environmental system tailored for the congregations: the church's environmental diploma. About one hundred congregations have obtained it and many new congregations are making an effort to do likewise. Now, the system has been updated to take into consideration the reality of climate change more profoundly than before. We are primarily called to do three things: to express gratitude for the good gifts of God, to have respect for life and God's creation and to seek a moderate lifestyle.

Turku, 2 June, 2008

Jukka Paarma
Archbishop



To Church Council



During the spring session 2007 of the General Synod, the representative initiative 1/2007 was handled, concerning drafting a climate programme of the church.

The initiative stated that global warming and its impact have become a significant theme in Finnish public discussion. Slowing down a human-induced environmental catastrophe that threatens the creation requires profound changes in our attitude towards nature. Because the churches and the Christian theology have a significant role in the environmental discussion through influence in values, the churches have to consider their own tradition critically in order not to unintentionally advocate thought patterns that are detrimental to the environment. The church should create an interpretation of the Bible and the doctrine that takes into consideration environmental aspects. The church should also participate from its own standpoint in the ethical discussion ongoing in society and in its own operations favour choices that slow down climate change. To reach these goals, the Church Council should found a working group of experts,

which would have the task of drafting the church's climate programme.

Report of the Theological and Historical Grounds Committee 1/2007 was the basis of the General Synod handling. According to it, preventing climate change is a social issue, and the church does not have its own special means to solve it. For this reason, the church needs to make an effort to cooperate with political decision-makers, authorities and other actors in society. The church can further the reaching of the climate protection goals set by society by influencing attitudes and by committing to mitigating climate change in its own practical operations. By participating in preventing climate change, the church is demonstrating that Christians need to take responsibility for social matters. The committee noted that climate change has turned out to be a threat to the entire ecosystem of the earth, and preventing it is a central and serious challenge for humankind. Drafting the climate programme is a project that is naturally related to the environmental projects already ongoing in the church. The church's environment work comes from faith in

creation and it is a relevant part of carrying out the social responsibility of the church. On these grounds, the committee considered the initiative justified.

On the 11th of May 2007, in accordance with the proposal of the Theological and Historical Grounds Committee, the General Synod decided to send the initiative on to the Church Council for preparation and measures.

On the 15th of August 2007, Church Council decided to appoint a working group to prepare a proposal for a climate programme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to be presented to the Church Council by the 31st of March 2008. The programme should

- give the church, congregations and church members clear recommendations and
- arouse discussion on climate issues from the church's point of view and
- include the climate issues into the church's faith, doctrine and life.

The Church Council appointed Diocese Dean *Ouri Mattila* chair of the working group and Bishop's Theological Secretary *Timo Helenius*, Th. D. *Pauliina Kainulainen*, Finnish Association for Nature Conservation Communications Officer *Matti Nieminen*, MBA *Sirpa Pietikäinen*, Professor *Antti Raunio*, B. Sc. *Hermann Riikonen*, Meteorologist *Markku Seppänen*, Development Policy Coordinator of FinnChurchAid *Nina Suomalainen* and Church's Early Education Secretary *Mirkka Torppa* members of the working group, and Secretary for Social Responsibility *Ilkka Sipiläinen* secretary of the working group.

The working group convened a total of 9 times.

The leading work sector secretary of the church's Swedish language work centre *Pia Kummel-Myrskog* has also contributed to the work as an expert. After *Mirkka Torppa's* leave of absence started in December 2007, her substitute, youth work secretary *Pekka Tukeva* participated the meetings. Since the beginning of 2008, *Nina Suomalainen's* substitute has been FinnChurchAid's climate change expert *Katri Suomi*.

Professor *Lauri Thurén*, Th. D., MA *Pauli M. K. Niemelä* as well as Professor Emeritus *Tuomo Mannermaa* have been used as experts on special issues related to the Bible and theology. Environment issues journalist *Pauli Välimäki* and biologist *Marja-Liisa Leino* have been used when drafting practical recommendations to the parishioners. Special researcher *Heikki Tuomenvirta* from the Finnish Meteorological Institute has given his comments on the meteorological details of the introduction.

The task of the working group was to draft the climate programme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Having completed its task, the working group respectfully presents its report to the Church Council.

Helsinki, March 31, 2008

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1. Introduction

Concern over climate change of the earth is growing around the world. Also in Finland, there is awareness that many of our lifestyles and customs threaten our environment and us. A growing number of people is daily struggling with choices and is looking for guidance in order to live in a way that saves the climate and nature.

Climate change is a scientifically observed fact that has been researched for several decades. Already in 1896, Swedish physicist-chemist Svante Arrhenius predicted that the carbon dioxide emissions will warm up the atmosphere. Over the decades, the scientific community has received ever more disconcerting information about the intensity of the phenomenon. In order to inform the decision-makers, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC has published already four extensive and detailed reports (1990, 1995, 2001 and 2007). Their message is clear: Excessive release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere leads to difficult problems.

Many variables are involved in predicting climate change, just as in predicting the weather. However, with great certainty it is known that the medium temperature of the earth will rise within this century by at least one degree, even if the emissions were nearly stopped. But if the emissions grow at the current rate, the climate may warm up even six degrees. The emissions of humankind are a decisive factor in climate change.

Along with global warming, also extreme weather phenomena will increase. In some parts, there is flooding and in other parts dry seasons lengthen. According to the IPCC, the sea water level will rise 20–60 cm by the end of the century, which will destroy lowland cultivated areas and habitations. The impact of climate change is already visible in different parts of the world, and it is getting worse at an accelerating pace. First, the impact is felt in the poorest countries and communities. Small island countries, Africa, large river deltas and arctic areas are the most vulnerable areas.

In Finland, both summers and especially winters are getting considerably warmer. There is more rain in the winter and the precipitation is mostly water. At the end of the century, Christmases are usually snow free in large parts of Finland. In spite of the thinning snow cover, the risk of flooding increases due to more intense heavy rain.

Climate change is expensive. The report of Sir Nicholas Stern, former chief economist of the World Bank, published in Britain in 2006 estimates that if nothing is done, climate change will decrease the GNP of humankind by 5–20% annually. It would cause instability in world economy, which would be strongly reflected in Finland: for example the price of food could rise rapidly. However, if the prevention and adjustment measures are really started now, it is enough to spend only an average of 1% of the GNP

on them. The countries developing technology may even benefit from climate change. However, delaying will cause permanent damage to everyone, because the excess carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere does not disappear for thousands of years.

Climate change influences the welfare of the entire creation profoundly and irreversibly. The warming of the climate and its becoming more extreme threaten life both directly and indirectly. More people will get sick, many will lose their home, and many will die. Ecosystems are disturbed and significant amounts of species will completely disappear. Finnish nature will experience dramatic changes when the northern species are replaced by new species from the south. Insect pests and fungus diseases threaten agriculture and forestry. Changes in precipitation influence the salt content and fish population of the Baltic Sea. Lengthening of the hot seasons worsens also the blue-green algae problem. Climate change has several consequences, which in turn have their own unexpected consequences.

The most difficult thing is predicting human behaviour in the changing circumstances. It is known that in most dry areas, shortage of water will worsen further, which increases poverty, diseases and mortality. What are not known is what kind of conflicts will be caused by water shortage for example, and how many people have to move due to climate change. Environmental problems overall are causing growing migration. According to an estimate of the UN, the number of environmental refugees is going to reach 50 million already at the end of this century. The stream of migration from Africa and Asia to the European Union, therefore also to Finland, will increase dramatically. In a century, this will probably be hundreds of millions

of people. This kind of migration is unprecedented and we cannot even imagine its impact on societies. Climate change makes the world more unstable and unpredictable than it currently is.

In order to avoid the worst case scenario, we need to mitigate climate change. Churches and NGOs in different parts of the world are demanding that industrial countries decrease their greenhouse gas emissions significantly and at a rapid pace. For example the bishops of the Norwegian Lutheran Church have demanded that the government of their country take immediate action in order to decrease emissions. According to a resolution of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the world's greenhouse gas emissions are at the moment significantly exceed the sustainable level and decreasing them requires more powerful measures than are currently used.

The EU is committed to decreasing its greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 level by a minimum of 20% by the year 2020. EU raises its goal to 30% if the other developed countries commit to equivalent goals and the more advanced developing countries commit to making sufficient efforts in accordance with their responsibilities and readiness. In the future decades, emissions need to be decreased even further. The EU wants to lead the developing countries to 60–80% emission decreases by the year 2050. If 80% decreases come true, global warming would probably remain at a maximum of two degree Celsius. According to the IPCC, this requires that states cooperate in mitigating climate change, technological development is rapid, differences between developed and developing countries are levelled, population growth slows down quickly and economic develop-

ment continues to be good so that instead of goods production, the economy focuses on services and developing information society.

It is to be noted that the consequences of even a two degree warming are serious, but humankind is able to adjust to them in a controlled manner – provided that new technology and volition is developed. A wealthy nation like Finland is able to prepare for an even greater warming fairly well, whereas in poorer countries the possibilities to adjust and prepare for the consequences of climate change and the catastrophes caused by it are very poor. Also, many ecosystems can not tolerate even a two degree warming. Climate change is likely to increase inequality in the world and makes it harder to reach development goals, decrease poverty and preserve nature's diversity.

Mitigating climate change is part of sustainable development, which in layman's terms means satisfying the needs of current generations without compromising the possibilities of future generations to satisfy their needs. There is consensus in the world on having to strive for sustainable development, but in practical politics, the short-term economic arguments dominate decision-making. One of the reasons for climate change is the fact that the meters of economic development do not usually give sufficient value to having the common commodities, such as clean water or favourable weather, at the disposal of future generations. Environmental protection is still often seen as an expense and not an investment.

On the other hand, sustainable development has been studied in economics already since the 1930s, although the term itself was adopted only in the 1980s. In everyday decisions, sustainability consid-

erations have so far gained little foothold. Now, climate change challenges companies, organisations, political decision-makers and individuals to evaluate the consequences of their decisions in the long run. Instead of maximal economic growth we need to start reaching for moderate growth. It requires a change in attitudes, bold political decisions and energy in carrying out the necessary reforms.

Stern's report recommends especially three measures to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. First, those producing the emissions would pay a fairer price for their emissions. The emissions trading mechanism included in the Kyoto Protocol is one step forward, through which a part of the greenhouse gas emissions of the industrial countries have been made visible as costs that need to be cut. Through raising the environmental taxes, the costs of emissions have been brought also to many sectors outside of the emissions trading, for example traffic. Furthermore, many companies and organisations receive voluntary charges, whose product is directed to mitigating climate change and adjusting to it. In global scale, however, the situation is still such that the current generations and industrial countries are not paying the full price for their emissions and are thus getting in debt to the future generations and developing countries.

The second recommendation of Stern's report is the rapid development and implementation of ecologically efficient technology. In order to succeed, the new technology requires conscious support from public administration, companies and consumers. At the same time we have to remember that technology alone is not enough to solve climate change, but lifestyle changes are also needed. For example, energy consumption in the industrial countries needs to start

decreasing in the next few years in order to allow giving up fossil fuels sufficiently rapidly.

These two recommendations the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland can follow in its own practices and discussion contributions, the same as other actors in society. But the third recommendation of Stern's report concerns the church in a particular way; it is the recommendation to get rid of obstacles that are slowing down the change in lifestyles. In it, the church has something special to offer, rising from its own tradition.

In this programme, the church presents concrete recommendations to all its members as well as its administration from the congregation level all the way to the General Synod. Furthermore, the programme opens a discussion towards the rest of society because mitigating climate change requires intense cooperation. However, the most important contribution of the programme is related to what the church has to offer in support of changing attitudes and lifestyles. In the midst of the concern for climate change, the heading of the climate programme "*Gratitude, Respect, Moderation*" crystallises the understanding of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland on what people are called to do.

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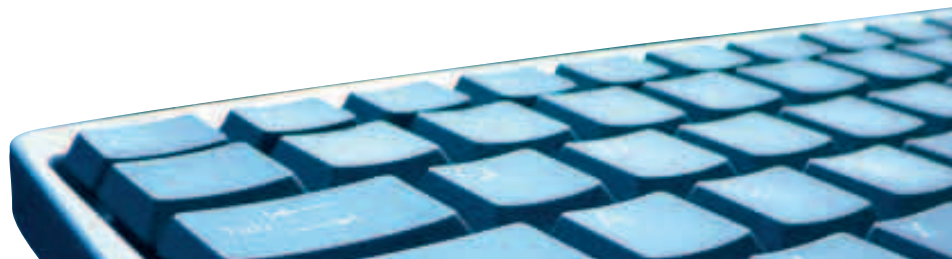
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INFORMATION: FINNISH FORESTS

The growth of Finnish forests has lately been about 100 million cubic metres a year; the current forest assets are nearly 2,000 million cubic metres. The growth of our forests is estimated to increase already in the decades in the near future, maybe even by one third. A part of the increase is based on more efficient forest economy; part is due to the warming climate as well as an increase in the carbon dioxide content of the air.

Especially the Northern Finnish forests will experience enhanced growth. If the forest tree species proportions were determined solely by climactic factors, the change would be relevant; by the year 2100, the share of birch could be over 60% in Southern Finland and along the western coast, and in places even up to 80%. Spruce would decrease in Southern Finland, but would get more prevalent in the north. Climate warming would also weaken the possibilities for pine in Southern Finland.

The threats of the forests are the increased incidence of current pests and the arrival of new ones into the country. Especially the higher winter temperatures may increase damages to the forest, for example the European Pine Sawfly may spread into the entire Finland. The reaction of organisms to climate change is specific to each species so that extensive prognoses are not possible.

Esko Kuusisto in
Maailmanlaajuiset ympäristöongelmat
– Uhkakuvista yhteistyöhön
(Editor Jaana Gustafsson),
University of Turku In-service Education Centre,
2005



2. Theological starting points

2.1. CULTURAL-HISTORICAL REVIEW:

How was the Western person's relationship to nature formed?

Review in a nutshell

- The background of climate change is our distorted relationship with nature and the unsustainable consumption resulting from it.
- Since the 17th century, Western thinking has been dominated by a mechanistic relationship with nature, in which reality is understood to resemble a machine.
- Enlightenment philosophy emphasised reason, with which we can rise above nature and learn to utilise it – nature was no longer understood to be the place of presence of God.
- Developing technology allowed exploitation of natural resources.
- The role of Christianity in this development is complex:
 - The idea of dominion over nature, which is part of the Judeo-Christian faith, has been interpreted out of context so that it has been used to argue for our right to abuse nature unreasonably. The original idea of our responsibility has been swept aside.
 - The Bible has an abundance of ecologically significant views, which have not been focused on sufficiently (for example our responsibility for the welfare of animals).
 - In the Christian tradition, the idea of the humans' togetherness with all creation has also been preserved (for example Francis of Assisi).
 - Current ecotheology focuses on the pro-nature aspects in the tradition.
- Finnish culture and the Lutheran theological tradition contain many ecologically significant aspects that emphasise the relationship with nature, which are worth taking seriously in our struggle against the acceleration of climate change.

The twisted relationship of humans with nature is generally seen as the background of climate change and other serious environmental problems. As a result of this twisted relationship, an ideal of consumption has been generated, which is unsustainable and unreasonable from the point of view of nature. The focus is especially on the scientifically and technically weighted culture formed in the western countries that has spread all over the globe. Christianity is one of the central influences on western thinking. In the discussion, it has been claimed that in the formation of the relationship with nature, the role of Christianity is primarily negative. In the following review of the general tendencies of European cultural history, we first assess whether this claim is sustainable. Later, the concept of Christianity's relationship with nature is illustrated through a closer study of the biblical, theological and ethical bases.

In 1967, a US historian of Western thought Lynn White Jr. published his article *"The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis"* in the esteemed Science journal. According to him, the Western cultural heritage is arrogantly human-centred and the roots of such harmful attitude are primarily in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Mostly, White paid attention to the idea of dominion over nature springing from the Old Testament creation stories. In his article, White also referred to the positive focuses of the Christian tradition that were seen for example in the close relationship with nature of Francis of Assisi, a Saint that lived in the 13th century. The extensive discussion generated by White's article has, however, focused on the negative influences of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

White's article presents the multi-faceted interpretation history of the Christian tradition. Especially in

the modern times, the Christian tradition has been used to support human ambition to utilise natural resources as efficiently as possible. However, the Judeo-Christian tradition does not in itself include this emphasis, but the idea of efficient utilisation of nature has been influenced by other powerful ideological tendencies more than it. Of these, the major one to be considered is the development of European philosophy in the 17th and 18th century, i.e. during the period of the scientific and technical revolution and Enlightenment.

The Western concept of the nature of reality started changing strongly since the 17th century. However, the foundation of that change had been laid already in the thinking of the late Middle Ages. Since the ancient Greece to renaissance, nature had been understood as an organic entity in which the different parts were harmoniously connected together. Within the sphere of influence of Christianity, the basis of this unity was understood to be God. On the other hand, the development of Christianity and the entire culture was influenced by the dualistic way of dividing reality into dual categories such as mind/body or human/nature. The roots of this kind of thinking go back to Plato.

During the 17th century, scientific knowledge started to guide human ambitions to understand the surrounding reality. Along with the developing science, the concept of reality became mechanistic - the idea was that the universe is like a big machine that obeys the mathematical laws of nature. From the point of view of Christian theology, the new mechanistic concept of reality led to a significant change: people could no longer think that creation was the place of presence of God. Along with Enlightenment philosophy,

this was replaced by faith in a nearly omnipotent reason, with which humans could rise above nature and learn to utilise nature for their own purposes.

Dominion over nature began to be understood so that the task of humans is to place themselves supreme over all the rest of nature and have the right to use it to their benefit purely for their own purposes. This view became more prevalent in the 19th century also in Christian theology, although it cannot be found in the older interpretations of the creation story. After Enlightenment, this interpretation has been very influential in the Western countries. For example Enlightenment philosopher Francis Bacon thought that with the help of science and technology, humans could regain some of their original power over the rest of nature that was lost in the Fall.

The significant background of this way of thinking was the philosophy of René Descartes in the 17th century. He made a division between soul or spirit (*res cogitans*) and matter or body (*res extensa*). Many representatives of Christianity accepted this dualistic division because it was thought to protect the reality of the spirit, faith and morality from the pressure of materialistic science. The dualistic division between spirit and nature grew stronger in the 19th century along with Kant's views.

As a counterforce to the mechanistic understand-

ing of reality, romanticism that emerged in the 19th century wanted to return to a more comprehensive, organic way of understanding the world and the nature of the human spirit. The ambitions of romanticism were, however, in many ways tied to anthropocentric thinking, and they did not change the mainstream of Western culture.

Technological progress has continued strong in the wake of the world wars, for example. During the 20th century, the Western concept of the character of scientific knowledge and the mechanistic approach to nature have been widely adopted also in other cultures. In practice, consumption has globally reached such a level that it exceeds the limits of tolerance of nature. On the other hand, quantum physics for example has challenged the entire classical mechanistic concept of science and reality. Discussion on the responsibility of science is becoming more profound.

Lately, many people in the world of science, NGOs and different religions are interested in a new way to examine the underlying reasons for our environmental problems. In the discussion, it is important to take into consideration the influence of old theological and phil-



osophical models on our thinking and formation of our attitudes. The role of the church is to critically assess the impact of its theological tradition and make a focused effort to lift up the emphases in its tradition that defend life on earth.

Certain characteristics of Christianity, such as the idea of dominion over nature, have undeniably been used as arguments for thought patterns that are harmful from today's point of view. On the other hand, a line underlying the unity between the human and nature has always run alongside the line of separating nature and spirit. For example many mystics are known for their close relationship with nature, especially animals. In addition to Francis of Assisi, we can pay attention to the Saints of Celtic Christianity in the British Isles from the 5th to the 8th century, as well as many holy men and women of the Eastern Church. The creation had a significant role also in Luther's theology.

Even our time knows Christians who have emphasised the life-sustaining features contained in the Bible and the Christian tradition. For example the supporting principle of Albert Schweitzer's (1875–1965) "ethical mysticism" was the respect of all life. The aforementioned article of Lynn White Jr. gave an impetus for an ever intensifying reform movement of Christian theology known as ecotheology. It is an attempt to interpret the Christian tradition in view of modern challenges so that it is able to mould human relationship with nature and values towards a more life-defending direction.

In the Finnish culture, we should also take a glance at our own culture's traditional relationship with nature, which still has an impact on the lifestyles of innumerable Finns. Still today, a great number of Finns

say that they experience the presence of God when walking in nature, especially in the woods. There is also drifting apart from nature, but on the other hand the flourishing summer house culture reveals a need to get in touch with the beauty and quiet of the nature.

For example different kinds of devotions and divine services in nature are increasing in Finnish Christianity. One may think that many Finns experience the same good God in the forest and at the altar of the church. This kind of spiritual relationship with nature is a richness that motivates and empowers people to act for the welfare of nature - and at the same time, for the wellbeing of humans.

The impact of the Christian churches in the Western cultural circle has been manifold. Today, we can see that the Christian tradition carries much of the kind of positive force for change that is needed in reforming the human's relationship with nature.

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2.2. BIBLE AS A SOURCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND FORCE OF CHANGE

Biblical background in a nutshell

In the core of the Bible's message is God who has created all to be good and who sustains His creation. The role of humans is to thank God for His gifts and to take good care of them. Environmental problems are an indication that humans have neglected their responsibility.

Creation

- According to the creation story, God gave the human the task to cultivate and protect the land
- The Fall corrupted the human's relationship with God, other people and the rest of creation
- After the Flood, God made a covenant with all living things and set a rainbow as a sign of hope
- In addition to the genesis stories, creation is an important theme for example in Psalms, Job and Isaiah
- Creation has a value in itself, which is more than only its usefulness to human beings.
- According to Paul, the entire creation is waiting for deliverance

Responsibility

- The human is created in the image of God, which means that the human is created to live in connection with God and to take care of other creatures

Creation stories speak of our power to have dominion over the rest of creation – however, this idea never means the power to exploit nature

- The role of humans is to have dominion over the rest of creation trusted them as wisely and gently as the God who in His love gave it to them
- Care for animals and the land is included in the law of the ten commandments and the Jewish Sabbatical practice
- In the New Testament Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the parables present an image of Jesus, who lived in close contact with nature and used it as a source of his parables
- Jesus' core message about the kingdom of God means a total conversion to be obedient to God's will
- Grace renews us so that we are capable of change

Bible as a source of force of change

- God speaks to the humans in the Bible, reading it changes us and challenges us to check our lifestyle
- The parable of the tree of life in the beginning and the end of the Bible describes God's good will and renewing power
- The message of hope in the end of time is also part of Christian faith, and it encourages us to take responsibility

Biblical texts concerning the creation are found especially in the Old Testament but naturally the point of view of the New Testament is important to the Christian.

The basis is a good God, Creator of everything. As His work, also the creation is good. Sin came to the world as a consequence of human action. The role of humans is to thank the Creator for His gifts and to take good care of them.

The creation and human responsibility for it are depicted for example in the following Bible verses:

- God has expressed His omnipotence and wisdom in the creation,
(Psalms 93:1; 96:5, 10; 102:26–; Isaiah 40:21; Jeremiah 10:16; Hebrews 11:3)
- which has been created through the Son.
(John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14)
- Nature is under God's power.
(Psalms 65:10ff; 78:26; Job 9:4ff)
- Heaven and Earth are the Lord's.
(Psalms 24:1; Psalms 89:12; Matthew 11:25; Acts 17:24; Ephesians 3:9)
- In front of God, the human is only dust
(Genesis 2:7; Psalms 103:14; Isaiah 40:7)
- and in all ways dependent of Him.
(Psalms 139:13–16; Joel 2:21–24; 1 Corinthians 4:7)
- To humankind God gives hope that is based on his covenant with the earth
(Genesis 9:12–17; Revelations 22:1–5)

Creation and life

God tells about Himself to his creatures through the creation, its order and phenomena. His presence in

creation makes it to human being a reality holy and worth respect that cannot be objectified into a mere object of irresponsible actions. Environmental crisis and climate problems show how humans have forgotten the responsibility given to them by the Creator. The prophet Hosea laments that the entire creation is suffering of human evil and ungodliness (Hosea 4:1–3). However, the creation is not divine or god and in that sense holy. Pantheism does not belong to the Judeo-Christian concept of God.

In the Old Testament, creation is presented in addition to the creation stories of the Genesis, also especially in the Psalms, the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55) and in wisdom literature, such as the book of Job. In them, creation is presented in relation to the concept of the birth of the world at the time. Although the modern natural science's viewpoint to the matter is different, it still does not exclude the reality of creation. The Bible tells in the language of religion, through stories and parables about the relationship between humans and God, which appears in human awe and admiration towards the gift of life. People, animals and the entire creation take part in the life they have received from their Creator (see Psalms 139:13–16; Job 10:8–12). Life on Earth is not only for human needs. Humans, living on the blessing they have received, need to respect God's commandments. Sinning against God leads to loss of life and its diversity (Jeremiah 12:7–13; Habakkuk 2:17).

Genesis creation stories

Most of all, the so-called genesis creation stories at the beginning of the Bible tell us about the relationship between humans and God and humans and creation. The psalms and some texts commenting on creation

add viewpoints to creation.

The first creation story of the Bible is found at the beginning of Genesis (1:1–2:4a). The entire universe is created in seven days, which already contains the basis of responsibility (cf. commandment: *“Keep the Sabbath Holy”*). Life has begun at the will of God. To all creatures from plants to birds and animals, He has appointed their place and task. As a result of creation, humans and animals have a special relationship with each other. They are partners to each other, created on the same day. In addition to this, God’s special consideration is involved in creating humans: He created humans *“in His image, in His likeness”*. It is also notable that the human’s first full day was the seventh day, which God set as the day of rest. The human had to start on what God had already prepared for him earlier.

In the first creation story, the human was given the right to have dominion over *“the fish of the sea, birds of the sky and all that lives and moves on earth”*, but for food the human was only allowed to use plants that produce seeds and fruit trees (Genesis 1:28–29). Animals were given for food only after the Flood (Genesis 9:2–3). The Flood was a consequence of the evil and violence of creation, resistance of the will of life-protecting God (Genesis 6:5–13). After the Flood, God made a covenant with all living things and set a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of hope: *“This is a sign of the covenant that I have made with you and all living things on earth and with all your descendants to the coming generations.”* The covenant had a promise that God will never again let a flood drown all living things (Genesis 9:12–17). God as Creator of everything protects the creation, but as the Bible’s whole message shows, humans also have to take

their responsibility for securing the conditions of life.

The second creation story in the Bible (Genesis 2:4b–24) emphasizes the unity of earth and all living things. Humans are tied to the natural environment and the land that has existed before them. *“In those days when the Lord God made the earth and the sky, there were no bushes and not even grass had come up because the Lord God had not let the rain wet the earth and there was not yet man to cultivate the earth.”* Of the living things, God created first *“man from the dust of the earth”* and blew into him *“the breath of life”* (Genesis 2:7). Along with the dependency following from creation, God’s care for the human He created is also emphasised: *“The Lord God raised from the earth all kind of trees that were beautiful to watch and whose fruit was good to eat”* (Genesis 2:9). As a habitat for humans, He planted a garden and He put the human to live in it.

The second creation story defines human’s earth-bound basic task by clarifying the relationship between the human and the natural environment by telling us how *“the Lord God put man in the garden of Eden to cultivate and protect it”*. (Genesis 2:15). The emphasis is that ever since the very beginnings, the human has been created to cultivate and work with the earth and protect it. In the Old Testament, protecting often means the same as guarding (Genesis 3:24), following God’s commands (Exodus 16:28, Deuteronomy 5:29) and handing one’s property over to another or preserving someone else’s property (Exodus 22:6, 9). Therefore, carrying out the basic task of cultivating that had been given to human, means cherishing, sustaining life’s requirements and supporting the creation. The human has to tend to the paradise he or she had been given comprehensively.

Other creation texts

In addition to the actual creation stories, creating and creation are also present for example in the Old Testament wisdom literature. God is described in a deeply personal and loving relationship also to the material world. The creation is not only for satisfying human needs, but it is also a demonstration of God's love (see Job 38:2–38) and continuous work of creation.

Many of the Bible's most important creation texts are found in the Book of Psalms, in which faith in creation is expressed in poetic imagery. The earth is in front of God's majesty and under His control in a delicate balance (see for example Psalm 46:4). The magnitude of natural phenomena tells us about God's glory and presence (Psalm 29). God is the giver and sustainers of all good things

The second part of the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55) presents God's universal might over His creation. The human is part of God's creation and subject to God's power. God has made the earth and created the human to inhabit it. The task of humans is to be obedient to their Creator (Isaiah 48:17–19).

In the Book of Job, in chapters 38 and 39, the relationship of God, humans and creation culminates in the form of questions: *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Have you commanded*

the morning to appear, even once? Who feeds the desert, the barren land, so that it is covered in green? Are you able to restrain the stars of Pleiades or open the ties of Orion? Do you provide food for the raven when its young cry out to God as they wander about in hunger?" According to Job, the creation itself has a value based primarily on its Creator.

The "Wisdom" created before heaven and earth, mentioned in Proverbs, is a personal force through which the order of the world has been created (Proverbs 8:22–36). The human's task is to perceive God's Wisdom involved in creation and follow it: *"Now, children, listen to me! Happy are all who follow my ways. Listen to my counsel and be wise. Don't ignore it."*

The special view of the New Testament compared with the Old Testament is that the world has been created through Christ. The beginning of the Gospel of John (John 1:3,10) develops the theme of the Old Testament of God's Wisdom and talks of God as the Word, through which all has been created. The Christ hymns in the Colossians (Colossians 1:15–20) underlines the purpose of creation: *"Everything has been created through Him and for Him."* Christ, through whom and for whom everything has been created, is the head of the universe. Christ's body is the congregation, who needs to obediently carry its responsibility.



Of Paul's letters, the letter to the Romans handles the new creation by combining the history and salvation of the human and creation (Romans 8:19–22). The entire creation is eagerly waiting for the coming Day of the Lord, when the creation also is let loose from slavery to transitoriness *"into the freedom and glory of the children of God"*. Sharing in redemption frees us to wonder, praise and cherish God's mighty creation work. The stages of creation and the history of humankind from creation to the final day of liberation are interlinked.

Human responsibility

The earlier Finnish language form of the word 'vastuu' (responsibility) is 'edesvastuu' (be liable for something). Already in the language of Mikael Agricola, this refers to legal terminology and shows what the issue is especially in the Old Testament Bible ethics: In front of God, humans are liable for their actions and omissions.

Image of God

The creation of the human differs from the creation of all other creatures in that he or she was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27; cf. 1 Kings 22:19–20). In the background of being an

image of God is the royal imagery to which also the expressions *"master over"* and *"subdue"*, mentioned in the same context, are related. The human acts as the image and likeness of God, at God's side and as His representative in creation.

According to Jesus, creating the human in the image of God (imago Dei) means primarily that the human belongs to God just like the *"image of Caesar"* belongs to Caesar (Luke 20:24–25). At the same time, humans are capable of a dialogistic relationship with their Creator. Description of the human as an image and likeness of God explains exactly this dimension. The central thing is that the human is given the right to act as God's representative amidst creation and that humans live in a special relationship with their Creator. The humans are created to answer all the time with their life to the call of their Creator. Responsibility is also connected to this: The human's task is to wander staying awake and listening to God (Micah 6:3, 8).

The creation stories contain the idea that humans have greater power over creation than the other creatures. The right includes in a way a greater responsibility for the welfare of creation. The human is first created in the image of God and only then given the power to have dominion over creation. The role of the

human is to have dominion over the earth trusted to the human as wisely and gently as the God who in His love gave it to the human (see Psalm 104).

Based on creation, the human has the right to use the fruits of creation: cultivate the land, fish, and hunt and keep livestock (Genesis 1:29–30). Apart from cultivating, the human responsibility is also to protect the land. This means being liable to the will of God. The human does not set goals independently. The human is to reflect the image of God who loves people and the creation.

God's commandments

According to the creation stories, in the beginning God created everything good. The law of the Ten Commandments, i.e. the Decalogue is the expression of God's will whose purpose is to protect all that was created good. Particularly significant is the third commandment about keeping the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:8–11; Deuteronomy 5:12–15). It expands the scope of the commandments from the relationship between the human and God also to the relationship between the human and creation, as well as to the human's relationship to himself or herself.

Keeping the Sabbath holy is related to both a social-ethical aspect and an aspect of animal protection: a day of rest was to be given both to the working neighbours including the slaves, and to the animals needed in the work. The argument for this is expressly the creation and God's own actions: The human needs to act like the loving God, with solidarity towards other people and the creation.

In the early history of Israel, keeping the Sabbath holy was extended to celebrating a sabbatical year and a year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25). These ideals represent

strongly the idea of respecting and protecting the land. Six years, the field was to be cultivated, but in the seventh year – the sabbatical year – the human was allowed to only benefit from the fruits that the land gave of its own accord. Every 50 years, a Jubilee was to be celebrated; a kind of sabbatical of sabbaticals. Its special message was that the real owner of the land was God and that land property was only on loan to the human.

Sermon on the Mount

Jesus' teaching does not actually handle nature topics directly. However, his way to use the natural environment, plants and animals as examples tells us about his respecting attitude and close relationship to creation. Jesus often taught in nature, for example in a boat on a lake (Mark 4:1). The written form given to Jesus' teachings allows us to pick out a more extensive whole, in which alongside the external circumstances, also the content of the teaching urges us to broad responsibility: the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew chapters 5–7.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urges us to follow the law and especially to understand its spirit: it is a question of carrying out God's will and following the content of His commandments protecting life (Matthew 5). Also, the sermon on the mount urges us to look at the birds of the sky and the flowers of the field and to trust that the heavenly Father takes care of the needs of the human, whom He has similarly created (Matthew 7:11). The idea of equality is related to this: God lets His sun rise to the good and the wicked and sends rain to fall on the righteous as well as the ungodly (Matthew 5:45).

Parables

Parables are central in Jesus' preaching. They communicate a living image of what Bible research considers Jesus' key message, i.e. the message of God's kingdom. The language imagery of the parables often arises from the natural environment. One of the best known ones is the parable of the sowing of seeds. In it, the people who hear the gospel are compared with seeds sown in different places (Mark 4:1–9; cf. Matthew 13:1–9 and Luke 8:4–8). In the fourth chapter of Mark, the evangelist has collected a series of parables of the kingdom of God: the kingdom is like crops or mustard seed that grows of its own accord. The parable of the evil vineyard farmers (Mark 12:1–12) turns our glance at the actions of the human in tending to the tasks given by God. The parable of the fig tree (Mark 13:28–32) illustrates the situation of Jesus' followers when the end of time approaches.

Examination of similar speeches by Jesus included in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew confirms the image of Jesus that uses nature as a source for parables. His imagery is down-to-earth and concrete: nature symbolism and life of people in the countryside, such as foxholes, sheep and wolves, sparrows, mustard seeds in the vegetable garden (for example Luke 9:58; 10:2–3; 11:11–13; 12:6–7; 13:18–19; 15:4–7; 17:6; 17:23–24).

With their own actions, humans need to further the approach of God's kingdom, i.e. repent, have a change of heart and re-examine life's direction. They need to contend (for example Luke 13:24–27; 14:27). The most crucial emphases of the recorded material of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew are the requirements of following Jesus, and the ethically and

religiously urging teaching.

The material in the Gospel of John differs in style from other gospels. The *"I am"* phrases stand out in the Gospel of John; they express that Jesus is aware of His divine being. In these sections also, the creation and its fruits are used as parables: the bread of life (6:35) and vine (15:1–10).

The so-called Bread Speech in the Gospel of John (John 6) lifts up Jesus and his significance: only in connection to him does the human share in everlasting life. The use of the bread metaphor becomes essential from the point of view of the creation theme and human responsibility. God's bread is the one that comes from heaven and gives life to the world (verse 33, cf. Exodus 16:4 about manna). For the human who needs the daily bread, the essential thing is to listen to God's will and to carry it out.

Bible as a source of force of change

God speaks to us in the Bible. This encounter challenges us to examine our lifestyle and gives power to reform it. For example the proverbs of the Bible emphasise righteousness and moderation. Appreciating what one already has is moderation. Due to respect for God and His creation work, a moderate person avoids all unnecessary consumption and strain on the creation that makes life possible (Proverbs 30:8–9). The righteousness depicted in the Bible proverbs includes defending those who are weak: *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice to those who are perishing. Speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice."* (Proverbs 31:8–9).

The message of the Bible gives power for the renewal of life

The message of God's good will towards the human and the entire creation is seen throughout the Bible. In the paradise of the Genesis story, there is a tree of life (Genesis 2:9). This parable, common to so many cultures, carries the message of the God, who wants life to flourish. The tree of life is also present in Proverbs (for example Proverbs 3:18) and has an important role in the last pages of the Bible, in Revelations (22:2): *"Down the middle of the great street of the city, on each side of the river stood the tree of life bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."* In Revelations, the tree of life is a source of eternal life.

The Bible is rife with imagery of God giving life and sharing His goodness in many ways. Also the natural environment is God's talk to us (Psalms 19: 2–7). The Bible challenges us to hear also this speech so that love and appreciation for the good that we have been given would be visible: *"Lord, our God! You are worthy to receive glory and honour and power."*

For you have created all things and by your will they were created." (Revelations 4:11). We are renewed when we encounter our dependence of God's goodness.

The theme of renewal is also tied to Jesus' core message about God's kingdom. Receiving Jesus' message – and the message about Jesus – means a total conversion, a change of heart. The empowering centre of the New Testament is the entity consisting of Jesus' life and teaching, suffering, death and resurrection, which means the possibility of salvation for the human.



Jesus' parable of himself as the bread of life and the Eucharist set by him (Mark 14:22–25) can be seen as the nutrition of a Christian when facing life's challenges. God's saving love for us, expressed in Jesus inspires love for the creation and our neighbours. Merciful grace generates gratitude and motivates to action in the life of a Christian (see for example Romans 12:1–2). Sharing in the hope of eternal life gives a vision of goodness that leads to respect of nature and one's neighbour.

Hope of renewal and a new beginning

In the Genesis stories of the Bible, God gave a rainbow as a sign of an eternal covenant that encloses also nature: *"Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I remember my*

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covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind." (Genesis 9:14–15). The evil of humankind was drowned under masses of water (Genesis 6:31–7:10). In Baptism, the Christians are in a way drowned in the tomb of Christ and raised with Him into eternity (cf. Markus 1:9–11). Thus, baptism solidifies faith in the revival of love and in appreciation of the good obtained through creation, hope in the possibility of a new beginning.

Moses encountered a burning bush, which was not consumed in spite of the fire. God urged Moses: *"Do not come any closer! Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."* (Exodus 3:5) The sanctity of creation is the sanctity of the Lord of creation which influences human actions. Also in the apocalyptic visions at the end of the Bible, this radical demand for respect and protection is maintained: *"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees."* (Revelations 7:3) At that point, the words were directed to the angels of destruction, but today the words are topical to the entire humankind. According to the vision of the writer of the book, the tree of life of Revelations grows in the New Jerusalem. Revelations chapter 21 brings before the reader a hope-filled image of the future of the world: God will create a new heaven and a new earth (see also Isaiah 65). A Christian cannot and has no reason to be paralysed in front of the threats of the future. Due to the saving love the Christian has received, he or she wants to make sacrifices to protect the creation in every way.

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2.3. THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL BASES OF THE CHURCH'S CLIMATE PROGRAMME

Bases in a nutshell

- Environmental issues are about human relationship to nature and to God
- Christian concept of reality is theocentric
- Core issues of theology are intertwined with ethical solutions - faith and Christian lifestyle go hand in hand
- Lutheran "climate theology" can draw upon the common theological heritage of Christianity, Lutheran special emphases and newer ecotheological thinking
- Traditional Christian concept of the trinity of God is ecologically rich

Basis of Trinitarian teaching

God as Creator: His essence is love that gives itself, which is present in all creation giving and sustaining life. Life depends on Him. He is present in a saving way in the word and in the sacraments as well as in faith. Because creation is the place of presence of holy God, it is holy and worthy of respect. We have been given the right to have dominion over nature as responsible stewards, but not to abuse it.

God as Saviour: With His suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ brought salvation, which touches man, human communities and the entire creation. Supported by grace, a Christian can face

even big challenges in life and see hope. The principle of neighbourly love, that was central to Jesus, urges us to take responsibility for the poor in the world, whose lives are hampered by climate change. Today, Jesus' declaration of God's kingdom means for example an effort towards fairness and moderation.

God as Holy Spirit: God acts in the world also as Sanctifier. He helps us to recognise the life-sustaining and saving gifts given by God as Creator and as Saviour. He guides us to use the gifts correctly, i.e. use them to take care of all creation. The Holy Spirit is an animating Spirit, which unites the Christians to each other and to the entire creation.

Faith and lifestyle

When facing the challenges of climate change, we must return to the comprehensive basic premises of the Christian tradition. Those kinds of ways to word the old message are needed, which have the power to change the way people think.

The core of reality is God's donating love

- God's donating love keeps the entire cosmos together and makes it alive
- Love is the strongest driving force

We need a source of deep motivation in order to change our lifestyle to be more



ecological – the deepest source of power is not guilt, but an awareness of a basic togetherness with all creation and love of nature

God is present in his creation

- God is at the same time present in His creation and beyond it
- God is near by giving us hope that prevents getting paralysed when facing challenges

Gratitude

- Gratitude for the gift of creation and the love that gratitude generates make us act for the benefit of nature
- Encountering God in the quiet and beauty of nature is an important part of spirituality for many Finns

Respect

- Creation is sharing in the holiness of its Creator, but nature is not God, this is not pantheism, i.e. that everything is god
- We have an attitude of respect and wonder towards the things we consider holy
- The respectful attitude limits our greedy tendency to exploit natural resources

Moderation

- Simple lifestyle, in which the essential things are distinguishable, is part of Christian faith
- With its emphasis of moderation, Christianity offers a counterforce to over-emphasised consumerism
- Jesus' declaration means a call to a comprehensive change of life and continuous struggle
- Meditation and prayer give power and direction to ethical action

Church's prophetic task

- As the environmental threats advance, the Christian communities need to reform spiritually and implement ecological responsibility also in its practical solutions
- On these bases they can and need to use a prophetic voice and call people to a change of lifestyle, i.e. conversion
- Churches are influential leaders in values, who need to raise their voices for the poorest people and for the future of the entire creation
- In this task, Christians need to unite their own forces and unite forces with representatives of other religions
- The prophetic voice of the church needs to be based on taking into consideration the research of the state of nature

The reality of climate change challenges the Christian communities to weight their thinking and actions in more ecological ways. The following will outline the Lutheran theological bases of confronting this challenge.

The basis of the relationship with nature of the Christian faith is the concept of God and the relationship between God and the creation. The Christian concept of reality is not anthropocentric nor is it biocentric, but theocentric. Observing from this perspective, the interpretations of the Bible maintain their original context and may guide the Christian communities to a responsible life.

The Christians' actions for the welfare of creation require both a reform in thinking as well as lifestyle. This reform can only become real in sharing God's love through faith. That is why faith and the Christian lifestyle go hand-in-hand. Reacting to climate change requires a return to the traditional emphasis, which most clearly guides towards an ecologically responsible lifestyle and carries the force of change. For this reason, "*climate theology*" needs to be founded on the core issues of faith, i.e. start from a Christian concept of God. Today's Lutheran theology can draw upon the common theological heritage of Christianity, Lutheran special emphasis and newer ecotheological thinking.

The central characteristic of Christianity is the faith in the Triune God, i.e. the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This traditional concept of God is also ecologically rich. The human does not know the secrets of the essence of the Triune God, but God Himself has announced that He is love and that He acts in the world in three ways: as Creator, as Saviour and as Sanctifier. The donating love of God is realised in the

action of three persons: "*The Father gives us all of creation, Christ all of his work and the Holy Spirit all of his gifts.*" This Trinitarian concept of God is the basis of Luther's theology.

God as Creator

God's love towards creation does not mean only a benevolent attitude or acceptance, but the fact that God's essence is donating oneself. God donates what He is himself and all that He has; both His love and His good deeds. Creation also is God's donating activity, in it He gives life and all that is needed to sustain and protect life.

God Himself is present in all that is created. All creation is expressing God's donating being and work. God is present in the world He has created in two ways. Firstly, He is present everywhere, giving and sustaining life. In this sense, all created life is dependent of God. Secondly, God is present in a saving way in the word and in the sacraments as well as in faith. Therefore, God's presence everywhere is not action that saves. The presence that saves is realised only wherever God has expressly promised to carry out salvation.

Because the creation is the place of presence of holy God, we can say that the creation is also holy. The sacredness of creation does not lead to pantheism, the association of God with nature, because according to the Christian view, God is present in all creation but at the same time above, under and outside of it. However, creation reflects the holiness of the Creator, from which follows that the human must respect the creation and receive it as a gift from God. Each creature, in which God is present, is also a gift, in which the Creator donates Himself. No creature is

in existence only for itself, but for others, i.e. to further the life and welfare of other creatures. The sun and the moon do not shine for themselves but to give light to others, water does not rain for itself but to sustain the life of plants, animals and people, air does not exist for itself but for the plants, animals and people to breathe.

The same is true of the human as a created being. He is not meant to search for his own interest, but to take care of and serve the other creatures. The moral law written in the human heart in creation and urging us to do unto others as we would have them do to us, speaks of this. The creation forms, therefore, a kind of *"order of donating love"*, in which each creature exists for others. The basis is the idea that God uses the created reality when He acts according to His being as a donator of good.

According to the biblical concept, the human has been given the power to have dominion over nature, but not a permission to destroy and abuse it. Abuse is the humans' preventing creation from realising its life-sustaining and protecting task. This is exactly what happens when some part of creation is destroyed: its task of sustaining life is being prevented. According to Luther's understanding, dominion over nature meant that the human is able to know nature and the forces active in it, and understand the needs of creatures and act accordingly. This kind of dominion therefore, is based on the recognition of the needs of creatures and furthering their good.

Very little is left of this kind of understanding of dominion over nature. Humans are likely to close their ears and understanding of the command of love written in their heart, targeting not only people but also all other creatures. That is why one should have an ap-

preciating attitude towards nature and strive to use the information available for sustaining and protecting the life of all creation. This may mean for example that to keep the balance in creation, humans need to limit their actions and existence for the good of all other living creatures.

God as Saviour

According to the Christian view, on the background of environmental problems lies ultimately the reality of the Fall. The tendency to evil is part of humanity and distorts the relationship with God, other people and creation. Today, sin is also *"ecological sin"*, which prevents life on earth from flourishing and causes suffering also to the human. The role of the human is to repent, turn away from sin and trust in the message of grace. The reality of grace fills the human with gratitude and gives new force for a change of life towards a respectful relationship with nature.

In the core of Christian faith is the idea of incarnation: in Jesus Christ, God becomes a human being, a human body. This mystery expresses the great value of the physical and material reality in the Christian tradition. The same ability of the material world to carry sacred things is seen in the sacraments, i.e. baptism and Eucharist, in which God's word joins water, bread and wine. These bases lead us to love and respect the entire creation, the material reality.

God donates Himself in a particular way by saving the human from evil and death. Even this is carried out in two ways. Firstly, salvation is realised when God's word i.e. Jesus Christ becomes a real human being, lives, suffers and dies for the human and finally defeats death. Secondly salvation means that in faith, he becomes present in the human heart and

donates himself and his saving work to the human personally. Both confession of sins and clinging to the gift of God's grace, therefore, belong to salvation. Today, the consequences of sin are seen for example in the illfare of creation.

In the way of the Bible, early church and reformation theology, salvation needs to be understood to concern the entire human and even all of creation. For example, according to Paul *"the creation waits in eager expectation to be brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God"* (Romans 8:19–23). The Fall of the human is expressed among others in the human desire to set himself or herself in God's place. This has a limiting impact on the living space of other creatures and their possibilities to realise their life-sustaining tasks. Therefore, all creation is longing for freedom and salvation. This kind of concept of salvation concerning the entire reality has clearly belonged to the thinking of major theologians of the early church.

Based on the salvific work of Christ, a Christian finds hope in the midst of menacing images. He or she has the courage to encounter life's great challenges, one of which is taking responsibility for the future of the earth. As one sharing in grace, he or she will have grateful love of God's commandments and a desire to obey them. The permanent basis and moving force of this kind of change of life is the grace and love donated in Christ. Based on them, a Christian will start to follow the urging written in our hearts in creation: do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

In Christ, his divine and human nature act together. Through both, God donates salvation in the person of Christ. The central message of Jesus' human life

was his public declaration of the closeness of God's kingdom. In God's kingdom, love, justice, peace and joy are realised. Jesus' message is a good message especially to all those who are poor and oppressed. Salvation works already in this life healing broken relationships between people and their relationship with the rest of nature.

When striving for realisation of justice and love in today's world, we need to take into account that climate change already has dramatic impact on the lives of the poorest people on earth. Environmental problems are intertwined with issues of justice, because poverty drives people to utilise nature in unsustainable ways. On the other hand, climate change and other environmental problems worsen the problem of poverty. That is why striving for more just economic systems is part of fighting against climate change. As those sharing in God's donating love, Christians are geared towards alleviating and removing the distress of the poor and preventing destruction of nature and furthering its welfare. Christian love of one's neighbour is expressed in the effort to remove factors causing and sustaining poverty, desire to share of one's own and in being satisfied with moderate consumption.

Salvation, therefore, contains both the dimension of the hereafter and its *"repercussions"* in this world. From this viewpoint, the work to maintain balance in nature is a part of the spiritual life of Christian churches. Climate change raises the care for the poorest people and nature: atmosphere, water, forests and animals, as important factors of spirituality of this age. The theological bases are intertwined with renewal of lifestyle: faith and practical life cannot be separated from each other.

God as Holy Spirit

God donates Himself also as Sanctifier. The sanctifying work of the Spirit means that the Spirit helps the human to recognise and receive the life-sustaining and saving gifts given by God as Creator and Saviour, and use them right. The right use of the gifts is realized when the gifts are recognised as coming from God and they are used to tend to the material, mental and spiritual needs of the creatures.

According to the faith of the church, God as the Holy Spirit creates and sustains the church, which is connection with Christ and other Christians. The Holy Spirit itself is the love that connects the members of the body of Christ to each other. Also the nature created by God is meant to be a community, in which everything exists for each other and to donate love for each other. The connecting factor of creation and of church is, therefore, donating love. Through creation, God donates life to other creatures and sustains it. In the church, He donates salvation and eternal life. This also takes place through the created reality, word, water, bread, wine and other Christians.

Receiving and using God's gifts through the Holy Spirit means that the church community and each Christian uses them for furthering and strengthening

both the earthly and eternal life. With the help of the Spirit, a Christian realises the law of love written in his or her heart: we place ourselves in the position of another creature and ask what we would hope to have others do to us if we were in the same situation. From this point of view, there is no contradiction or conflict between taking care of creation and human longing for eternal life.

The Holy Spirit is God's renewing and encouraging Spirit. The Spirit sanctifies everything with its presence and thus turns finite things into windows to God's infinity. The Spirit influences in a special way through the holy sacraments but at the same time the Spirit is as necessary for creation as breathing.

Faith in the Triune God, which is in the core of Christian theology, requires a balance between the three persons of God and their actions. The life of a Christian as part of creation is based on faith in God's creating, saving and sanctifying work. Ecologically responsible Christian thinking and lifestyle are constructed on this faith.

Faith and lifestyle

Climate changes and other environmental problems challenge Christian communities to search for an in-



terpretation of the Bible and tradition that is meaningful in our time. For a new encounter with the old message, powerful parables and wording is needed which get people to search for a new kind of lifestyle. Again and again it is necessary to be reminded that when declaring the kingdom of God, Jesus required a total change of heart of his listeners.

1. The core of reality is God's donating love

Ecological questions lead to theological ones, such as the question of the image of God. An example of an ecologically significant theological concept is the idea of God's life-sustaining presence in all creation. This was also one of Luther's central emphases but later Lutheranism has not much pondered on its significance and consequences. One can say that according to Luther's concept of reality, God's most profound being is donating love and the purpose of creation is to express this love. The human response is gratitude that leads to a loving lifestyle. Lutheran theology has ecological potential that has not yet been utilised to the full.

2. God is present in his creation

Climate change challenges to raise the traditional but cast aside concept of God according to which God is at the same time present in his creation and beyond it. According to Lutheran theology, it is possible to think that creation is holy in the sense that it is sharing in God's holiness. Creation expresses and mediates God's goodness and love. That is why the human does not need to expressly sanctify creation but only let it realise its purpose as a mediator of God's gifts. The sacredness of creation still does not make nature an instrument of salvation.

This way to approach God's mystery also means that God is near by giving us hope that prevents getting paralysed when facing challenges.

3. Gratitude

God gives all His good gifts through creation. It is exemplified by the fact that many Finns find nature – forests, lakes, sea or mountains in Lapland – to be spiritually important. Their relationship with nature is based on gratitude for God's great gifts, a profound sense of unity with all beings and love for them. This love is a powerful driving force when looking for solutions for climate change and other environmental problems. Experiencing God's presence in nature corresponds to the concepts of Christian theology. Both Christians gathering together for services and the holy sacraments and retiring in silence in nature are part of spiritual life. Nature's healing power is one of God's good gifts. Gratitude gets us to respect nature's own balance in our solutions and to praise our Creator for His gifts.

4. Respect

The God that is present in creation shares His holiness with creation. Human attitudes toward what is holy, is respect, wonder and also fear. A certain kind of inviolability is also part of holiness – there is no permission to trespass holiness arbitrarily. Understanding the value of creation limits greedy human desire to utilise nature unreasonably. This kind of attitude changes the current idea of our position as part of nature, bridles our natural greed and focuses attention on a more responsible life as a member of creation.

5. Moderation

A moderate lifestyle is an effort to use God's gifts the right way. Today, it means for example simplifying life and emphasising the essential. Humans give up something good in order to gain something better – more time, space, peace or possibilities to share one's resources with others. Understood in this way, Christianity is a counterforce to the over-emphasised consumerism, which harms humans and the entire creation. The life of a Christian is a struggle towards a good and responsible lifestyle, but it is still not a joyless life. Enjoying the creation is also part of life. To do it, we need a moderate lifestyle and ethical choices in consumption. Meditation and prayer give power and direction to ethical action.

Church's prophetic task

Environmental threats challenge Christian communities to reform spiritually and to return to the rich way to observe human relationship with nature that is based on the original sources. Based on them, they are to use their prophetic voice and call people to resistance against one-sided consumerism. The ideal of a simple lifestyle has always been a part of Christian tradition: we feel better without constantly striving for more material in our lives. Christian faith in the footsteps of Jesus offers tools for reassessment of our lifestyle, a change of heart that touches our entire life, and for continuous struggle.

In the search for concrete deeds that protect nature, the church leans on the efforts of scientific research, political decision-makers and other actors to understand the state of nature and to find the necessary measures.

Prophetic and credible speech requires that the

church realises ecological responsibility in its own operations and takes into account the research on the state of nature. At the same time, the actions require ecumenical and also interfaith cooperation. The reform of the church needs to take place at the same time on the doctrinal, ethical and liturgical levels. In their liturgical life that reaches into the everyday life, the churches give a concrete form to what their beliefs are. In the Finnish society, the church is a significant opinion leader. It is its duty to raise its voice to defend the poorest people and the future of the entire earth.

The Christian tradition and connection with the sacramental life of the church offer profound sources of power in the struggle to save the future of the earth. A strong emphasis of responsibility is present in the tradition: our duty is to cultivate and in this age, to protect the creation. Under the weight of guilt and oppression of the reality of sin, we hear the message of God's grace and gratuitous love. Perhaps the most powerful driving force is love: God's donating love that embraces the human in creation and inspires love in return. The human, who feels deeply connected with the entire creation, wants to preserve nature's diversity and beauty also for the coming generations.

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INFORMATION: GIFTS OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

- It is characteristic of the Orthodox theology to emphasise the unity of the material and spiritual realities
- As a created beings, we have the task of being ministers of creation, i.e. those praying and thanking for the entire creation
- Our insatiable seeking for profit is ecological sin, splitting of life
- Salvation is the recovery of the creation's original connection between creation, human and God
- In Eucharist, i.e. the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion), our good relationship with creation and the holiness of matter becomes concrete
- Ascetism, i.e. simple lifestyle illuminates the true value of material things and teaches us to appreciate nature's gifts

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3. Recommendations

3.1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGREGATIONS

Recommendations in a nutshell

The congregations are recommended

- To take prompt action to mitigate climate change
- To perform an energy review as well as implement the church's environmental system, the environmental diploma. When drafting the environmental programme of the congregation, included in the diploma, to pay special attention to actions controlling climate change and to environmental education.

- To adopt the use of renewable energy exclusively or at least increase significantly its share of purchased energy
- Drafting an all-encompassing traffic and transportation account and updating the travel instructions so that the use of public transportation is preferred
- Updating the purchase instructions so that mitigating climate change and taking into account the environmental impact is adopted as one of the criteria in all procurement. The search for a moderate lifestyle that is the ideal for the individual person involves also the congregations.
- To develop all operations so that they are an example for the parishioners and the surrounding society. The environmental education and the liturgical life of the congregation need to support the parishioners' commitment to an ecological lifestyle and give them motivation to make their lifestyles more moderate. The congregations are recommended to draft an environmental education plan.





The congregations are recommended to adopt the use of the church's environmental system, environmental diploma (see the Finnish version www.evl.fi/ymparistodiplomi or **Church's environmental diploma manual 2005, *julkaisumyynti@evl.fi***). When obtaining the environmental diploma, an environmental review is performed and an environmental programme is drafted for the congregation. When drafting the environmental programme, special attention needs to be paid to actions mitigating climate change and to environmental education.

Controlling climate change is especially related to the following operations of the congregation:

A. Saving energy

Energy review

In order to mitigate climate change, the congregations are recommended to perform an energy review. The review can be outsourced to an external expert or the congregation can do it itself.

Energy review means a systematic examination of the property's HVAC, plumbing and electricity operations. The review encompasses also the electricity consuming devices of kitchens and offices. It produc-

es an account and proposals for improvement, which along with the climate viewpoint may have considerable economic significance. Considerable decreases in the consumption of energy and water can be reached by mere changes in usage and practically free saving measures. Of the measures proposed in the review, at least those saving measures have to be carried out which have a repayment period of 1–3 years.

The old church buildings, which are usually high, poorly insulated and technically outdated, form a special issue. Especially in the winter, heating up old churches for a single divine service consumes quite a bit of energy. As to these churches, the congregations should consider moving the venue of the divine services to the congregation houses for the winter months, if suitable facilities are near the churches. However, moving the venue of divine services is a very delicate matter that needs careful consideration taking into account the traditions of the congregation and customs of the parishioners.

Along with the old churches, another special issue is the refrigerated storage of the deceased. The condition and need for replacement of the refrigerated spaces needs to be assessed in the review. Earlier, the refrigeration agent used was Freon, which needs to be recovered in renovation and replaced by substances that are less harmful to the atmosphere and from the point of view of climate change.

When carrying out the energy review, the employees need to be heard and saving points needs to be searched together with them. The employees are informed of the results of the review, and instructions are given on how everyone can contribute to cutting energy consumption. The annually celebrated Energy

Week is a good way to increase the energy awareness of employees as well as the parishioners. Further information on the energy review is available in chapter 8 of the Church's environmental diploma manual.

Use of renewable energy

The environmental impact of energy consumption can be decreased by becoming a user of renewable energy. ***The congregations are recommended to completely transfer over to the use of renewable energies.*** Hydropower, wood in its various forms and other biomass, wind power, solar power and solar electricity, geothermal heating and biogas are renewable energies. On the long run, energy service on the



earth can only be based on renewable energy sources. They do not end and they are fairly free from pollutants. They also do not further the greenhouse effect (assuming that no more wood is burnt than is grown). Still, even their use may have considerable impact on nature.

The Norppa ecolabel awarded by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation is the only energy ecolabel in Finland. The label is awarded according to certain criteria to electricity and district heating produced using renewable energies. The idea of the label is to encourage power companies to increase the share of renewable energy. That is why an obligation to strive to further develop these energy resources is associated with the label. Usually, the companies have priced the ecolabelled energy slightly higher than ordinary. However, the difference is not great and in some regions it may be even more economical than the ordinary purchased energy.

B. Waste management

According to the Waste Act, an effort needs to be made in all activities to prevent waste generation and to reduce the amount and harmfulness of waste as much as possible. The waste producer is obliged to know the substances it uses and the waste generated from them, and to organise appropriate waste management. If possible, waste needs to be utilised primarily as material and secondarily as energy. In addition to law, the congregations are also obliged by municipal waste management regulations. In practice, waste separation is regulated by what kind of recoverable waste is collected and accepted by the operators in the area.

The congregations are recommended to perform a waste management account. The account gives a basis for goals in waste generation prevention and recovery. The account encompasses the properties, kitchens, cemeteries and parks as well as churches and camping centres of the congregation.

The waste management plan made on the basis of the account needs to be communicated to the personnel and for example the customers of the cafeterias. Instructions for separating waste need to be drafted for each property and they need to be visible for example at the waste collection points in the kitchens and cafeterias. More detailed information on drafting a waste management account and waste management plan are available in chapter 6 of the Church's environmental diploma manual.

For climate change, the appropriate management of biowaste (food remains, decomposing household and garden waste) has a special significance. Separating biowaste is important, because in the dump, the decomposing waste generates methane, which is a gas increasing the greenhouse effect. If there is a possibility to use a personal compost, the need for transportation is reduced.

C. Property management

Good property management allows one to significantly reduce the heat and electricity consumption of buildings. From the point of view of climate change, reducing the consumption of energy and adopting the use of renewable energy forms are essential. The use of how water also consumes energy. Ventilation is a significant consumer of heat energy and electricity. Up to one third of the heat energy use of a building may

be attributed to ventilation.

The consumption of electricity, heat and water should be monitored regularly; this can be organised in different ways depending on the property base and the technologies used. The monitoring keeps a log of monthly consumption figures of energy and water in properties. In order to make the data comparable, it is good to report it as specific consumption (kW/m^3 and l/m^3). For heat, the consumption figures corrected by maturity are also given in order to eliminate weather variation. The maturity allows the correction of actual heat energy consumptions in order to compare the consumptions of different months or years of the same building, and the specific consumptions of buildings in different municipalities.

The monitoring reports allow the personnel responsible for property management to monitor the consumption of energy and water and intervene if the consumption figures for some reason are exceptionally high. Monitoring also allows the comparison of the consumption figures of different properties and to plan repairs. Monitoring has an important role in controlling energy expenses but it also allows preventing needless consumption hikes, and thus reducing environmental emissions.

Ecological construction

According to the Land-use and Building Act, all buildings need to follow good building practice and be based on the principles of sustainable development. Ecological construction means setting environmental goals that go beyond the building standards. They may be related to energy saving, use of renewable energies, durability of the building, minimizing waste and recycling, natural and healthy building materials

or consideration of the microclimate and developing parks, for example.

Ecology needs to also be taken into account in the construction projects of the congregations. For example energy saving technology is commercially competitive and with small additional investments, considerable reductions in the operating expenses of a building can be gained. Thus, ecological construction may also be economically feasible. In repair projects and equipment and machinery replacements, energy efficient and low-emission products need to be preferred. Geothermal energy, sun panels, wood chips or other bioheat and draft air recovery are increasingly popular means in ecological construction.

Construction has a great environmental impact for decades to come for example in heating and other energy expenses. Before making a decision to build, an account is needed of the utilisation degree of the current spaces and of the possibilities to raise it. Some spaces can also be rented.

When making energy renovation of old buildings, the starting point is their cultural and historical value and it may limit the selection of means to modernise energy technology. However, energy leaks and energy saving possibilities need to be mapped out; these are done in the energy review.

High energy saving level needs to be required of electric planning for example when totally new spaces are being planned or lighting systems are being renewed. The so-called smart lighting saves at best up to 70% of the energy and at the same time offers the best user comfort. The smart lighting automatically takes into account for example the effect of daylight and the lights turn off when they are not needed. Using energy efficient bulbs, reducing needless

general lighting and increasing local lighting allow saving electricity in the already existing indoor and outdoor lighting.

Camp and course centres and summer homes

The operation of camp centres, course centres and summer homes has an impact on nature in many ways. Often the camp centres are on waterfronts and in the middle of valuable areas that are in their natural state. The camp centres are examples of environmental education – in good and in bad. It is important to make an environmental account also in these localities. Further information on drafting the account is in chapter 12 of the Church's environmental diploma manual. The environmental programme of the camp centre / course centre / summer home is drafted based on the environmental account. It presents the goals in removing perceived environmental problems and means and schedule for the improvements. For mitigating climate change, special attention needs to be paid to the camp centre's energy economy.

If the camp or course centre is in a sparsely populated area, it is difficult to organise waste management as efficiently as in a densely populated area with centralised waste collection. That is why special attention needs to be paid to preventing waste generation. It means, for example, minimising the use of disposable dishes, packages, plastic and other non-biodegradable material. It is recommended to have the biowaste originating from the kitchen and cafeteria, decompose in a thermal composter acquired for this purpose.

Cemeteries

Managing the cemeteries and parks has direct envi-



ronmental impact that needs to be examined. If the congregation has a crematorium, its emission and the possibilities to minimise them need to be examined also. In accordance with the environmental protection decree, operating a crematorium requires an environmental permit.

Based on the examination, care instructions (or the environmental sections of the instructions) for the cemeteries and parks are drafted or updated. The goal is to develop the care of cemeteries and parks to be more natural, ensure the preservation of valuable natural characteristics and minimise the harmful environmental effects of the care. More detailed information is available in chapter 11 of the Church's environmental diploma manual.

From the point of view of climate change, it is worth paying attention to energy efficiency of machin-

ery and composting organic waste. Biodegradable garden waste should be put in a compost or taken to a compost field appointed by the municipality.

The condition and quality of maintenance equipment has a direct impact on environmental emissions. For example electric and mechanical machines have low emissions. Catalytic converters or equivalent exhaust gas purifiers reduce the amount of harmful emissions.

The emissions of vehicles, excavators and loaders, tractors, sweeping machines, lawn mowers and small machinery need to be monitored and they need to be kept in good condition. Those fuels, lubricants and engine oils should be used that are best for the environment. Sulphur-free fuel needs to be used in machinery whenever possible. Small machinery fuel is recommended for use in petrol-driven lawn mowers and other small machinery.

Watering cemeteries and parks consumes a lot of water. If the cemeteries do not have their own wells, household water is used and purifying it consumes energy and purification chemicals. Attention needs to be paid to watering needs and an effort needs to be made to choose species that need less water, and to use garden planning.

D. Traffic

Traffic has along with many positive effects also significant environmentally harmful effects, such as exhaust gas emissions and energy consumption. Especially the continuous growth of car and airplane traffic accelerates climate change.

The congregations are recommended to make a traffic and transportation account of the congre-

gation's operations. Its goal is to study whether the traffic needs are organised in the best possible way considering the environment and the operations, or whether traffic and transportation could be made more efficient or increase the use of transportation forms that are advantageous to the environment. More detailed information on drafting the traffic account is available in chapter 14 of the Church's environmental diploma manual.

Based on the account, an operating programme is drafted, which will present a selection of points to develop. At the same time the congregation's travel regulations need to be checked.

Vehicles

In the choice of cars and machinery, environmental characteristics need to be an important criterion. It means that attention must be paid especially to the vehicle's fuel consumption, exhaust gas purification technology and low emission levels, as well as to the correct size and engine efficiency in proportion to the vehicle's use.

Fuel consumption needs to be monitored regularly and consumption kept at a reasonable level. Regular maintenance helps keep the vehicle in good condition and lengthens its service life. Vehicles that are in good condition are also more energy efficient.

Training for economic driving

Economic driving can considerably influence fuel consumption and through it, the environmental emissions. It has a great significance especially in city driving. As even a driving style as possible, avoiding acceleration and braking, anticipating situations, planning routes and combining trips for running errands,

removing extra load of the car and preheating the engine with an engine-block heater are examples of factors that have a decisive impact on fuel consumption.

Currently, many driving schools provide training for economic driving. The congregation can order this course especially for those employees that need to drive a lot due to their work.

Car pooling and joint transportation

By planning the routes, schedules and transportation, the need to drive can be minimised. Car pooling scheduled in advance to go to meetings and other occasions considerably reduces the total quantity of kilometres driven. A regular part of work meetings and



consultations should be: In whose car are we going?

Joint transportation should always be organized to go to camps and on excursions. Many transportation companies nowadays have quality and environmental certificates. These should be preferred.

Increasing pedestrian and bicycle traffic and public transportation

Walking and bicycling are environmentally and health wise the most recommendable forms of transportation. On a busy working day, walking is only feasible on short distances, but bicycling especially in the city with distances of only a few kilometres is practically as fast as the car.

The congregation can further the use of bicycles among the employees by providing good storage spaces for bicycles and a chance to shower and change clothes. Common bicycles can be provided for the use of the employees for running errands. The congregation can participate in the international Car-less Day event (September 22) or other such campaigns to advocate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

For its employees, the employer can get a bus pass or a pass to other public transportation to be used on trips during working hours. When organising meetings and consultations, the accessibility of the venue by public transportation needs to be taken into consideration.

E. Procurement and investing

Climate change and the finiteness of natural resources require a change in consumer culture also in the congregations. Each congregations should draft procurement instructions, which require the consideration of

environmental and climate protection aspects in all procurements. Adopting climate and environmental impact as a significant selection criterion in tenders for services, products and contractors requires that sufficient information on the environmental impact and quality of them is available for those responsible for procurement.

In procuring for many products, it is possible to use the energy and ecolabel criteria. The environmental burden of food stuffs can be reduced by purchasing food produced locally and increasing the proportion of vegetables in the diet.

In investment operations, the congregations have an opportunity to support companies that invest in environmental technologies, recycling and renewable energies. Further information on environmentally friendly procurement and ethical investing is available in chapter 4 of Church's environmental diploma manual and the instructions on ethical investing of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, issued by the Church Council (www.evl.fi/vastuullisen_%20sijoittamisen_%20ohjeet2007.pdf).

F. Environmental education and liturgical life

With its example and operations, the congregations need to advocate the strengthening of environmentally friendly attitudes. The congregation's environmental education needs to support the parishioners' commitment to ecological lifestyle and offer them a source of power for a change of lifestyle, rising from the Christian tradition.

At best, the environmental education of the congregation is realised by mainstreaming it in all opera-

tions of the congregation. It is naturally a part of early education, youth work and confirmation school education. It can be a topic in Bible study or other discussion groups.

For the help of the congregation employees, it is good to draft an environmental education plan covering all work areas and providing concrete examples. Training related to environmental issues needs to be offered to the employees in order that they may take the climate and environmental aspects seriously into consideration.

The employees of the congregation may have an important role as bridge builders in environmental issues that cause conflict among the population. The congregation employees or work forms may also generate discussion on aspects and values that otherwise are left without attention. Taking a stance has an impact even in the case that the congregation as a community cannot commit to any party of a dispute. In such a case, the congregation can be a uniting or mediating party – or individual representatives of the congregation may participate in action.

The book of divine services requires that the congregation celebrates one of the Sundays in the period May–October as Creation Sunday. In the spring, a blessing of the sowing of the seeds can be organised, and in the autumn, creation theme is naturally related to thanksgiving for the harvest. In addition to celebrating Creation Sunday, environmental and climate issues need to be observed in the annual liturgical life of the congregation. Gratitude and concern over creation may be present in the sermons, hymns and intercessory prayers of the divine services. Services in nature or “forest church” are good ways to experience God’s presence.

G. Environmental indicators

It should be possible to monitor the climate and environmental impact of the congregation annually and to issue a report on them in connection with the annual report. It is not possible to quantify and compile statistics on all environmental impacts, but figures found in statistics do allow monitoring some of them.

For example the properties’ specific consumption of electricity, heat and water, work-related driving in kilometres per employee or the accumulation of waste tip waste can be environmental indicators. The relevant thing is that a clear goal is related to the indicators, for example “an effort is made to reduce the specific consumption of heat energy by 1% annually”. This allows us to monitor whether the goal has been reached and discuss the reasons, if it has not.

SOURCES:

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www.evl.fi/ymparistodiplomi

Instructions for responsible investing of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland:

www.evl.fi/vastuullisen_%20sijoittamisen_%20ohjeet2007.pdf/



3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHURCH MEMBERS

Recommendations in a nutshell

- Assess and change your lifestyle to be more moderate. Examine your possibilities to influence climate change mitigation.
- Have a family meeting (or equivalent), in which you agree on the changes in your lifestyle
- Pray and be quiet: it gives power and direction to the change of lifestyle
- Enjoy nature and its miracles
- Keep the Sabbath holy. Seek for it other content than consuming.
- Have an impact in your congregation, in your area and contact your member of parliament

The greenhouse gas emissions of households vary greatly. Many factors influence it, for example lifestyle, type of housing, dwelling place and stage of life. It is easier to reduce large emissions than small ones. Moderation is part of a Christian's lifestyle.

It is recommended that the church members assess and change their own lifestyle to be more moderate and study their possibilities to influence climate change mitigation. The short list presented here helps in this. The list in question is naturally not complete. Mitigating climate change is such an important issue that the church wants to present its members concrete ways to act, although the church does not have other information about the practical actions

than that obtained from the climate change experts. This issue is like the one in the age of Enlightenment when the pastors' sermons included instruction on how to grow potatoes. Church is one of the actors defending the good living conditions of humans and the rest of creation.

It is good for the whole family to gather together to go through the recommendations and to agree on the changes in lifestyle that the family makes.

The same can be done by those living alone or in various communities.

Meditation and prayer give power and direction to ethical action. The periods of fasting preceding Christmas and Easter are a good opportunity to try a simpler and more moderate lifestyle. Also, keeping the Sabbath saves the environment if it reduces needless consumption.

Household emissions are significant sources of greenhouse gases. That is why our own choices matter. People who have made their lifestyles more moderate due to the climate and the environment are encouraging examples of what we can do. When your own house is in order, you can demand more of your congregation, municipality, church, country and the EU.

With the help of this list you can go through the lifestyle of your family or that of your own:

Seek for a moderate lifestyle

- Moderation is a traditional Christian virtue. As those sharing in God's donating love, Christians are geared towards alleviating and removing the distress of the poor and preventing destruction of nature and furthering its welfare. Christian love of one's neighbour is expressed in the effort to remove the factors causing and sustaining poverty, desire to share of one's own and in being satisfied with moderate consumption.
- Think how you and your family can enjoy God's good gifts and have a moderate lifestyle.
- Meditation and prayer are ecological deeds. They give power and direction to ethical action. Seeking silence does not pollute nor consume natural resources. Prayer is God's immaterial gift to us.
- Think how you can observe fasting. The periods of fasting preceding Christmas and Easter are a good opportunity to try a simpler and more moderate lifestyle.

Keep the Sabbath holy

- Think how you and your family can spend a Sunday. Keeping the Sabbath saves the environment and reduces the generation of greenhouse gases.
- Instead of needless consuming, Sundays can be spent in many other ways: attending a mass, walking in the nature or in the city, reading, visiting with friends and family, going to concerts and other events.

Save energy in transportation

- Think about transportation in your and your family's life. Do you use your own car, public transportation, bicycle or do you walk? Many factors influence the possibility of choice:
 - Do you live in the city, suburb, countryside or far from centres? Is there public transportation available, can you walk or bicycle part or all of the way?
 - Do you have small children, and what are their hobbies? Can the trips to hobbies be organised by car pooling or public transportation?
 - What is your physical condition, health and possibilities to move by your own effort?
 - Do you need a car for professional purposes?
 - Make a habit of physical exercise, bicycle or walk all short distances to run errands, if possible.
- If you buy a car, boat or other vehicle, consider its consumption compared with other alternatives. Choose a low emission alternative.
- Flying is the fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions. It is good to prefer the train as an alternative to flying. However, if you think it necessary to fly, consider compensating for the carbon emissions you are causing. There are organisations that calculate the quantity of the emissions you have caused and you can invest money in renewable energy, efficient energy use or forest care projects that save the equivalent amount of emissions.

Prefer energy saving heating and devices and save water

- The household energy consumption can be divided into direct and indirect consumption. Heating of the house, car fuel consumption and use of hot water are considered direct consumption. The consumption caused by the whole production chain of purchased goods and services is considered indirect energy consumption. In statistics, it is often entered as energy use of industry. However, industry is not a separate island but finally its production is linked to private consumption. The quota of direct consumption of the home's energy use is about 40% and that of indirect consumption about 60%.
- Most of the energy flow, therefore, is "hidden" from the individual consumer, but it can be influenced with one's consumer habits and choices, for example by choosing durable products that are produced locally and observing the energy labels.
- The easiest way to influence the home's direct energy consumption is to choose energy efficient and durable devices and avoid purchasing unnecessary devices. For example, the energy consumption of refrigeration devices has been reduced to only one third in 25 years.
- Electric heating is an inefficient and high-emission form of heating, and it is good to consider giving it up and choosing a solution that saves energy (for example an air source heat pump or geothermal heating) when replacing it.



Turn off electric equipment and use energy saving lamps

- Check the temperature of your living quarters and work room and adjust it to maximum 21–22 degrees.
- Devices and lights that are left turned on when not in use, as well as devices in standby state cause needless consumption.
- Incandescent lamps consume energy many times more than energy saving lamps or LED lamps that consume even less. So change the lamps in your home!
- Choose always the device that consumes the least energy, labelled with energy label A, when purchasing new electric devices.

Separate and recycle

- Separate and recycle waste at least as much as the services in your municipality and/or housing company allow. If the possibilities are inadequate, make an effort to improve them.
- An even better way is to avoid generating waste, because most of the products we purchase cause greenhouse gas emissions in the production and distribution stages.
- Collect and recycle or compost biowaste. Waste tips cause about 3% of the greenhouse gas emissions of the EU in the form of methane, which is generated by decomposing biowaste. By recycling or composting biowaste in your garden you can help to solve this problem.

Prefer vegetables in your diet

- Prefer vegetables, organic food and food produced locally in your diet. If you are an omnivore you can prefer the traditional Mediterranean diet in which meat products are more in a role of seasoning than main course. Reducing the consumption of meat has a great impact on preventing climate change. Even a moderate vegetarianism is a sustainable diet in world scale.
- During fasting, one can try out a meatless diet.

You can learn more about your possibilities to reduce greenhouse gas emission for example using the EU calculator: www.mycarbonfootprint.eu/fi/carboncalculator1.asp



SOURCES:

Most of the tips presented here are taken from http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/walk_fi.htm

Other sources are for example
www.sll.fi/luontojaymparisto/energiajailmastonmuutos/ukk2007
www.motiva.fi/ (energy saving service centre)
Wikipedia
www.martat.fi/neuvonta/ymparisto/ilmasta_iloa
Church's environmental diploma manual 2005:
www.evl.fi/ymparistodiplomi



3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Recommendations in a nutshell

Church council

- The environmental programme of the Church council is extended to cover the entire central administration.
- Travelling instructions and purchase instructions are updated if necessary considering the aspect of climate change mitigation and other environmental factors, and extended to cover the entire central administration.
- Projects related to climate and the environment are handled in the Church council in a coordinated fashion. Through mainstreaming, they are involving the operations of all units.
- Church's environmental diploma manual is updated to be in accordance with the church's climate programme.

Synod

- The measures presented in the climate programme are resourced in the budget of the Central Church Fund.

Cathedral chapters

- An environmental review is performed and an environmental programme is drafted in the cathedral chapters.
- An environment working group is founded in the dioceses, if none exists so far. The task of the environment working group is to support the congregations in operations that mitigate climate change and further the environment diploma projects in the congregations.
- Actions to mitigate climate change are discussed during visitations.

Church Council

- The environmental programme of the Church Council is extended to cover all the actors of central administration.
- The travel instructions of the church's central administration are extended to cover all the central administration and they are updated so that they take into consideration environmental and climate aspects and prefer the use of public transportation more clearly than before.
- The procurement instructions of the church's central administration are updated so that they

more clearly than before require taking into consideration environmental and climate aspects in procurement. Climate and environmental impact is adopted as one of the choice criteria in tenders for services and purchases. Check that the procurement instructions cover the entire central administration.

- Meetings and negotiations related to the operations of the central administration are organised as telemeetings using information technology whenever there is reason to do so. Acquisition of the

necessary technology is prioritised in the church's data management strategy.

- The various units of the Church Council pay special attention to climate and environmental issues when controlling and giving instructions to the congregations in issues such as construction and land use.
- For the congregations, the Church Council drafts instructions on construction, repair and renovation work, in which the aspect is not only mitigating climate change but also adaptation to it.
- In investment operations, the church's instructions on ethical investing need to be followed, in which consideration for the environmental issues is included.
- Adequate resources are given to the coordination of climate and environmental issues in the operations of the Church Council (responsibilities, working time etc.).
- If applicable, the operational department of the Church Council includes environmental education in the basic tasks of the units.
- The unit of liturgical life and music continues to produce for the congregations divine service material related to creation, environment and climate issues (creation Sunday, Prayer Day of Peace etc.).
- The church research centre furthers and supports research of ecotheology and of the impact of the church's operations on climate and the environment.
- The church's communications centre drafts a communications plan advocating the climate programme.
- The Church Council monitors the discussion on

environmental and climate issues and participates in it.

- The Institute for Advanced Training includes the climate and other environmental issues in its training operations.
- Advocating education on climate and other environmental issues together with the schools and universities training for church offices is added to the tasks of the monitoring groups of different training fields.
- Church's environmental diploma manual is updated to be in accordance with the church's climate programme.



- A meter calculating environmental and climate impact is set up for the use of the congregations and their members for example as an application on the evl.fi web service.

General Synod

- The General Synod is informed of the church's climate programme. The measures presented in the climate programme are resourced in the budget of the Central Church Fund.
- The operation of the General Synod is included in the church administration environmental programme drafted by the Church Council. The instructions on travelling and meetings are also applicable to the operations of the General Synod.

Episcopal conference

- The episcopal conference is informed of the climate programme.
- The operation of the episcopal conference is included in the church administration environmental programme drafted by the Church Council.

Cathedral chapters

- An environmental review is carried out in the cathedral chapters and an environmental programme is drafted in which mitigating climate change is especially taken into consideration.
- Supporting and furthering the environmental education of congregations is included as a permanent part of the training and development operations of the diocese.
- The cathedral chapter recommends to the congregations obtaining the church's environmental diploma and supports the congregations in diploma projects by offering expert assistance.
- An environmental working group is set up in all dioceses; its expert working group monitors and develops the operations related to the environment and climate issues of the diocese (in several dioceses, such working groups already exist).
- In visitations, the congregations' actions to mitigate climate change are discussed and if defects are found, carrying out an environmental review, drafting an environmental programme and obtaining the environmental diploma are recommended.

3.4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCH'S SERVICE AND MISSION ORGANISATIONS AND FINNCHURCHAID

- Drafting an environmental programme or updating an already existing programme is recommended to the church service and mission organisations and FinnChurchAid (FCA). The programme should include mitigating climate change in the operations in both Finland and abroad, and helping those already suffering from climate change.
- When signing JÄRKI agreements (between organisations and the Church Council), the organisations are required to take into consideration climate and environmental aspects in their own operations. The agreements define the tasks of the church service organisations in environmental education and in actions mitigating climate change.

3.5. CHALLENGES OF THE FINNISH SOCIETY

Climate change demands a change of values of the consumers and support for more sustainable consumer habits of businesses. The third central actor is the public sector: municipalities, state, European Union and other national and supranational systems that legislate and guide the development in society. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland supports the decision-makers in their efforts to mitigate climate change. For example the following actions present challenges to the Finnish society.

Climate-friendly products are favoured by means of legislation and taxation. Especially in energy production and traffic, the use of fossil fuels needs to be reduced rapidly. In the future, fossil fuels cannot be more economical than renewable energy. Powerful investments need to be made in renewable energy production. Biofuels and climate-friendly electricity need to be turned into economically competitive alternatives also from the point of view of the consumer.

Investments are made in climate-friendly transportation. The municipalities and state are in key positions in developing climate-friendly transportation. Bicycling should be an attractive and safe alternative on short distances. On longer distances, rail traffic is most efficient. It is important that the national railway network is maintained and developed. An economic and safe commuter parking in the vicinity of the stations helps motorists to prefer the train or the bus. Also toll fees may have to be implemented in large cities.

Energy use will be reduced. In spite of the rapid development of emission-free energy technology, no sustainable and cost-efficient solutions for limitless energy production are in sight. In order to keep the price of energy from rising too high, Finland needs to follow Sweden in reducing the total use of energy. This may require stricter building regulations, weighting property tax to less used and poorly insulated properties and modifications in vehicle taxation. Regional political solutions and community planning allow reducing and shortening the distances that people and goods have to be transported.

The economy is allowed to grow in a sustainable fashion. Many companies have already in their ethical principles committed to corporate social responsibility, including the economic, social and ecological dimension. The principles of moderation need to be ever more visible in practice so that this responsibility can also be carried in the future. In energy policy, it is important to encourage all companies to produce growth energy-efficiently. It is wise to make new investments in environmental innovations, information technology and the service sector in order to reduce the dependency of the national economy on production that is harmful to the climate.

Carbon sinks will be increased. Carbon is being tied to the soil in various biological and physical processes. Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) allows us to fulfil a part of the emission reduction need. The natural carbon sinks need to be strengthened: the carbon content of forests and swamps can be in-

creased. Destruction of tropical rainforests is stopped with international cooperation. In the use of natural resources, special attention needs to be paid to not weakening nature's ability to adjust as the climate change advances.

Other countries and their citizens are helped in making climate-friendly choices. A rapid change to a climate-friendly society requires investments, which the disenfranchised cannot afford. The flexibility mechanisms included in the Kyoto Protocol are one way for the industrial countries to help the less developed countries in making the necessary reforms, but obtaining emission rights cannot be the main motive for development cooperation. Development cooperation between two cultures needs to be understood as a two-way process: the Finns also need development aid in order to disengage from their consumerist lifestyle.

Also material development projects in Finland need public support. For example farmers can be given investment subsidies for the construction of

farm-specific biogas power plants. Solar heat, wind and geothermal units can be installed in houses and summer cottages with the help of government subsidies. Nobody's prerequisites to satisfy his or her basic needs can be weakened due to mitigating climate change. The most just solution is that those, whose consumption exceeds their need, carry the responsibility.

Caused damage will be compensated. It is the moral duty of industrial countries to compensate for the damage their emissions have caused to those, who suffer more than they are guilty of in climate change. This means strong participation in development programmes, with which the developing countries are adjusting to the climate change that has already been caused. Preparedness to receive climate refugees is also needed. Even in Finland, the government cannot escape its responsibility for possible flood and forest destruction if mitigating climate change is delayed.

Church supports a change of attitude. Climate change is nationally and globally one of the most important challenges that the power-holders in all fields of administration need to face. Fortunately, there are already plenty of solutions, now all we need is courage to grapple them. Future generations will certainly hold the current decision-makers accountable for whether everything possible was made to prevent climate change or whether decisions were postponed because of love of comfort?

STATEMENTS BY OTHER CHURCHES AND CHURCH FEDERATIONS ON THE CLIMATE ISSUE

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden

The Archbishop of Sweden Anders Wejryd has called an interfaith conference focusing on climate change issues, to convene in November 2008. The Uppsala Interfaith Climate Conference is constructed on international experts but there is an intention to also have seminars and other events related to it. According to the Archbishop, the challenge needs to be answered together with other religions: *"We have a common task in mediating future and hope, but also in doing everything that can be done for the climate and the environment. We need a 'power meeting'.*

Anglican Church of Australia

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia that convenes once every three years discussed the climate change and its impact on poverty and decided that each diocese needs to commit to reducing its own ecological footprint. Since the meeting, the dioceses need to report on the effect of their actions to the General Synod. The General Synod also required that the permanent committee of the General Synod found a group of experts to examine the possibilities to manage the difficulties caused by increasing drought. In addition to that, the General Synod urged the federal government to adopt the UN Mil-

lennium goals as a basis of its development cooperation programme and to increase its development cooperation resources to 0.7% of the GNP.

Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is extremely concerned about climate change. In the UN general assembly in the autumn of 2007, Monsignor Pietro Parolin presented the views of the Catholic Church on several occasions. *"Climate change is a serious and unsurpassable challenge to researches and other experts, political and administrative leaders, local authorities and international organisations as well as each sector of society, and humans."* The Catholic Church wants to remind us that it is a universal moral imperative (unsurpassable ethical duty) to be responsible for protecting one's environment. Monsignor Parolin called for international cooperation in searching for solutions to problems related to climate change and in implementing the solutions. Especially through environmental education, means have to be sought for the majority of the earth to reduce greenhouse gas emission and to adjust to climate change feasibly, emphasise sustainable development and cherish clean environment. Pope Benedict XVI has noted: *"Protecting the environment, supporting sustainable develop-*

ment and special attention to climate change are a common serious challenge to the family made up of the entire humankind."

Orthodox Church

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomeus is known for his environmental activism. One of his channels of influence is the organisation called Religion, Science and Environment. The purpose of the organisation is to organise symposia, through which efforts are made to advocate cooperation between different religions, the science community and the environmental movements. Since 1995, six symposia have been organised, for example in 2003 on the Baltic Sea and the latest one in 2006 on the Amazon River. In a statement sent to the Montreal Climate Meeting in 2005, Patriarch Bartolomeus states that in his view, climate change is a symptom of a fundamental moral and spiritual disturbance. He linked together global warming with the state of the poor in the world.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches recommends that the 500-year anniversary of the birth of Jean Calvin, a central figure in the Swiss reformation, be celebrated in 2009 by compensating and reducing greenhouse gases. A statement issued by the executive committee of the World Alliance notes that Calvin had appreciated the creation as God's work. *"Waste of natural resources is an offence to God. We need to be responsible stewards of creation."*

Lutheran World Federation

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) convened in July 2008 in Tanzania. The theme of the meeting is: "Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro: Christian Witness amidst the suffering Creation" The LWF urged its member churches to celebrate July 27th 2008 as a "Climate Change Sunday" and to pay attention in every way to the issues of God's suffering creation.

World Council of Churches

In its statement on climate change, the executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WFC) urges all the signatories of the Kyoto Protocol to its "full implementation". The committee notes that reduction measures far exceeding those of the Kyoto Protocol are needed. The committee notes that greenhouse emissions still far exceed a sustainable level and are even growing. The executive committee calls the churches, church organisations and ecumenical actors to consolidate their cooperation in issues concerning climate change.

Furthermore, the WFC urges its member churches to adopt in their liturgical life a special Creation Time. Creation Time begins in the beginning of September and ends on the second Sunday in October. In the Orthodox world, September 1st is the day of protecting the creation. In the divine services of Creation Time, special attention needs to be paid to creation issues and human responsibility.



PROPOSALS OF YOUNG ADULTS

The proposals have been gathered in the young adults' climate events organised by Changemaker on November 14th, 2007 in Joensuu and November 15th, 2007 in Helsinki.

- The church could be giving an environmental award annually.
- Creation theology could be taught more clearly in confirmation school and linked to the environmental issues.
- For this reason, more teaching material is needed, with which even a person not versed in environmental problems could conduct versatile lessons on it.
- Flying should be avoided in travel in Finland. Travel costs would not need to be compensated for flying.
- Tight international cooperation between different churches should be done in climate issues because the problem is global.
- The church facilities should be more intensively used. There should be more common use of facilities with other parties in society.
- Climate change requires giving up something, but what you give up is replaced by something better.
- The values governing the use of extra money in the church and among its members should be set right.
- Humility, frugality and modesty need to become virtues again.
- The elderly members of the church should be an example, because they know how to live modestly.
- In the tradition of the national church, more "forcing" is needed since in mitigating climate change voluntary measures are not enough.
- The church needs to be a forerunner in society, even the one showing the direction.
- The church needs to make noise towards the parliament as much as possible.
- In the preparation and implementation of the church's climate programme, openness needs to be the goal so that the members are given a chance to give their comments and discuss.

Collected by
the Church's climate programme working group
member Hermanni Riikonen.





Gratitude, respect, moderation is the name of the Climate Programme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The program initiated in the spring session 2007 of the General Synod as a representative initiative. The Church Council appointed a working group of experts of theology, climate change and environment, political decision making and citizens' activity and adopted the work of the group in June 2008.

"The church can make its own contribution for the climate. This is exactly the issue: common striving of the entire humankind. In addition to reason, our Christian faith resonates in our hearts. There are three words in the title of the climate programme: gratitude, respect, moderation. Guilt is paralysing, it makes us stop. But gratitude for the good gifts of God is a mobilising power. Gratitude gets us to respect nature's own balance in our solutions and to praise our Creator for the gifts of God" writes the Archbishop Jukka Paarma in the preface of this book.

The Climate Program gives concrete recommendations to church members, local congregations and church bodies. The church has had its own environmental program, Environmental Diploma for the local congregations for almost 10 years. Already 100 congregations have met the requirements and got the diploma.

"Church supports a change of attitude. Climate change is nationally and globally one of the most important challenges that the power-holders in all fields of administration need to face. Fortunately, there are already plenty of solutions, now all we need is courage to grapple them. Future generations will certainly hold the current decision-makers accountable for whether everything possible was made to prevent climate change or whether decisions were postponed because of love of comfort?" are the concluding words of the program.