

God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action
The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church

Foundation Document

Preface

More than 20 years ago (May 1986) after two years of prayerful study and consultation with specialists in many related fields, the United Methodist Council of Bishops offered a Pastoral Letter and study document called, "In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and A Just Peace."¹ It was an urgent message to all United Methodists and the Church at large on the growing threat of nuclear war and of the extinction of life on the planet through a "nuclear winter." It was an urgent reminder that this world belongs to God, "precious precisely because it is not our creation."² And it declared a "clear and unconditioned 'No' to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons."³ The documents received wide attention in the media, were translated into several languages and debated among leaders in the nuclear establishment. The pastoral letter was read aloud or published in newsletters in an estimated 90% of our congregations, supported by the foundation document and the guide for study and action. The following General Conference affirmed the document as the policy of The United Methodist Church.

In 2004, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church authorized the Council of Bishops to revisit these documents by "educating and encouraging the church, citizens and governments to seek things which lead to peace."⁴ The result of this process is a new Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document, "God's Renewed Creation," which are supplemented by study guides and a variety of web-based materials. "God's Renewed Creation" maintains the firm commitment of the 1986 Council, namely that "nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church's blessing." These documents, generated in 2009, also build on the observations of the earlier Council, that the nuclear crisis threatens "planet earth itself," that the arms race "destroys millions of lives in conventional wars, repressive violence, and massive poverty," and that the "arms race is a social justice issue, not only a war and peace issue."⁵ After many decades and millions of dollars, we are no more secure or peaceful in our world with a larger number of nations in the "nuclear club."

Today's nuclear peril is part of a complex "web of brokenness" that people of faith and good will must confront. The 2009 Council of Bishops expanded its focus to include three interrelated threats:

- Pandemic poverty and disease;
- Environmental degradation and climate change, and
- A world awash with weapons and violence.⁶

While we are not experts on these global issues, we are experts on the moral and ethical life that strengthens and supports God's intentions for Creation. As a strong and diverse global denomination, we speak as pastors to the Church and people of good will around our world calling for awareness, study, and action birthed of hope rather than fear.

The development of "God's Renewed Creation" reflects the purpose of The United Methodist Church to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World." We know the world is being transformed and we seek to cooperate with God's renewing Spirit, especially through our denomination's Four Areas of Focus: (1) developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world, (2) creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations, (3) engaging in ministry with the poor, and (4) stamping out the killer diseases of poverty. Focusing on these four areas will shape our discipleship such that those who seek God will see an image in our behavior that is inviting, encouraging, healing, and inspiring. This project, "God's Renewed Creation," furthers these goals.

"God's Renewed Creation" is a rallying voice and a demonstration of rededicated leadership by the Bishops to engage, inspire and rouse United Methodists and people of good will to a deeper spiritual consciousness as stewards and caretakers of creation. These documents remind us all of the possibility and promise of hope and God's renewal. They challenge us to ask "what now shall we do" to be true disciples of Jesus Christ to address this web of threats? "God's Renewed Creation" also provides recommendations and guidelines for answering this question of discipleship.

Moreover, these documents create space for individuals, congregations, and ecumenical and interreligious bodies to discern and implement their own response, given their particular context. As bishops serving a global church, we know that our people have different kinds of experience with the problems of poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and weapons and violence. We prioritize these problems differently and have varying levels of power and resources for addressing them. However, we also insist that these issues *pose a common threat to our shared future*. We must treat them as interrelated issues, and we must work together, each contributing what we can, to eradicate poverty and disease, stop the destruction of our natural world, and reverse our reliance on weapons and violence.

The Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document share our hope and expectations for our United Methodist Church and the power and influence we can bring if we work in concerted, international and ecumenical/interreligious action. Included with this Foundation Document and at the website

(www.HopeandAction.org) are lists of resources, other valuable online networks, and key Resolutions from *The United Methodist Book of Resolutions* that are rich in action ideas and educational materials. Also included is a timeline for the studies, action planning in congregations and conferences, and ways to stay connected to share stories of struggle, progress and hope. Receive this with our prayers that God will be merciful and sustain us with responsible hope as we go forward.

(End of the Preface to the Foundation Document)

For many hundreds of years “The People of the Book,” Jewish, Christian, and Muslim have lived through hard times of draught, fire, floods, raging waters and tempestuous winds, sustained by the ancient wisdom of the Psalmists who over and over again sang of “the steadfast love of the Lord.”

Today, the human family is awakening to alarming news: after several thousand years of a stable climate that enabled us to thrive, the earth is heating up at an accelerating rate. Climate change poses a particular threat to the world’s poor because it increases the spread of diseases like malaria and causes conflicts over dwindling natural resources. Easy access to small arms ensures that such conflicts turn deadly, and the specter of a nuclear war that would destroy the earth continues to loom over us.

Clearly we have arrived at “*a hinge of history*,” a revolutionary time of great challenge. We turn again to the ancient wisdom and remember the ringing challenge of God: “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19) Do we not see signs that God is at work in this crisis?

As the earth is being transformed, God has blessed human beings with the capacity to read the signs of the times and to respond with intelligence and faith.

Learned scientists and experts monitor the changes that impact our very survival. They are clarifying the measures we must take immediately to save our forests, oceans, air, human and animal ecosystems.

More than that: God has inspired human beings to envision new futures and to invent the tools necessary to make them a reality: Technologies to replace fossil fuels with energy from the wind and sun; new forms of transportation, “green jobs,” and guides for cutting “carbon footprints.” Thousands and thousands of persons in faith-based and community-based coalitions, congregations, businesses and farms are already acting for change in quiet, persistent and profound ways.

Even further: God is bringing people together to plan and to act upon emerging realities: Villages, towns and local governments urge and guide neighbors to share common cause; cities, states and nations identify the special needs of their citizens and implement solutions; the United Nations and international agencies research global problems, identify solutions, and shape the organizations to address them. Public leaders are working at a feverish pace to reshape the rules of engagement between humans and the earth. Empowering all of this is an amazing network of globe-circling monetary, industrial, transportation and communications systems such as the human family has never before known.

Finally: Christian and interreligious communities are speaking out boldly on the interrelated nature of the present crisis. For example, the “Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace” currently being drafted by the World Council of Churches names justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

Why is all of this happening? Because the peoples of the world are reading the signs carefully---
we see clearly that God is doing a new thing, and that God is inviting the human family to participate in transformation.

Called to speak a word of hope and action

In 2004, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church took an explicit step in this movement by calling on the Council of Bishops to offer a word of hope and a call to action in light of the triple threat to peace, people, and planet earth. This Foundation Document is one piece of our response, as your bishops, in addition to a Pastoral Letter, study guides, and a number of web-based resources.

This Foundation Document:

- Describes the interconnected nature of poverty and disease, environmental degradation and weapons and violence through stories of those most affected;
- Shares information about Christian scriptures and beliefs, and our Wesleyan heritage in order to provide a foundation for our response;
- Recommends a variety of actions; and
- Reminds us of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the great sources of encouragement and hope all around us.

Listening with open minds and hearts

Over the past two years, the bishops have asked United Methodists in every region of our denomination Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States as well as interreligious and ecumenical colleagues about their concerns, their own responses to the crises, and what they hoped to hear in the Pastoral Letter and this Foundation Document. The most persistent requests were to:

- Speak to the fear, anxiety, frustration, and concern for future generations;
- Lead a confession of our greed and selfishness;
- Offer a reminder of our Biblical and theological grounding, and Wesleyan passion for social holiness;
- Call for transformation of lifestyles, systems and structures;
- Give special attention to the sense of urgency, impatience, and cynicism felt by our young people;
- As bishops, exemplify living and working in sustainable communities;
- Suggest what we can do in prayer, study and action, and
- Guide our turn from fear and concern to Hope and Action.

This Foundation Document supplements the Pastoral Letter by serving as a reference for prayerful reflection, study and action. It puts real stories and faces on victims of unjust systems and structures. It describes the context of ministry as we plan and connect with others. It helps to prepare us spiritually and mentally to be instruments of God's renewing work. "God's Renewed Creation" moves us all out of isolation and fear and into the streets of our communities and our world with hope and promise because *we cannot help the world until we change our own way of being in it.*

An Honest Look at our Situation

We must prepare our hearts and minds by turning to God, placing all anxiety, loss, and grief before the One who is our ever present help in time of trouble. And, with God's grace, we remember the story that guides and sustains us, holds us accountable, and gives us hope. It is the story that begins with God's loving gift of creation and culminates in God's promise of renewal for all. It is the story of the Word made flesh, the Incarnation, God's presence with us. It is the story of Jesus' ministry to the most vulnerable, his denunciation of violence, greed, and oppression, and his call to discipleship. It is the story of resurrection, of the triumph of life over death, and of the promise of new life in Christ. And it is the story of transformation, from old to new, from woundedness to wholeness, and from injustice and violence to the embrace of righteousness and peace.

We have a role to play in this story, but we have not faithfully performed it. God entrusted us with creation. But, instead of faithfully caring for our peaceful planet and its people, we have neglected

the poor, polluted our air and water, and filled our communities with instruments of war. We have turned our backs on God and one another. By obstructing God's will, we have contributed to pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence.⁷ Around the world, we feel the effects of this interconnected trio in different ways and to varying degrees, but there is no doubt that we all are experiencing elements of the same storm.

The storm builds as powerful forces swirl together...

To impact poverty: the **global economic crisis** as systems built upon self-interest and fraud devastate the global economy; the **resource crisis** as food, water and energy become scarce; the **justice/poverty crisis** as the gap between rich and poor continues to widen; the **global health crisis** as millions die of the preventable diseases of poverty like malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis; and the **refugee crisis** as millions of people are displaced by violence, natural disaster, and loss of jobs.

To impact the environment: the **energy crisis** as oil reserves run out within two or three decades; the **climate crisis** as increasing greenhouse gases threaten to scorch the earth and desertification erodes productive land, polar ice melts, fire seasons lengthen, and coastal floods and severe storms increase in number; the **bio-diversity crisis** as at least one-fifth of all plant and animal species face extinction by 2050.

To impact weapons and violence: the **weapons crisis** as the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical attack looms and precious resources are poured into the sink-hole of futile arms races⁸; the **small arms crisis** as roughly 639 million small arms and light weapons circulate the world and the illegal small arms trade is estimated at close to \$1 billion;⁹ the **"security" crisis** as global military spending surpasses 1.2 trillion USD in 2007, with the United States spending 45% of this amount.

Because these threats are interconnected, each one compounds the effects of the others. This means that people and the planet experience the cumulative effects of this storm. The interrelated nature of these threats also makes it exceedingly difficult to make any real headway on any individual issue. We find ourselves overwhelmed by complex *webs of brokenness*: injustice against migrants, resource scarcity elevated to warfare, energy crises, environmental racism, economic globalization, and violence against the most vulnerable, especially women and girls.

Lives threatened by the storm

Each person affected by this trio of threats has a story. These are just a few that we have heard.

From the Philippines, we learned about 7-year old Rosalie who died on November 21, 2007. “She was among those who are suffering extreme hunger in Rapu-rapu, a fishing community in Albay, Bicol, a place that has been environmentally devastated, where sources of livelihood have been disrupted since the mining corporation started operation.”¹⁰ Rosalie died of hunger on her way home from school.

Our bishops in Angola tell us about the landmines that make farmland unusable. The land simply lies fallow because farming it would be deadly, and removing the landmines is too expensive and dangerous. Angola is one of 82 countries affected by landmines manufactured in 15 other countries. The most conservative estimate is that removing landmines costs 100 times as much as making them. An estimated 15-20,000 people are hurt or killed by landmines every year.¹¹

In part of the Appalachian Mountains of the Eastern United States, roughly 1,000 metric tons of explosive are used every day to blast away the tops of mountains and ridges to reach coal seams underneath. Mountaintop removal (MTR) destroys animal and plant environments, causes landslides, floods, and toxic streams, and generates long-term threats to health and safety. At current rates, MTR will mine over 1.4 million acres in the United States by 2010. This is an area larger than the state of Delaware, USA.¹²

God’s Promise and our Purpose

*“For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for welfare and not for evil,
to give you a future and a hope.” (Jer 29:11)*

It is understandable to look out on this broken and suffering world and feel despair. But the brokenness and suffering are not the complete story. They are part of our experience, but not the sum total of it. Amidst corruption, there is honesty; amidst greed, there is generosity; amidst killing, there is compassion; amidst destruction, there is creation; amidst devastation, there is preservation; amidst apathy, there is righteous indignation, holy dissatisfaction, and a passion for the possible. If we look carefully, we see seeds of hope that can be cultivated by God’s Spirit.

In East Africa, dock workers refuse to off-load a foreign vessel carrying smuggled small arms. Doing what they can to stop the killing in their continent, they also send word to other dock-workers who refuse the shipment when it arrives farther south.

United Methodists from Lage, Germany forge a partnership with people in Cambine, Mozambique to promote solar energy. They install solar panels on the local maternity hospital and a theological seminary. The first boy born in the maternity ward after solar light was installed was named “Solarino” to celebrate the renewable energies bringing new life to God’s creation.

In a number of United States cities, people of faith are working to end the “straw purchase” of handguns -- guns purchased legally are passed into the hands of those who could not legally buy for themselves. Nonviolent volunteers with “Heeding God's Call” raise awareness, approach gun retailers directly, and ask them to accept responsibility for the role they play in violence and to voluntarily end this destructive practice.

Since 14 were killed during a workers’ strike in 2004 in the Philippines, members of The United Methodist Church and ecumenical adults and young people have organized weekly to visit workers, hear their stories, witness struggles, visit the Congress, circulate petitions and renew their resolve to work for justice and peace. These life-changing experiences of sharing strengths, fears, and vulnerability, as well as faith and love, empower young people to choose hope amid discouragement.

Stories about our disregard and destruction of one another and the earth more frequently grab the headlines. But acts of perseverance, compassion, care, and positive innovation take place every day in every corner of our world. Right now, there is someone writing a letter to oppose a discriminatory practice or to advocate on behalf of workers treated unjustly or to support the ratification of a weapons ban. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is setting up disaster response centers and trainings to “prevent a bad thing from becoming worse.”¹³ Someone is sitting by a bedside to provide comfort. In a community center, a trainer prepares a group to use methods of nonviolent resistance in order to make a change without violence.

Somewhere, there is a new school opening and a new well functioning. People are unpacking boxes of medical supplies and mosquito nets. Children are educating their parents about global warming, and organizations are examining their carbon footprint. New forms of transportation are coming on the market: hybrid cars and plug-in cars and hydrogen cars and cleaner burning diesels that do not give children respiratory diseases as they roar through neighborhoods. With the tools of ecumenical organizations congregations are doing energy audits, recycling materials, replacing energy-guzzling appliances and installing solar panels and wind turbines.

No matter how discouraging things seem; no matter how overwhelmed and anxious we feel; no matter how apathetic or cynical we become, God is already at work in the world. We must only *open our eyes* to see God's vision, *open our hearts* to receive God's grace, and *open our hands* to do the work God calls us to do.

We open our eyes to God's vision for this renewed creation, to God's Spirit active in the world, and to our role as channels of God's blessing. When we open our eyes to God's vision, we no longer see a list of isolated problems affecting disconnected people, plants, and animals. Rather, we see one interconnected system that "groans in travail" (Romans 8:22). We see that the threats to peace, people, and planet earth are related to one another, and that God's vision encompasses complete global health. When we open our eyes to God's vision of renewal, we also clearly see the ways in which we obstruct God's process. When we open our eyes to the presence of God's renewing Spirit in the world, we celebrate every charitable act, every just practice, every courageous stand for peace, every moment of reconciliation, every cessation of violence, and every restored habitat as a glimpse of the Kingdom of God, as a "seed-like presence of that which is hoped for."¹⁴

We might think of opening our eyes as a spiritual discipline rooted in John Wesley's understanding of the "natural image of God" (*Works* 2:188).¹⁵ This is the basic equipment we have been given by our Creator as spiritual beings to be both independent and at the same time to relate to God and our neighbor. The first of these gifts is *reason*, the human ability to discern order and relationships, to grasp how things work, and to make judgments. The second gift is our *will*, the ability to commit ourselves to God, to persons, and to goals, and to carry through. The third gift is our *freedom*. God does not want automatons. "A mere machine" is not morally answerable, says Wesley. Human responsibility requires freedom (*Works* [Jackson] 10:234).

Therefore, we reflect the natural image of God when we exercise our reason for accurate understanding and good judgment, and when we respond to God's grace by freely exercising our will to choose good and resist evil. We open our eyes in order to perceive the world accurately, understand our roles and responsibilities, and exercise good judgment.

We open our hearts to confess our sin, to receive God's grace, to discern God's call, and to feel strengthened by God's sustaining Spirit. We are not initiating these actions; rather we are responding to God's gracious invitation to join God's renewal of creation. God invites us, with all of our imperfections, to participate in this work. We open our hearts so that we can change. We open our hearts to feel God's

presence with us as we labor. We open our hearts “that we may anchor our souls in the One who is just, who renews our strength for the work to be done.”¹⁶

We open our hearts to embody the “moral image of God,” to use Wesley’s words (*Works* 2:188). This is not something we possess but is ours only insofar as we continually receive it from the Source. We embody the moral image of God as we receive God’s grace and then reflect that grace out into the world. Wesley described this process of receiving and reflecting God’s grace using the image of breath, calling it “spiritual respiration:” “God’s breathing into the soul, and the soul’s breathing back what it first receives from God; a continual *action* of God upon the soul, the *re-action* of the soul upon God.” (*Works* 1:442)

We open our hands to respond to the Spirit and do the work God calls us to do in the world. As human beings created in God’s image, we have a special responsibility to care for the gift of creation. Wesley calls this “the political image of God.” (*Works* 2:188) We often live as though “being created in God’s image” gives us special privilege, but that is a grave mistake. Our status as human beings increases our *responsibility*, not our *privilege*. Being created in God’s image means that we are charged with caring for this world, not invited to abuse it.¹⁷ Doing justice, building peace, and mending the planet are ways that we take care of what we have been given. However, we are not caretakers for an absentee landlord; rather God’s renewing Spirit works through us and courses around us breathing new life into the planet and its people.

"We are now God's stewards," says Wesley. "We are indebted to God for all that we have.... A steward is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as he pleases, but as his master pleases....He is not the owner of any of these things but barely entrusted with them by another" (*Works*, 2:283). The care of the earth is entrusted to us. We are the "channels of God's blessings" to the other creatures and to the earth itself (*Works*, 2:440).

With open eyes, we see God’s vision

With open eyes, we see God’s vision for the whole of creation. Our Christian understanding of the Kingdom of God is deeply informed by the Hebrew prophetic tradition that formed Jesus. This is why we often think of Isaiah’s prophesy as a description of the Kingdom of God:

No more shall be heard in [Jerusalem] the sound of weeping or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days or a person who does not live out a lifetime....

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.... They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity. (Isa 65:19b, 20, 21, 23)

This is an inclusive vision of well-being. People and the land are healthy and safe. It is the vision of Shalom, which includes “living in harmony and security toward the joy and well-being of every other creature.”¹⁸ It is a vision of wholeness.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul gives us a vision of glory that extends to all of creation. “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now,” he writes. But “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Rom 8:22, 21) God not only offered the gift of creation, but also promises its renewal.

When preaching on this text, John Wesley underscored its meaning for “brute creation.” “While [God’s] creatures ‘travail together in pain,’ [God] knoweth all their pain.” He continues, “In the new earth, as well as in the new heavens, there will be nothing to give pain, but everything that the wisdom and goodness of God can create to give happiness.” God’s promise of salvation is extended to the whole of creation, not just human beings. (Works 2:445) God’s work of salvation has cosmic proportions.

In Colossians, we read that the reconciling and unifying work of Christ extends to all of creation as well. As “the first-born of all creation,” Christ “is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven.” (Col 1: 15 – 20) The resurrection thus serves as “the pledge or promise of the full redemption to come.”¹⁹ The renewal of creation is God’s promise.

The gospel writers often describe Jesus as “preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.” (Matt 4:23) Healing and preaching the Kingdom of God were part of the same ministry for Jesus. This process of preparing for the Kingdom of God, of renewing creation, is akin to a healing process. God is healing the planet.

John Wesley held firmly to this language of healing in his own preaching and teaching. Indeed, one of his favorite metaphors for God was “the Great Physician.” (Works 2:184) For Wesley, God is fundamentally concerned about well-being. Salvation is understood holistically, as complete holiness and happiness. When we expand that notion of salvation to the planet, we see that God’s work of renewing creation is comprehensive. In the hands of the Great Physician, every aspect of our world is being made whole or healthy. Poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and violence are signs of our ill-health.

God is working toward the health of the whole body. If we are to fashion ourselves as instruments of God's renewing work in the world, we too must direct our efforts toward healing our collective body.

With open eyes, we see relationships

With open eyes, we see the relationships between poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence. Although this makes the problems seem even more difficult to surmount, treating them separately is less effective. To accurately diagnose our situation and craft a viable plan for health, we must see and respond to the ways in which the particular threats interact with one another. For example, we cannot address global poverty without addressing water shortage made worse every day by global warming. We cannot stem the proliferation of weapons without examining dwindling natural resources or minerals as causes of violent conflict. We cannot talk about the need for health care, schools, roads, and wells without re-evaluating the amount of money we spend on weapons.

Although we may prioritize poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and weapons differently in light of our individual experiences, we must not lose sight of the connections among them. And we must reject policies and practices that pit the victims of these problems against one another. We must see these problems as linked, like three connected rings, so that a solution for one improves the situation for the others.

In its "Minute on Global Warming and Climate Change," the World Council of Churches captures the relationship between environmental degradation, poverty, and disease.

Those who are and will increasingly be affected [by climate change] are the impoverished and vulnerable communities of the global South who are much more dependant on natural resources for their subsistence and do not have the means to adapt to the changes. Deforestation in Africa, Asia and Latin America; the increase in vector-borne diseases (like dengue or malaria) in the higher altitude areas of Africa as a result of the increase in temperature; the forced migration, displacement and resettlement of populations as a result of sea level rise, particularly in the Pacific; are some of the impacts that will continue to increase the pressure on poor and vulnerable communities.²⁰

Citing the 2007 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Evangelical Environmental Network tells us that "40-170 million additional poor people could be at risk of hunger and malnutrition in this century" due to the decrease in agricultural output. "One to two billion people already in a water-stressed situation could see a further reduction in water availability."²¹

Many global partners have been hard at work on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals—goals to lift the extreme poor of the world by addressing the interconnected issues of severe poverty, disease, sustainable development, globalization, education and human rights. But the fight will not be won easily. “Seeing through the lens of the poor and hungry... we see how a multiplicity of crises—of food, fuel and finance—have grossly disadvantaged the very beneficiaries of the Goals. We cannot assume that the myriad of crises we experience daily—food crisis, financial crisis, energy crisis, climate crisis—are going to be solved by policy makers, let alone the very people and forces that have led us into the brink of these crises.”²²

Diverting resources toward the manufacture and purchase of weapons also worsens poverty. We have known this for a long time. U. S. President Eisenhower said in 1953, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired is, in a sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”²³ We also see that the world’s poor, especially women, children and elders, and persons of racial and ethnic minority, bear the burden of dwindling natural resources and quite literally “get dumped on” by those who export their waste. We know that the poor and powerless are stuck with polluted land and water while others move on to “greener pastures.” And for many communities, “going green” has a short-term expense that pushes the long-term benefits out of reach for the poor. Therefore, “we cannot separate the plight of the poor from the plight of the planet. ... Those least responsible for creating this problem are most vulnerable to its effects.”²⁴

Around the world, dwindling or otherwise valuable natural resources fuel violent conflict. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, militias are raping women, abducting children to be soldiers or sex slaves, and burning villages in their fight to control mineral-rich land. In other cases, land is not necessarily a cause of conflict, but it becomes a consequence. Farmlands littered with landmines are just one example. An age-old practice in warfare is the purposeful destruction of the land so that communities are completely displaced.

While conventional weapons are already damaging creation piece by piece, nuclear weapons “could transform the planet and all its inhabitants into a dreary waste of ash and cinder.”²⁵ Moreover, as a global community, we have yet to solve the life-threatening dilemma of the safe disposal of nuclear waste. Our geo-political situation has changed dramatically since the Cold War, but as U.S. President Barack Obama recently stated, “The threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up.”²⁶ And two critical years have passed since a team of four “Cold War patriarchs”

urgently called for the elimination of nuclear weapons entirely, including a reinvigorated commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty eliminating all nuclear arsenals of the nuclear powers, ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty banning all nuclear explosions, and a joint international effort to eliminate all nuclear arms, step by verifiable step.²⁷

When we see all of creation as one body, we know that our collective health cannot be realized as long as some still suffer. Forty years ago from his cell in the Birmingham Jail, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. penned his famous line: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Written during the economic crisis in 2009, *A Message to the People of The United Methodist Church* reads, “We are no more secure than the most vulnerable among us; no more prosperous than the poorest; and no more assured of justice and dignity than those who live in the shadows of power, void of fairness and equity.”²⁸ As disciples of Christ, who showed special concern for the most vulnerable members of society, *we must open our eyes to the ways in which environmental degradation and violence particularly hurt the poor and marginalized.*

The lethal combination of poverty, environmental degradation, and violence threatens all of creation, but they pose a more severe risk to societies and communities inhabited by people of color. Across Europe and the Americas, racial and ethnic minority communities bear the brunt of harmful pollutants from factories, laboratories, and nuclear power plants, dumping of poisonous wastes, mining the earth for fossil fuels, and replacing or severing neighborhoods with highways and commercial buildings.

For example, for decades Native American tribes and reservations throughout the Western United States have faced the gravest danger from public and private efforts to mine uranium and transport and store nuclear waste and radioactive materials on their lands. Much of the hazardous wastes targeted to these lands are left over from production of weapons for war. Members and allies of the Western Shoshone people are still fighting U.S. government efforts to bury atomic waste at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, a sacred site for the tribe. When tribal leader Ian Zabarte accused U.S. officials of “environmental racism” at a 2007 public hearing, the room erupted in applause, demonstrating the pain and anger many Native people feel about this potentially lethal pollution of their land and water resources. Indigenous peoples have much to teach the world from their wisdom about the earth and the consequences of defiling it.²⁹

It is women who suffer most from poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and weapons and violence. About 70% of the world's poor are women and children, many living in areas where housing is marginal and daily living strenuous. Because of this women and children pay a hefty price when caught in natural disasters exacerbated by climate change.³⁰ Women traditionally shoulder the burden of household food production both in Africa and Asia, while men may tend to focus on growing cash crops or migrate to cities to find paid work. Yet women own a tiny percentage of the world's farmland—some say as little as 1%.³¹

Civil conflict and environmental degradation make it more difficult and even deadly to meet the daily needs of their families. Every day, women are subjected to rape and other forms of violence while they search for firewood and fetch clean water. Rape and sexual slavery are instruments of war such that women and girls in conflict zones experience multiple forms of violence.³² Worldwide, one out of three women experiences some level of abuse in her life.³³ And, in too many places, women are denied power in decision-making processes regarding the issues that affect their well-being so profoundly. Women and children are indeed the most vulnerable in our global family.

With open hearts, we acknowledge our complicity

In our discussion of “The World Community” in the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, we acknowledge this fact: “Some nations possess more military and economic power than do others.” (§165.B) Some nations consume more of the world's resources, generate more of the world's waste, and produce more of the world's weapons. For example,

Twenty percent of the world's population accounts for 76% of private consumption of things like electricity, paper, meat and fish, and vehicle usage.³⁴

“A mere 12% of the world's population uses 85% of its water, and these 12% do not live in the Third World.”³⁵

The United States is the largest supplier of conventional weapons in the world, selling 38% of all weapons purchased between 2000 and 2007—roughly one-half of these weapons were sold or transferred to developing countries.³⁶

There are many ways to designate the differences between us: Global North and Global South; first world and third world; first world and two-thirds world; developed world and developing world. We

must also acknowledge that there is deep poverty and underdevelopment in the so-called “first world,” and there are pockets of wealth and opulence in the so-called “third-world.”

Our social and economic situations are much more complex than any labels or statistics can capture. And yet, some generalizations are also true and important. Those of us in the Global North consume more, waste more, and militarize more than those of us in the second category. We in the North must take responsibility for the environmental damage we have caused, what many now call our “environmental or ecological debt.”³⁷ We must reckon with our vain pursuit of security through weapons and violence.³⁸ We must also confess the greed and selfishness that motivate us to pursue our own comfort while ignoring those in need.

We also recognize that “no nation or culture is absolutely just and right in its treatment of its own people.”³⁹ We in the Global South must acknowledge corruption that threatens our societies. Like our brothers and sisters in the north, we too must challenge our nations’ quest for security through weaponry. When we spend precious resources on weapons, we are stealing from the poor of our country. We confess selfishness and greed, made worse in contexts of scarcity.

We join together in acknowledging that we have resources and gifts that we hide under bushel baskets (Matt 5:15) instead of utilizing them for the glory of God and to the benefit of God’s good earth. We have opportunities for charity and justice-making that we do not exercise. We have also failed to encourage the gifts and energies of our young people by not involving them in community building, leadership and development. And, we have not done enough to stop violence against women and children. At times we all fall prey to despair, losing sight of God’s presence with us and failing to hear God’s call to us. We ask for God’s help and grace as we turn away from harmful practices and commit ourselves to God’s purpose of renewal for all.

With open hearts, we pray

Make us wise as to how fragile and dependent and connected we are,
that in the indulgence in the destruction of others,
we inevitably destroy ourselves.
Give us the grace to be thankful for what we have,
and the willingness to share.
As your church labours in the world,
cause it to be more interested

in your reign of righteousness
than in its own survival,
so that the world may grow into a kinder, gentler, safer place
in which to live.⁴⁰

With open hearts, we respond to God's grace

We cannot rely on our own sense of purpose and strength for this work of renewal. Rather, we absolutely require “transcendent resources.” We turn to God to inform, infuse, and inspire us. We seek “partnership with and participation in the divine Spirit.” However, “*humanity* cannot on its own initiate this relationship. We cannot produce the covenant [with the Creator], for the initiative must come from the other side.... And the name for this initiative from the other side is *grace*.”⁴¹

John Wesley understood grace to be “God’s love for humanity made evident in Christ.” When we open our hearts to receive this grace, forgiveness and renewal become possible.⁴² However, renewal in our personhood is incomplete. Breathing in the grace of God is the first step; we must also breathe God’s grace out into the world. In doing so, we become a channel of God’s blessing. We experience synergy (working together) between God’s grace and our human response. We move toward restoring the image of God in humanity and contributing to the renewal of creation. And, we celebrate the presence of the Holy Spirit, which is “called 'holy' [precisely] because it sanctifies life and renews the face of the earth.”⁴³

With open hands, we do the work to which God calls us

In order to live fully in God’s image, we must make God’s promise our purpose. We respond to the groaning of creation *and* to this vision of renewal by making ourselves a channel of God’s blessing. We open our hearts to receive God’s grace, and we open our hands in response, to do the work God calls us to do. What does it really mean to fashion ourselves as instruments of God’s renewing Spirit? This is not a new question. It is, in fact, a variation of the question posed to Jesus many times. “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25) Jesus answers with the dual love commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt 22:37-39). Participating in God’s work of renewal looks like love shining forth in action.

We love God by paying attention to God’s creation. We pay attention to poverty, environmental degradation, and weapons and violence. Neglecting these ills and those who suffer their effects is contrary to love. We respond to Jesus’ commandment by paying attention to our world. And we begin to fashion

ourselves as instruments of God’s renewal by deepening our spiritual consciousness as faithful stewards and directing our attention to the world God loves.⁴⁴

*We love God and neighbors by practicing compassionate respect.*⁴⁵ We extend our care and concern, provide assistance and comfort as needed. But we also respect the ones cared-for as subjects in their own right. We respect the earth, knowing that it is not ours to plunder. We respect those suffering poverty and disease, granting them full autonomy to determine their own needs and path to well-being. We respect victims of violence by supporting their pursuit of a just peace.. In sum, we “work toward societies in which each person’s value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened.”⁴⁶

We love God and neighbors by changing our behavior. We cannot be instruments of love if we hold on to selfishness and greed. Jesus calls us to love, but he also calls us to conversion, to a radical change in our lifestyle and attitude. His message is clear: We cannot help the world until we change our own way of being in it.

We love God and neighbors by challenging those who do harm. We must not only respond to the suffering already created, but also challenge people, companies, and governments that continue to exploit the weak, destroy the earth, perpetuate violence, and generate more weapons. We follow Jesus’ example of confronting authorities nonviolently, using the force of love.⁴⁷ And we adhere to our Social Principles which affirm the “right of individuals to dissent when acting under the constraint of conscience.”⁴⁸

Anyone who has experienced genuine love knows its power. Looking at the world through the eyes of faith, we can see love at work, transforming an abandoned lot into a community garden, transforming a neglected child into a healthy and happy toddler, and transforming people at war into communities committed to reconciliation. We witness God’s work of renewal in these pockets of transformation. And we participate in that work of renewal by living fully as Christ’s disciples, people whose love of God and neighbor shines forth in action.

Call to Hope and Action

John Wesley insisted, “The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social. No holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.” (Preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, ¶ 5) Ours is not solely a private faith, but one that also orients us toward God *and* the needs of our neighbor and world. At a time when people are

cynical about religion, United Methodists must continue our rich heritage of “faith working by love” as an example of the church’s ability to make a positive difference in the world.

The leaders and members of our denomination have a long tradition of speaking truth to power, naming injustice and advocating for right relationships and equitable sharing among all God’s peoples. Today, United Methodists protest racism and abuse directed toward illegal immigrants and challenge local and federal authorities to maintain a democracy open to all people. In Arizona, Bishop Minerva Carcaño joins thousands in protest, and in Texas, United Methodist Women and the Board of Church and Society organize interreligious prayer vigils that include people from ten different countries.

We feel the energy in thousands of ministries every day in our United Methodist connection. We are strengthened and inspired by the Toberman Neighborhood House in San Pedro, California, which provides services for gang prevention and gang intervention, family counseling and mental health, child care, and community organizing. The Toberman House is one of 100 national mission institutions, founded by the women of the Methodist tradition in 1903 and still supported by UMW Mission Giving.

Today, we are increasingly aware of the powerful role that young adults are playing to transform our societies and to challenge our church to live out its commitments to social justice, creation care, and peace. For example, every year, young adult interns with the Micah Corps in the Nebraska Annual Conference immerse themselves in social justice education, training and advocacy on behalf of the poor and marginalized in their state.

During the many listening and learning events that informed the Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document, participants did much more than articulate their concern about poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and weapons and violence. From ages 10 to 100, they expressed their deep desire to do something about these problems and their great hope that change is possible. These conversations raised awareness about several things:

1. We must study, observe, learn and listen to one another, especially to victims of these threats. Some of us are indeed aware of these problems, but less aware of the interconnections, and even less aware of our personal connections and complicity or the dramatic urgency in what is already happening in our communities. We must listen with particular care to our young people whose knowledge, consciousness and impatience for action can be energizing and inspiring for us all.

2. We can be re-energized and spiritually renewed by the examples from our own Wesleyan and United Methodist heritage and experience. We belong to an amazing denomination with transforming potential already active and agile in thousands of ministry settings including legislatures, parliaments and congresses.
3. We need an ongoing word of hope as we follow Wesley out into the streets and communities to face uncomfortable and difficult things and connect with others working for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.⁴⁹
4. “With God all things are possible.” (Matt 19:26) We have immense hope and it will grow as we study, act and connect.

As your bishops, we have taken this to heart, making several commitments and nine specific pledges in our Pastoral Letter. Here is our encouragement for all people of faith and good will to consider these calls to action.

Let Us Order Our Lives toward God’s Holy Vision

- Renew our understandings of God’s holy vision for peace, peoples and planet Earth.
- Start with personal spiritual transformation reclaiming the “commission” as a faithful, hopeful caretaker with renewed power and energy;
- Establish small groups to sustain practices of prayer, study, empathy, and action;
- Collect, celebrate and share stories of progress, improvement, hope and struggle; share them within communities, congregations, conferences and regions;
- Strengthen spiritual disciplines privately and within small groups, and attend to the guiding of the Holy Spirit;
- Prayerfully identify the specific responsibilities for action and transformation urgently needed in *your* region or context (Global South or Global North, urban or rural, powerful or vulnerable, host or sojourner).

Let us Practice Social and Environmental Holiness

Practice personal and social holiness by joining us as we:

- Organize within our own particular congregations to study and plan what we can do as individuals and members of our churches (for example, congregational “Green Teams” reclaiming the familiar refrain: *Think Globally, Act Locally*);

- Learn the positions of The United Methodist Church on these issues, and consider the many options for response and action recommended by our General Conference⁵⁰;
- Update our knowledge of nuclear proliferation; pending legislation, conventions, and treaties, and the critical timelines for achieving a truly secure world free of nuclear weapons;
- Connect within our own community groups already active in peace, health and justice ministries including energy, immigration, consumerism, discrimination and population growth;
- Call to accountability public officials and decision makers in local and national governments to eliminate barriers to flourishing and sustainable communities.

And practice environmental holiness with us as we:

- Conserve natural resources and use only renewable resources in every gathering and every ministry of our congregations and Church;
- Become partners with other groups already active in defending God’s creation by teaching others, volunteering in projects, and guiding young people and children in the ways that continue this transformation;
- Interact with those in power over community, national and international policies to change systems and structures that destroy, deplete or damage the earth.

Let us Learn from One Another and Practice Prayerful Self-Examination

- Broaden our understanding of these problems and our accountability for them;
- Deepen our relationship with those most affected by the interrelated trio, evaluate our complicity with their causes, and challenge those who ignore their severity;
- Learn how to practice Wesleyan “holy dissatisfaction” and
- Take concrete steps as part of God’s gracious movement in this broken world.

Let us Live and Act in Hope

Renewing creation is an act of discipleship for us. It is the work we are called to do, and the One who calls us accompanies us as well so that we experience a synergy of grace and human responsibility. God is even now “doing a new thing,” and we are invited to serve the divine purpose of renewing creation. Despite the threats posed by these interrelated forces, we refuse to be governed by fear. On the stormy waters with his disciples, Jesus admonishes them (and us) to live in faith rather than fear. (Mark 4:35-41) His ministry in the world provides a pattern for resisting the forces that terrify without succumbing to or employing terror. And his resurrection assures us of the new life to come, new life for

every element of creation no matter how wounded. The God who raised Jesus from the dead is the God who breathes new life into every aspect of our broken world.

Facing these complex and difficult problems will press us to practice a “responsible hope,” one that remains open to promise and peril. “And, given the often overwhelming experiences of life, we must frequently practice hope in pieces, sometimes grieving and shouting, sometimes celebrating. The cumulative effect... is a disposition that generates and sustains moral action because it attends to possibilities and limitations. It buoys the spirit and steels the spine.”⁵¹

Included with this document and at the website are lists of key resources, other valuable online resources, and key Resolutions from *The United Methodist Book of Resolutions* that are rich in action ideas and educational materials. Also included is a timeline for the studies, action planning in congregations and conferences, and ways to stay connected to share stories of struggle, progress and hope.

Closing Word of Hope and Blessing

This road is long and the work is hard; so, we must see every action we undertake as a *practice of hope*. Through these actions, we put into practice our faith in this divine process of renewing creation. We act in response to God’s grace, as followers of Christ Jesus, and in partnership with the Holy Spirit. Our actions then reinforce a disposition of hope that shapes our character as resurrection people, people who believe that death and destruction do not have the last word, people who know that renewal and reconciliation are underway, people who have a passion for the possible. With every action to eradicate poverty and disease, stop the destruction of our natural world, and reverse our reliance on weapons and violence, we put our hope into practice and live out the faith that sustains us.

We close this Foundation Document with a blessing, reminiscent of Wesley’s spiritual respiration.

Breathe in the grace and love of God.

Feel the breath renew your spirit and revive your soul.

*Breathe out – speaking, acting, and being grace and love in the world.*⁵²

¹ The United Methodist Council of Bishops, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, “A Pastoral Letter to All United Methodists” (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986).

² Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, National Council of Churches, March 10, 2009 at “People of Faith United for Justice” sponsored by the Wisconsin Council of Churches/Interfaith Partners.

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- ³ *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace.*
- ⁴ Resolution #367, 2004 *Book of Resolutions* (Resolution #8004, 2008 *BOR*, p. 915).
- ⁵ *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace.*
- ⁶ In 2002, Reverend Dr. William Sloane Coffin, referring to a political trio of threats said, “A more likely and far more dangerous trio would be environmental degradation, pandemic poverty, and a world awash with weapons.” *The Chautauqua Appeal*, with Joan Brown Campbell and Stephen J. Sidorak, Jr.
- ⁷ Dr William Sloane Coffin, Jr., recalling a geo-political “axis of evil” said, “A more likely and far more dangerous trio would be environmental degradation, pandemic poverty, and a world awash with weapons.” *The Chautauqua Appeal to the Religious Communities of America*, 2002.
- ⁸ Adapted from Bishop Dale White, “Riding out the Perfect Storm: Communities of Faith Navigate a Scorching Earth,” March 2009 for the General Board of Church and Society and Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Wash., D.C.
- ⁹ Center for Defense Information. Obtained from: <http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=2996>
- ¹⁰ Philippines Central Conference, Public hearing on ‘In Defense of Creation’ (February 13, 2008).
- ¹¹ <http://www.landmine-action-week.org/statistics.html>.
- ¹² “U.S. Geological Survey Report on Consumption of Explosives” at <http://www.minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/commodity/explosives/600401.pdf>.
- ¹³ Reverend Sam Dixon, quoted by Melissa Hinnen, “Relief Office in the Philippines Offers Help, Hope” July 28, 2009.
- ¹⁴ Paul Tillich, “The Right to Hope: A Sermon,” in *Paul Tillich: Theologian on the Boundaries*, ed. Mark Kline Taylor (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991): 327.
- ¹⁵ “Works” refers to: *The Works of John Wesley*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press)(Bicentennial Edition).
- ¹⁶ Prayer from the Opening Worship of the 40th Year Celebrations, United Theological College of the West Indies.
- ¹⁷ “The Natural World,” Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, ¶ 160.
- ¹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom* (New York: United Church Press, 1982).
- ¹⁹ James Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1991): 131.
- ²⁰ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2008/reports-and-documents/public-issues/minute-on-global-warming-and-climate-change.html>
- ²¹ “Global Warming and the Poor: A sheet by the Evangelical Environmental Network” 9/19/08
- ²² Liberato Bautista, President of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the UN, in remarks to the Civil Society Development Forum, July 2, 2009, Geneva.
- ²³ Dwight D. Eisenhower, April 16, 1953, “Chance for Peace” speech before the American Society for Newspaper Editors.
- ²⁴ Testimony of John Hill, Director Economic and Environmental Justice GBCS to the U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on “Climate Legislation.” www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=3631941&ct. Mr. Hill was drawing on the Communiqué of the African College of Bishops, September 2008.
- ²⁵ *The Chautauqua Appeal to the Religious Communities of America*, 2002 (Endnote 1.).
- ²⁶ Barack Obama, Remarks by President Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, 2009
- ²⁷ George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, and William Perry roused a resistant political establishment with two op-ed essays in the Wall Street Journal, first in January 2007 with follow-up in 2008. See www.nuclearsecurityproject.org for specific goals promoted by the four co-authors.
- ²⁸ “A Message to the People of The United Methodist Church” from the President of the Council of Bishops, the Chair of the Table of General Secretaries, and the Chair of the Connectional Table. February 2009.
- ²⁹ Chief Seattle, member of the Duwamish Tribe, was a wise, eloquent and courageous leader of the Suquamish in the Puget Sound area of the U.S. These words are from his famous speech in 1854 to U.S. President Franklin Pierce: “You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children that the earth is our mother, whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.”
- ³⁰ See, for example, “Women, Gender Equality, and Climate Change” WomenWatch: Information and Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of women, United Nations. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/. Accessed on October 30, 2009.
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- ³¹“FAO Strategies for Improving Food Security,” UNESCO, at http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme_c/mod14/uncom14t04s01.htm. Accessed October 30, 2009.
- ³² “Rape in Times of Conflict and War” A Resolution from the General Board of Global Ministries approved by the 1996 General Conference of the United Methodist Church. <http://gbgm-umc.org/mission/resolutions/rapewar.html> Accessed October 30, 2009.
- ³³“Women Worldwide Remain Victims of Domestic Violence,” March 5, 2008 release of the World Bank on the World Health Organization report, at <http://youthink.worldbank.org/4teachers/pdf/gender/story-domesticviolence.pdf>. Accessed October 30, 2009.
- ³⁴ World Bank (for statistics from 2005) and United Nations Development Program (for list of items, from 1998); obtained from: <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/235/consumption-and-consumerism>
- ³⁵ Maude Barlow, “Water as Commodity - The Wrong Prescription,” *The Institute for Food and Development Policy*, Backgrounder, Summer 2001, Vol. 7, No.3. Obtained from: <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats#src30>.
- ³⁶ “Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2000-2007” U.S. Congressional Research Service. Obtained from: <http://www.globalissues.org/article/74/the-arms-trade-is-big-business>
- ³⁷ See, for example, “Statement on Eco-Justice and Ecological Debt” World Council of Churches (February 9, 2009).
- ³⁸ “In Search of Security”, published by the United Methodist Council of Bishops Task Force on Safety and Security, 2004.
- ³⁹ Social Principles ¶165.A.
- ⁴⁰ Twenty-Fifth Annual Service of the Caribbean Conference of Churches
- ⁴¹ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998): 22-23.
- ⁴² Runyon, 26.
- ⁴³ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992): 7-8.
- ⁴⁴ Resource: Sallie McFague. In accompanying study guides, we may provide additional resources for each of these points. McFague’s books (particularly, *Super, Natural Christians*) are examples of resources for this point in particular.
- ⁴⁵ Margaret Farley, *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics and Other Questions* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002).
- ⁴⁶ Social Principles, “The Social Community”, ¶ 162.
- ⁴⁷ Walter Wink, *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millenium* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).
- ⁴⁸ Social Principles, “The Political Community” ¶164.F.
- ⁴⁹ This language comes from the “Initial Statement toward an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace,” which is part of the World Council of Churches’ ecumenical peace convocation planned for 2011.
- ⁵⁰ See “Sampling of Related Resolutions of The United Methodist Church” in the Appendix of this document.
- ⁵¹ Ellen Ott Marshall, *Though the Fig Tree Does Not Blossom: Toward a Responsible Theology of Christian Hope* (Abingdon Press, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006) p. 107.
- ⁵² Ellen Ott Marshall, “Benediction,” Claremont School of Theology Chapel (April 30, 2009).