

# Faith and Facts: Eco-Justice

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- **Genesis 1:26-31** – Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’ God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
- **See additional Scripture references related to each issue listed below.**

## WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

From the Social Principles 2008:

- *Par. 160 I. The Natural World*—“All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives...Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation.”
- *Par. 163 IV. The Economic Community*—“We claim all economic systems to be under the judgment of God no less than other facets of the created order. Therefore, we recognize the responsibility of governments to develop and implement sound fiscal and monetary policies that provide for the economic life of individuals and corporate entities and that ensure full employment and adequate incomes with a minimum of inflation. We believe private and public economic enterprises are responsible for the social costs of doing business, such as employment and environmental pollution, and that they should be held accountable for these costs...”

## Issues of Eco-Justice

- **Budget and Taxes** – “We recognize the responsibility of governments to develop and implement sound fiscal and monetary policies that provide for the economic life of individuals and corporate entities and that ensure full employment and adequate incomes with a minimum of inflation” (Social Principles, ¶163). Scripture references: Jeremiah 29:7 and Matthew 6:21
- **Clean Air** – “We believe clean air is a basic right and necessity for all life. We must clean up and prevent air pollution, which threatens the health of our families and the survival of all life on the planet” (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Environmental Stewardship," ¶10). Scripture references: Genesis 2:7; Psalm 104:24,30; John 3:8
- **Clean Water** – “Water is an integral part of God’s radical expression of God’s love for all humanity. Water cannot be monopolized or privatized. It is to be shared like air, light and earth” (2004 Book of Resolutions,

"Protection of Water," ¶13). Scripture references: Genesis 1:9-10; Exodus 23:25; Numbers 24:7; Ezekiel 34:18; Revelation 21:6

- **Corporate Responsibility** – “Corporations are responsible not only to their stockholders, but also to other stakeholders: their workers, suppliers, customers, the communities in which they do business, and for the earth, which supports them. We support the public's right to know what impact corporations have in these various arenas, so that people can make informed choices about which corporations to support” (Social Principles ¶163.I). Scripture references: Luke 16:10-13 and Philippians 2:3-4
- **Environmental Racism** – “People of color are disproportionately affected by toxic contamination due to the production, storage, treatment, and disposal process of hazardous materials and wastes ... As a result, their communities have become the dumping grounds for waste with devastating economic and health consequences” (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Environmental Racism," ¶19). Scripture reference: Isaiah 58:9
- **Global Warming and Energy** – “A transition to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources will combat global warming, protect human health, create new jobs, and ensure a secure, affordable energy future” (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Energy Policy Statement," ¶5). Scripture reference: Isaiah 24:4-5 and 2 Chronicles 7:14
- **Labor and Worker Justice** – “We support the right of public and private (including farm, government, institutional, and domestic) employees and employers to organize for collective bargaining into unions and other groups of their own choosing. Further, we support the right of both parties to protection in so doing and their responsibility to bargain in good faith within the framework of the public interest” (Social Principles, ¶163B). Scripture references: Jeremiah 22:13 and James 5:4
- **Living Wage** – “Every person has the right to a job at a living wage” (Social Principles, ¶163C). Scripture references: Jeremiah 22:13 and James 5:4
- **Social Security** – “Because of the important role of Social Security, people of faith have a special interest in ensuring that it is operated fairly and securely. Its benefits must continue to be designed to overcome disadvantages of age, race, gender, or disability and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is flexible enough to adjust to the changing needs of society. Social Security is grounded in our biblical roots, ‘Honor thy father and mother,’ and ‘protect the widow and orphan’; nourished in the social justice teachings of John Wesley; and flourishing in the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, especially in the areas related to the rights of the aging, persons with disabilities and women...” (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Women and Social Security in the United States" ¶230). Scripture references: Isaiah 1:17 and Exodus 20:12.
- **Sustainable Living** – “We are called to eliminate overconsumption as a lifestyle, thus using lower levels of finite natural resources. We are called to seek a new lifestyle rooted in justice and peace” (2004 Book of Resolutions, "Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future," ¶7). Scripture reference: Ezekiel 34:18

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Alliance for Food—[allianceforfairfood.org](http://allianceforfairfood.org)
- Ecumenical Eco-Justice Network—[www.ecojusticenetwork.org](http://www.ecojusticenetwork.org)
- Fair Labor Association—[www.fairlabor.org](http://www.fairlabor.org)
- INMEX (Informed Meeting Exchange)—[www.inmex.org](http://www.inmex.org)
- Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility—[www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org)
- National Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture—[www.sustainableagriculture.net](http://www.sustainableagriculture.net)
- National Farm Worker Ministry—[www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)
- National Low Income Housing Coalition—[www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)
- National Neighborhood Coalition—[www.neighborhoodcoalition.org](http://www.neighborhoodcoalition.org)
- National Youth Employment Coalition—[www.nyec.org](http://www.nyec.org)
- Rural Coalition—[www.ruralco.org](http://www.ruralco.org)
- Faith and Politics Institute—[faithandpolitics.org](http://faithandpolitics.org)