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# The Sacramento Bee

## OPINION EDITORIAL

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### A religious call to action to save our environment

Concern for creation, the web of life that sustains us, is the heart of a religious life. As people of faith, we are called to protect creation. Like any good steward, we believe making responsible choices now will help ensure a healthy future.

Global warming is one of the biggest threats facing humanity today. While we don't know everything about global warming, we have heard enough scientific evidence to understand that human health, ecosystems and our very survival are threatened by refusing to act. We know that the problem of global warming can only be solved with collaborative efforts among all nations -- if we wait to address this problem it could be too late.

This is an important moral challenge. While it is not clear exactly what the effects of global warming will be, it is clear that the poorest people of the world will suffer the most. These are the people who cannot afford to address flooding, droughts and disease the way wealthier nations might. They will continue to suffer if we refuse to take action.

#### **Before long we will suffer too.**

The Kyoto Treaty to address global warming went into effect on February 16<sup>th</sup>, beginning a new frontier in international cooperation. The Treaty has been ratified by 141

countries that are taking steps to cut their global warming emissions. These countries have taken a leadership role. Unfortunately the U.S. is not participating. Had the U.S. signed the Treaty, reduction of global warming emissions would be mandated for this country as well. People of faith, however, don't need a mandate to do the right thing.

We are working with congregations to reduce our pollution through energy assessments, energy efficient lighting and appliances, supporting the development of clean energy, and providing education. Over the past year, California congregations have taken steps that will keep 4.6 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering our atmosphere (the equivalent of keeping nearly 460 cars off the road for a year or planting over 625 acres of trees). In addition, some religious leaders helped support legislation that will reduce automobile pollution. This bill will lower global warming emissions and maintain clean air for all of us. Unfortunately for Californians, this legislation is being challenged by the automobile manufacturers.

There has been some encouraging progress at the state level, yet we need responsible federal legislation to fully address this global problem. We can be part of the solution or we can

choose to deny that a problem exists thus risking the future of our children. Practical solutions are available and we need to begin implementing them. It would be immoral not to do so.

In California and across the country, the religious community is taking action and answering the call for stewardship of our planet, our health and all of God's Creation. We appreciate that many nations have signed the Kyoto Protocol and that some states have begun adopting responsible policies to address global warming. We urge the United States, as the world's biggest contributor to global warming emissions, to take similar action. People of faith must answer the call to stewardship of creation for the sake of all who live on this earth. We are grateful to those nations around the world who are answering this call.

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