

Walk & Witness for Climate and Creation

Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, United Nations

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Remarks of Rev. Fred Small

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Introductory Remarks

We gather here as clergy and laity from diverse faith traditions. We come in grief and repentance. We come in sorrow and anger. We come in hope and determination. We come in gratitude and joy

What God has created on this exquisite planet is so beautiful it makes us weep: sweet tears for beauty and bitter tears for injustice.

Every religious tradition forbids theft, but global warming steals from our own children and grandchildren and from the most vulnerable of the earth's people.

Every religious tradition forbids idolatry, but when we ignore global warming, we make idols of cheap gasoline, compulsive consumption, and corporate balance sheets.

But the law of karma, of cause and effect, is overtaking us.

The earth is overheating. Already, freak storms, floods, wildfires, freezes, heat waves, and drought leave thousands homeless and hungry. When rising seas swallow entire nations, when tropical diseases spread worldwide, when once thriving cities are awash, when once bountiful agricultures collapse, bringing down economies and governments, what will we tell our children?

Will we say we didn't know? Will they believe us? Will we believe ourselves?

"You have built houses of hewn stone," said the prophet Amos, "but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine."

It is not too late for us or the earth.

We must repent our recklessness, our selfishness, our short-sightedness.

We must love our neighbors as ourselves, and see as our neighbors all the people of the earth: of Texas and Tuvalu, of South Carolina and Samoa, of New York, New York, and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

We must demand of our corporate leaders responsible stewardship of what God has loaned us in trust. We must demand of our elected representatives effective and enforceable limits on greenhouse emissions or vote them out of office.

We must value the earth and each other more than the seductions of convenience, price, and profit.

As people of faith, we must dedicate ourselves and our religious communities to stopping and reversing global warming.

Climate change calls us to be better people than we have been. It forces us to dig deep and discover hidden springs of courage, compassion, self-discipline, and love.

We can do it because we must.

Today, let us begin.

Amen.

Concluding Remarks

Today we have heard voices of grief, fear, anger, faith, hope, and love. Now it's up to us to respond with courage and compassion and commitment, to make a revolution of consciousness to safeguard creation.

It all begins and ends with love—love for one another, for our children, for the divine beyond name or concept, for this beautiful and sacred earth, love even for those who oppose and thwart us, sometimes called our enemies.

“As for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end,” wrote the Apostle Paul. “Love never ends.”

We cannot stand by as the human race destroys itself, its habitat, and countless other species.

"There is nothing more tragic in all this world," said Martin Luther King, Jr., "than to know right and not to do it."

Today let us rededicate ourselves to doing what we know is right. Let us be faithful stewards of creation. Let us heal the earth and ourselves.

Let us stop global warming.

Amen.