



# Resolutions To Action

LCWR Global Concerns Committee

Volume 13, Number 1

January 2004

## Reverencing the Earth

*by Intercommunity Environmental Council Region 10 Members  
Janet Kuciejczyk, CSJ; Corlita Bonnarens, RSM; Carol Reeb, SSND*

“Sacred is the call, awesome indeed the entrustment. Tending the holy. Tending the holy.”

How do we continue to move beyond these lyrics to a change in our patterns of action? The August 2003 LCWR national assembly grounded us in the reality of the sacred enterprise in which we exist not as dominators of creation but as participants in a cosmic story. Does our participation reverence the earth or is it characterized by an addictive over-consumption, which depletes Earth’s non-renewable resources?

### EXPERIENCE

We know that:

- The United States has less than 5 % of the world’s population yet uses 25% of the world’s oil supply and 40% of the world’s gasoline.
- Oil and gas production are non-renewable fossil fuels often found in foreign countries.
- Much of the 8 billion barrels of oil imported annually fuels our vehicles.
- Due to emissions produced by power plants that generate the electricity used to run our homes plus home emissions, an average house releases 22,000 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.
- The world’s leading climate scientists have warned that there is now 30 percent more

carbon dioxide -- the primary global warming gas -- in the atmosphere than a century ago.

### SOCIAL ANALYSIS

As a nation we are driven by over-consumption of energy and resources. The present course of overwhelming poverty of the majority of the planet’s inhabitants and excessive consumption by the minority bodes an unsustainable planetary future. We can make a real environmental difference just by using energy more efficiently and by making choices for cleaner energy. Hybrid vehicles represent one such choice. The Toyota Prius, for example, gets 55 miles per gallon in combined city and highway driving and accelerates from zero to 60 mph in 10 seconds with a 650 mile driving

range without refueling. The Toyota Prius, like other hybrids, is powered by a downsized gasoline engine assisted by an electric motor with a battery that is charged by the gas engine and by brake friction. The Prius emits relatively low amounts of carbon monoxide and other smog forming gases. Its emissions of carbon dioxide are about half that of

*Resolutions to Action* is an occasional publication of the Global Concerns Committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Members of the committee are: Mary Brigid Clingman, OP; Toni Harris, OP; Barbara Moore, CSJ; Peggy Nolan, BVM; Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL; Peggy Sause, OP; Aline Marie Steuer, CSC; and Marie Lucey, OSF, staff. Please address correspondence to:



LCWR  
8808 Cameron Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-588-4955  
fax: 301-587-4575  
mlucey@lcwr.org

the average passenger vehicle. Many other hybrids have comparable statistics.

Along with transportation, electricity generation is the largest source of the air pollutants that harm human health, damage ecosystems and threaten the stability of our climate. Ten to 13 % of the average home's electric costs can be controlled with the flip of a switch. Using an energy efficient rather than a standard light bulb can, over its lifetime, reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by 1300 pounds. Replacing an old refrigerator with a new, efficient model can, over its lifespan, reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by nearly 11,000 pounds.

## REFLECTION

Many religious traditions provide motivation and rationale for changing our patterns of behavior so as to be more earth reverencing. Our Christian tradition reminds us that we are not simply for ourselves but that we are part of one body, a

body which includes the living and non-living aspects of creation. We recognize that we are not the only ones who are God's children but that every other person on the planet is our sister and brother and that we are called to love them as God loves them.

The Native American wisdom also tells us "In our way of life, in our government, with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation to come. It's our job to see that the people coming ahead, the generations still un-born have a world no worse than ours -- and hopefully better. When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generation are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them." (*Oren Lyons, Faith keeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation*)

If this emerging vision is to be sustainable we need to make the spiritual journey as well as the practical adjustments to make it real.

## ACTION

1. The next time you purchase a car, choose one with the lowest emissions and the highest fuel economy that can meet your driving needs. Automakers need a strong signal that consumers care about air pollution and global warming.
2. Tell automakers that you want more clean-vehicle options by writing them directly or signing the Clean Car Pledge at [www.cleancarpledge.org](http://www.cleancarpledge.org).
3. If possible choose to purchase a hybrid vehicle that emits Super Ultra Low emissions and that gets up to 52 mpg.
4. If appliances are old, replace them as you can with new energy-efficient models.
5. Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescents.

---

In our way of life, in our government,  
with every decision we make,  
we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation to come.

It's our job to see that the people coming ahead,  
the generations still un-born have a world no worse than ours -- and hopefully better.

When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because  
we know the faces of our future generation are looking up at us from beneath the ground.  
We never forget them.