



european christian **environmental** network

**8th Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network
'Our daily bread – living in a time of climate change'
Prague, 9 – 13 June 2010**

A call to the Churches and Christians in Europe

Dear friends in Christ,

We write to you as 85 participants – representing 23 countries – gathered at the European Christian Environment Network's (ECEEN) 8th Assembly, held at the International Baptist Theological Seminary at Prague, 9-13 June 2010. This took place under the theme of 'Our Daily Bread – living in a Time of Climate Change', with contributions from churches of Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions.

Considering the contemporary serious social, economic and financial crises we face today, we ask churches and Christians of Europe to be carefully vigilant, and wherever possible to oppose trends which distract and deter us from environmental sustainability.

In spite of the disappointing outcome from the international negotiations at Copenhagen last December, many of our churches continue to be actively committed to addressing the challenges of catastrophic climate change threatening God's creation on Earth. We are already facing the extinction of living organisms and of ecological sustainability across the world, and especially in more vulnerable countries, communities and habitats. Displaced people and environmental refugees also require justice in Europe and elsewhere.

The consequences of climate change often affect the poor and excluded more than those who cause the damage, increasing injustice, sometimes with militaristic zeal.

We believe our churches have a strong role to play in responding to these challenges, and indeed their engagement in grassroots movements and campaigns before and after Copenhagen are to be applauded. At this Assembly we have heard compelling evidence of the links between the ways we produce our food and environmental damage.

Modern lifestyles and patterns of food consumption pose great risks for our future. For instance, current intensive meat production is the number one contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions (according to figures from FAO) and the drive to provide cheap food comes at an environmental cost. The soil is often overstressed, with excessive use of chemicals, and biodiversity is depleted. Many species of wild plants and animals are under threat of extinction

from loss of habitat. The quantities of energy and water required by agro-businesses are unsustainable on current demands. Additionally, 'food miles', the risks of the genetic modification of organisms, food insecurity, and an excessive dependency on intensive meat production, all raise serious ethical questions for Christians in all our churches.

Faith-based organisations must develop their calling to bring hope turning words into actions inspired by the presence of the Holy Spirit in all life. Our hope springs from the gospel of the Triune God who creates, redeems and sanctifies the world and takes us into the divine act of love as co-workers in Creation. So it is our wish to encourage church leaders, church councils and all believers in Christ to respond to such food issues, and to demonstrate their concerns with us to our wider society and to lead by examples of new ways of sustainable living.

We therefore encourage you to join us in increasing your awareness and engagement, remembering that 'daily bread' for all life is a gift of God. We invite you to recognise that feeding the world raises deep questions as people experiencing hunger or poor diet are not able to grow in the image of their Maker. This is not right!

Furthermore, we should recall that irrespective of its worth to people, the whole inhabited world is of value to the triune God.

Our passionate pastoral concern for future generations of human and non-human life on Earth leads us to be extremely troubled about these complex but very real food questions. As Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, "Food for myself is a material concern; for my neighbour is a spiritual matter".

Finally, we offer this prayerful reflection on our Lord's Prayer for you to use in your own church and ministry at this critical time which is a 'kairos' moment for us...

Yours faith-fully

Delegates and participants of the Assembly in Prague

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) is a church network promoting co-operation in caring for creation. ECEN is an instrument of the Conference of European Churches for addressing the relationship to nature and the environment from the perspective of Christian theology and Christian way of life.