

## Ash Wednesday Declaration: Repent for \"shrug-culture\" on climate change

Brian Roewe | Feb. 22, 2012 Eco Catholic

Religious leaders in the United Kingdom are using this Ash Wednesday as a call to all Christians to repent for the \"shrug-culture\" existing in many parts of the world toward climate change.

Operation Noah, a Christian climate change lobby, released today its Ash Wednesday Declaration – a seven-point call to action based around biblical themes about creation and humanity's responsibility to care for it.



"Traditionally, Christians commit themselves to repentance and renewed faith in Jesus Christ on Ash Wednesday," said David Atkinson, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Southwark, in a press release. "We must live out that faith in relation to our damaging consumer economy, over-dependence on fossil fuels and the devastation we, as a species, are inflicting on God's world."

"We believe that responsible care for God's creation is foundational to the Gospel and central to the church's mission."

[\[Read the full Declaration here\]](#) [1]

Joining Atkinson in backing the Declaration are the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu of Cape Town, South Africa and Scottish Cardinal Keith O'Brien, archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh. Leaders of the Methodist, Baptist and United Reform churches also pledged their support.

Numerous churches across England, including St. Mary-Le-Bow in London, held public prayer services to launch the Declaration, subtitled "Climate Change and the Purposes of God: a call to the Church."

Operation Noah was formed in 2001 by Christian Ecology Link. Its website state its goal is a complete decarbonization of the British economy by 2030, and to reach that end, the organization works to educate and advocated church leaders, governmental leaders and children through various campaigns.

The Declaration states that global warming and its effects raise questions central to the Christian faith, and highlights seven areas, each stemming from a specific biblical verse (excerpts below are not bible verses, but bits from each theme in the Declaration):

- **Find joy in creation-** "The beauty and harmony of God's creation is for all cultures a source of human well-being, spiritual nourishment and joy."
- **Listen-** "Prophets are those who speak truth, usually uncomfortable truth, to their generation." In that respect, "We must listen to the scientists warning us of approaching dangers, exercise discernment, and be wary of 'false prophets' representing the vested interests of the powerful."
- **Repent-** To continue polluting habits goes against God, and "for our generation, reducing our dependence on fossil fuels has become essential to Christian discipleship."
- **Take responsibility-** Humans "have a unique responsibility for the well-being of creation," so to that end, "We must use our power wisely to promote the flourishing of future generations and the diversity of life on earth."
- **Seek justice-** Climate change justice means taking action for the poor, for future generations and for all creatures. To that end, "the challenge is to seek a different, sustainable economy, based on the values of human flourishing and the well-being of all creation, not on the assumption of unlimited economic growth, on overconsumption, exploitative interest and debt."
- **Love our neighbors-** "Loving our neighbour requires us to reduce our consumption of energy for the sake of Christ, who suffers with those who suffer. To live simply and sustainably contributes significantly to human flourishing."
- **Act with hope-** "Hope in God motivates us to take action that can lead to transformation, for by God's power at work within us, God is able to accomplish more than we can ask or imagine. Despite the strong probability of very serious effects from global warming, for Christians despair is not an option."

Because of the connections between each of these tenants and climate change, Operation Noah views climate change as a confessional issue for our time, one that requires spiritual reflection and action.

"We believe that this is a time of urgency for the church," said Atkinson. "The threat of runaway climate change is the most significant moral question facing us today."

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.operationnoah.org/read-the-declaration>