

Dear Colleague:

I greet you in the precious name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

“God’s Creation is in crisis.” This is the opening sentence of a pastoral letter adopted by the Council of Bishops [COB] of The United Methodist Church On Tuesday, November 3, 2009. This pastoral letter addresses the subject of God’s creation. The exact title of the letter is “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.”

I was pleased to join with my colleague bishops in adopting this pastoral letter, similar to the Council’s landmark 1986 call, “In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace.”

The letter declares that “our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered: [1] pandemic poverty and disease; [2] environmental degradation; and, [3] the proliferation of weapons and violence.” The notion that God’s creation is in crisis is no exaggeration. If this is the current reality concerning God’s creation, what does the future hold for humankind, unless we mend our care of God’s creation? Indeed, God has entrusted the care of God’s creation to all of God’s people. The critical problem that confronts us is that “we have turned our backs on God and on our responsibilities.”

The bishops said: “With a resurrection spirit, we look forward to the renewal of the whole creation and commit ourselves to that vision. We pray that God will accept and use our lives and resources that we re-dedicate to a ministry of peace, justice and hope to overcome poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence.” We bishops have pledged ourselves to the multifaceted task of helping to make a difference in the care of God’s creation.

**I am asking each pastor to choose a Sunday during Advent [or some other appropriate Sunday of your choosing] and read the pastoral letter to your congregation.** You might choose one version of the letter that is placed in a liturgical setting. The Pastoral Letter and the Foundation Document will be useful for group discussions and Sunday School classes.

There are three resources available to the church: [1] Pastoral Letter, [2] Foundation Document (with Preface), and the [3] Pastoral Letter in Liturgical Setting. The documents are available on the internet at [umc.org](http://umc.org) and [hopeandaction.org](http://hopeandaction.org).

I want to thank you for your prayers and your participation in this ministry of God's creation.

Faithfully,  
Ernest S. Lyght  
Resident Bishop