



## **Sacred People, Sacred Earth**

We are united by a fundamental belief that all people, all living things, and the Earth are sacred.

As we consider the state of the world today, our hearts overflow with concern.

We are frightened and frustrated by the damage that COVID-19 is inflicting on our communities. The pandemic has revealed cruel injustices. The vulnerable suffer the most severe impacts.

We know about this injustice. We have seen it before. These same communities are disproportionately and catastrophically affected by the accelerating climate emergency.

Grave threats are at our door as the world shelters in place. We see the rise of increasingly unaccountable or authoritarian governments, exploitive economies, and extremist cultural forces which pit us against each other, target women and oppressed communities, and foster doubt about the science required to save life on Earth. This is a world of widespread poverty, racial and gender injustice, massive income inequality, and the devastation of nature. This version of civilization is unsustainable at every level. Worse impacts lie ahead if we do not act now.

A far better future is possible if our collective response to the pandemic and the climate crisis is guided by compassion, love and justice at a scale that meets this moment. We must not only provide the relief that so many need to survive. We must create a new culture, politics and economy of life that heals people and planet.

We envision a world transformed, in which humanity in all its diversity has developed a shared reverence for life on Earth. Together, we are building resilient, caring communities and economies that meet everyone's needs and protect the planet. The era of conquest, extraction, and exploitation has given way to cooperation and community. The good life is

one of connectedness—with each other and all of nature. It is a world of flourishing life that replaces despair with joy, scarcity with shared abundance, and privilege with justly distributed power.

The work to create this future begins now.

In the months ahead, governments and financial institutions will spend massive sums in response to the pandemic. Governments will present climate commitments at COP26 in November 2021. These actions must not perpetuate an outdated economic system that relies on fossil fuels and the destruction of the very forests, waters, oceans and soils that make life possible. Instead they should accelerate renewable energy development; ensure universal access to clean water and air, affordable clean energy, and food grown with respect for the land; create jobs paying family-sustaining wages to workers in safe conditions. Wealthy countries must take responsibility for a larger share of emissions reductions to support a global just transition. We must also prepare ourselves to welcome those who will be displaced by COVID and climate change.

Compassion, love and justice require no less of us all.

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## **Position Statement**

As signatories to Sacred People, Sacred Earth and based on our moral and religious beliefs, we affirm the following:

### **Finance**

Money and finance must serve morality and the common good, not exploit the vulnerable, destroy nature, and increase income inequality.

- Businesses, banks and financial institutions must abandon systems based on exploitive returns. They must create and embrace a system that provides energy, transport and healthy food for all, that protects the rights and wellbeing of workers and local communities, and that truly sustains the planet.
- Financing must end immediately for new fossil fuel infrastructure, and for exploration for new oil and gas reserves.
- Financial institutions must dramatically accelerate investment in renewable energy systems, with a conscious commitment to decentralized,

community-based, women, Indigenous, and community-led initiatives so that the new energy system is more equitable, with more broadly distributed ownership.

- Financing must end immediately for agribusiness and extractive industries that immorally destroy tropical forests, its matchless biodiversity, and its Indigenous guardians. Financing must also end for industrial agriculture that promotes a profoundly unsustainable, unhealthy diet and that is unspeakably cruel to animals.
- Financial institutions must increase support for regenerative and sustainable agriculture, with a particular commitment to smaller-scale farms.

## **Governments**

Governments must enact and enforce laws that protect people and planet alike, in keeping with the inherent dignity of every human being and the world's biodiversity.

- Governments of the wealthiest countries must commit to reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and accelerate finance and technology transfers to poorer countries to ensure a global just transition to zero before 2050.
- All governments must enact policies and regulations that ensure:
  - Universal access to clean, affordable energy, especially for the 840 million people who lack access to electricity.
  - Rapid expansion of affordable public transport.
  - Retrofitting of buildings for energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy.
  - Food systems that are sustainable, reduce and eliminate the use of toxic chemicals, and that do not rely on factory farming.
  - Job training and placement related to these social and economic transformations, guaranteeing workers' right to organize and bargain collectively so that this massive and necessary transition fosters greater economic equality.
- They must ensure the protection of the rights of Indigenous communities and environmental defenders, on whose security healthy ecosystems rely.
- They must end subsidies for fossil fuels and industrial agriculture in a manner that protects the needs of the poor for affordable transportation, energy and food.
- They must provide for a just transition for jeopardized workers and communities through improved healthcare, job training and placement and other supportive measures.
- They must provide generous opportunities for climate and environmental refugees to migrate and to establish new homes.

## **Religious and Spiritual Institutions**

We must be models of environmental leadership, utilizing our rituals, religious education, facilities, and the public voices of our spiritual leaders, members and followers.

- We pledge to power our own facilities with 100% renewable energy where possible and as soon as possible in order to provide a positive moral example, on a schedule consistent with preserving a 1.5°C future.
- We will move purposefully towards sustainable, largely plant-based dietary practices in our religious schools, houses of prayer and worship, clinics, and our other institutions.
- We will align our investments with our values by moving to end support for the fossil fuel and industrial agriculture/agribusiness sectors and the banks that finance these industries.
- We will invest in climate solutions, particularly community, women, and Indigenous-led energy access enterprises.
- We will encourage local circles of care and resilience in our communities to participate in this transformation through education, organizing, advocacy, job training, or other means.

## **Individuals**

Each person carries a divine spark, unique gifts, and a moral responsibility to make one's life a blessing for the Earth and all people.

- We will move towards powering our own homes with renewable energy and adopting a largely or entirely plant-based diet.
- We will travel sustainably, on foot, by bicycle, and by mass transit, avoiding car travel and flying to the greatest degree possible.
- We will divest our personal investments from the fossil fuel and agribusiness sectors, invest in enterprises creating a sustainable future, and conduct our banking through institutions whose ethics reflect our values.
- We will join collective efforts to work for climate and environmental justice.