

Living More Simply

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editor's note

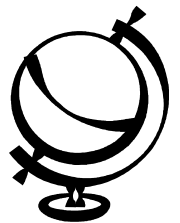
The first article summarizes the UU stand on the problem of Global Warming which is due to increased carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. The five articles that follow show practical ways to cut down on carbon dioxide production - some of these ideas are very simple and inexpensive. I hope you can incorporate them into your lifestyle. What follows are some sustainable clothing ideas and some ways to remain healthy without the multinational pharmaceutical companies.

UU'S TAKE A STAND ON GLOBAL WARMING

by Melissa Hughes

An important Statement of Conscience, *The Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change*, was presented to the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) of Congregations in June 2006. After much fine tuning, this statement begins as follows: **"We declare by this Statement of Conscience that we will not acquiesce to the ongoing degradation and destruction of life that human actions are leaving to our children and grandchildren. We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses."**

To read the entire Statement of Conscience, go to: <http://www.uua.org/csw> and click on the "2006 Statement of Conscience: Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change" pdf link. (**Webmaster's note:** UUCSC's contribution to this document may be found at: http://www.uusouthcountyrri.org/GWC_SOC.html)



Our congregation had some involvement in the process of forming this Statement of Conscience. The first draft had been made by the UUA Committee on Social Witness in 2004 - it framed the issue. The General Assembly then voted to have Study/Action groups to study the issue. Our congregation formed a Global Warming Meeting which met from September 2004 to March 2006, and

learned about the issue of global warming/climate change and its effects on the earth. In March 2006, congregations across the country, including ours, submitted comments on the draft statement. The Committee on Social Witness then incorporated selected comments into a revised draft, and at the 2006 General Assembly, the revised draft was brought to a mini-Assembly for approval.

According to the Fall 2006 issue of UU World, only 10% of congregations submitted comments on the draft. Nevertheless, the new draft of the Statement of Conscience that was presented at the General Assembly was substantially modified from the original draft. Then at the mini-Assembly, a coalition of environmental advocates and scientists led by the UU Ministry for Earth “hijacked” the approval procedure and proposed 50 amendments. This move appeared to be a calculated effort to incorporate even stronger language into the Statement of Conscience regarding the status of global warming/climate change. In what should have been months of work examining and incorporating congregational submissions, only two plenary sessions were held to debate the amendments. The Statement of Conscience that was finally approved greatly expanded upon the text of the draft presented at the mini-Assembly.

There is, for example, stronger language in the final Statement of Conscience about the seriousness of global warming/climate change and the necessity to act now, not later. Some concrete examples of global warming/climate change, that are happening now are presented, such as the melting of the Siberian permafrost layer, the melting of glaciers at faster rates, and the decreasing size of the polar ice cap. The probable impact of these examples is discussed. Throughout the statement, there is more emphasis on the necessity that our

actions be based on our seventh Principle and worldwide “ecojustice”. **The duty of UUs worldwide is to move toward a more simple and sustainable lifestyle. Everything one person does in the world impacts all peoples of the world and their ability to live in a sustainable manner.** There is an expanded section of examples of Personal Practices to incorporate into our lives and a call for leadership in activities at the Congregational and Denominational levels.

Did our comments have any impact? Yes. Three changes in the 2006 draft reflected our comments:

- 1) We had proposed no further development of nuclear power sources. This was somewhat reflected in “to promote safe and responsible energy development from sources with low greenhouse gas emissions.”
- 2) We had proposed that ‘climate change and human destructive actions of pollution and habitat destruction ‘are causing’ loss of species, forests, human settlements, glaciers...’ instead of ‘could cause’ and that change was made.
- 3) In the Advocacy Goals section, it states that family planning services should be available to peoples worldwide. We had included a statement on the importance of population control because Doris Anthony, who started our Global Warming Meeting and shepherded it through its first year, thought that this was very important. Was our two year study worth it? Those individuals who participated agree that studying global warming/climate change was

educational and informative. The study gave us the knowledge to become advocates within the congregation and local community. Our efforts not only had the above-mentioned impact on the 2006 draft and on the final Statement of Conscience, they certainly impacted our lives and hopefully, through our outreach efforts, had some impact outside the group.

Thanks to all the members of the Global Warming Meeting: Doris Anthony, Virginia Carter, Leslie Crockett, Carole Driver, Lisa McHenry, and Doree Webster. Thanks is also extended to Carol Craig, Patti Gambarini and John Glasheen for submitting comments.

GREEN UP

If you're trying to find a way to start on the road to a more sustainable future, think about investing in a cleaner future. GreenUp, a program of National Grid, supports the production of renewable energy, such as solar, wind, biomass and small hydro resources in the New England region. Renewable energy sources offset the impact of electricity production from coal, gas and nuclear energy in our region, supporting a cleaner environment for us all.

If you choose to participate, you sign up through NationalGrid with a supplier of your choice and pay a little extra on your monthly NationalGrid bill. The cost depends on the GreenUp option you choose. There are three GreenUp suppliers available to investigate:

*Clear Sky Power - 100% New England bioenergy
(<http://www.cleanskypower.com> or 1-888-833-6402)

*Community Energy - Wind/small hydro (<http://www.NewWindEnergy.com> or 1-866-WIND-123)

*People's Power & Light - Wind, solar, small hydro and biomass
(<http://www.ripower.org> or 401-861-6111).

There will be applications available to interested parties, so watch for an announcement in the Sunday insert!

BE KIND TO THE EARTH by Debby Hedison

Millions of people around the world are making small but important changes that can help sustain our ecosystem every day. Want to join them, involve the children and help make the earth a healthier place to live? It's simple - try these tips, courtesy of www.earthday.net:

- Use energy efficient light bulbs, which use less electricity – resulting in lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions – than regular light bulbs



- Drive less, get regular tune-ups and consider a hybrid car – all can reduce CO2 levels and improve fuel efficiency
- Eat locally farmed foods that are grown organically. It takes less energy (and therefore less CO2) to get them to market and organic farming uses no pesticides.
- Buy recycled products – and recycle your trash. In addition, steer clear of products that use excessive packaging.

Encouraging our children to help and modeling these small steps can make a huge difference all over the world – one family at a time, one child at a time.

BUILD A SOLAR DRYER



Next to your refrigerator, your clothes dryer is the biggest energy-guzzling appliance in your house. You can buy a clothesline pulley kit at the hardware store or order the components online – <http://www.clotheslineshop.com>. Or just put in 4X4 pressure-treated posts and 2X8's for the cross arms. Notch the posts to receive the cross arms, and run the lines on eye hooks between them. Total cost \$69. Clothes and sheets smell better when hung outside. Fabrics last longer when air dried. Spending a few minutes out in the sun is good for your skin.

For the cold winter months, buy a few wooden indoor clothes dryers. (I've seen them at Bennys). If there is no room for the bed sheets on the dryers, hang them on the doors between rooms or on the closet doors.

Very energy efficient.

CLEAN HEAT

A pellet stove can heat an entire 3,000 square foot ranch house for less than \$120 per month. Pellets are made from recycled, super-compressed sawdust. They not only conserve trees, they also burn hotter and cleaner than conventional woodstoves or fireplaces, producing minimal smoke and ash.

THE SOLAR INDUSTRY HEATS UP AGAIN

Adapted from This Old House, June 2006



There are now solar-powered shingles that blend with traditional roofing materials; solar cells are combined with slate, metal, and even asphalt roofing. They are installed over roof sheathing, and then they are wired together and tied into the house's electrical system. Hundreds of square feet of the shingles are needed to generate enough electricity to power the whole house. (They are called building-integrated photovoltaics.)

At sundown or on rainy days the existing power lines, of course, have to come back into service. But, on the other hand, if you generate more power than you

need, you sell the unused electricity back to the local utility for a credit. Your electric meter actually spins backward.

Although a system costs about \$15,000 which can be rolled into the mortgage, at tax time the energy Policy Act of 2005 gives homeowners a credit of 30%, or up to \$2000 toward the cost of a system. Your electric bill could be as low as four dollars (\$4.00). Those in sunnier states collect more solar power than those in northern climes, for example a system in New Mexico will produce 25 percent more electricity than the same system in Rhode Island. But since electricity costs so much more in Rhode Island, the savings are greater in Rhode Island.

If one figures in the cost of the shingles and installation, the price of a kilowatt-hour of solar energy is about 25 cents, unfortunately, compared to 10 cents for a kilowatt-hour of natural gas or coal generated electricity from the grid. Solar prices are continuing to come down, however, whereas electric rates continue to rise. At this rate they may become cost competitive without subsidies in the next decade.

Atlantis Energy Systems has begun to sandwich photovoltaic cells inside glass panels; someday we may even have super-powered skylights.

CRAFTING YOUR OWN CLOTHES Adapted from Time, March 2005

There is a glut of cheap sweatshop-produced clothing out there. Do you ever feel guilty about supporting unfair labor practices? Consuming more consciously might mean you buy new jeans from Old Navy, you remake and embellish a tee shirt that you buy from a thrift shop, you wear a vintage blazer, and you hand-knit a scarf. A much broader craft-it-yourself movement has emerged that is enabling us to create one-of-a-kind fashions. It is spread by websites like www.crafster.org and www.getcrafty.com and hundreds of other websites and blogs which

serve as sewing circles – places to trade ideas, share patterns and techniques, and post pictures of your best work. You can make a cool dress out of some sheets that you bought at a thrift store. You can learn how to turn a pillowcase into a skirt, how to sew felt on a blouse. You can turn old tee shirts into minidresses. The combination of **recycling and innovation** has special appeal. When you get dressed in your crafted clothes, you are telling the world that you are creative, complicated and colorful.



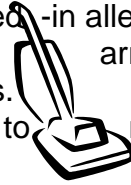
SEVEN STEPS TO CLEANER AIR

Adapted from This Old House, September 2006

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the air inside our homes and offices is up to five times more polluted than even the smoggiest industrial town. Right now, you are most likely breathing in a noxious mix of bacteria, toxins, and allergens into your lungs. More formidable enemies include radon,

an invisible gas produced by uranium in the soil under your house; second hand smoke; and poisonous gases like carbon monoxide, which can be emitted from poorly maintained gas stoves, furnaces, or fireplaces, and can cause headaches, chest pains, even death. You can pick up a carbon monoxide detector for \$30 and a radon testing kit for \$35.

1. VACUUM: Start by keeping your house clean. Regular vacuuming and dusting gets rid of dust mites, pet dander, and tracked-in allergens. Use a vacuum cleaner with a high-efficiency particulate (HEPA) filter, which can trap the smallest of particles.
2. CHANGE YOUR SHOWER CURTAIN: A vinyl one treated to resist mold and mildew is best.
3. FILTER: Buy a portable air purifier with a HEPA filter.
4. VENTILATE: It is impossible to eliminate the stuff in the air no matter how good a housekeeper you are. Use exhaust fans vented to the outdoors in kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms. Use an attic fan to suck out stale air.
5. CHECK YOUR CHIMNEY: Have your flues and chimneys inspected and cleaned yearly. Partially blocked chimneys allow harmful combustion gases like carbon monoxide into the house.
6. USE AREA RUGS: These are easy to roll up and clean
7. DECORATE WITH PLANTS: Some plants can neutralize benzene, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxide. These are spider plants, philodendrons, peace lilies, and aloe vera.



BOOSTING YOUR ABILITY TO MEDITATE (from the Aug 5, 2006 homily) by Lynda J. Wells, PhD, CNS

Even though meditation is extolled by many spiritual traditions for attaining serenity and for connection with our source, and even though it is touted by some in the medical establishment for de-stressing and attaining relaxation, many people can't meditate. They are too depressed or anxious or out-of-control in some other way to be able to do so. Some books on meditation say that one may have to take anti-depressant or anti-anxiety drugs to improve mood before attempting a meditation practice.

What follows are suggestions for non-drug ways to **stabilize mood** before attempting to meditate. These methods are scientifically grounded, easy to follow, comparatively inexpensive and have virtually no side effects.

First, hone your PLEASE skills. Take care of any **Physical** illnesses. **Eat** a superhealth diet. **Avoid** mood altering recreational drugs. **Sleep** enough. **Exercise**.

Next, strengthen the serotonin pathways in the brain by building up the levels of serotonin, the "feel good" transmitter. Boosting levels of serotonin has a similar effect as the anti-depressants that are called Selective Serotonin ReUptake

Inhibitors (SSRI's), such as Prozac, Paxil, Lexapro, Celeza, Zoloft – without the side effects of these drugs.

There are many ways to increase levels of serotonin.

1. During the first week, **a.** walk briskly outside in the daytime without sunglasses or other glasses for 20 minutes every day without fail - rain or shine. Continue this habit for the rest of your life. Walking will not only increase serotonin, but also the other transmitters, phenylethylamine, GABA, norepinephrine, dopamine and feel-good endorphins **b.** Take 50 mg of B vitamins, especially B6 twice per day with meals. **c.** Take 1000 mg of fish oil twice per day with meals or one tablespoon of flax oil twice per day.
2. During the second week be sure to include some complex carbohydrates with each meal. These would be vegetables, fruits, whole grain breads, cereals or pastas, brown rice, legumes, nuts, potatoes with their skin, sweet potatoes. Carbohydrates increase serotonin in the brain by causing the pancreas to release more insulin; insulin increases not only the absorption of glucose but also the amino acid, tryptophan, which is converted to serotonin in the brain.
3. During the third week, if still depressed, take a supplement of 5HTP (5-hydroxytryptophan), 100 mg at bedtime, and 50 mg twice per day with meals. 5HTP is the natural precursor of serotonin, one of the intermediate steps in going from tryptophan to serotonin. Numerous double-blind studies have demonstrated that 5-HTP is equal in effectiveness compared with the SSRI's; it is also less expensive and better tolerated.
4. During the fourth week, if still depressed, take the herb, St Johnswort extract (0.3% hypericin), which increases all of the feel good transmitters, 450 mg twice per day

At the same time that you are working to raise serotonin levels, also work on decreasing your stress levels, by starting two practices that help to fend off stress. Choose from yoga, tai chi, acupuncture, massage, self-hypnosis, a health spa, a support group, a counselor, daily talks with a trusted friend, family member or minister. Learn to manage anger, learn to increase gratitude, read positive literature for even just a few minutes daily.

Unbalanced hormones may contribute to mood disorders in women; women have a very complex and magical moon cycle directed by a symphony of hormones. These may need to be balanced out with diet, or with herbs such as chasteberry or black cohosh or progesterone cream.

If **anxiety, panic attacks, mind racing** are your major mood problems, you also need to boost the GABA nerve pathway - the pathway that the benzodiazepines like Valium, Librium, Xanax and Ativan effect. You can take GABA itself at 250-500 mg two or three times per day, or you can take valerian root, 300-400 mg two or three times per day and 800-900 mg at bedtime for sleeping.

The above discussed methods for increasing positive moods are a more healthful way to go, more in keeping with our basic natural physiology and with virtually no side effects plus they don't support the huge multinational pharmaceutical companies. If we have alternatives which are better choices, let's use them.

ABOUT JUNK MAIL from NewDream.org

Junk mail may seem as American as apple pie, but it doesn't have to be. **We can declare our Independence from Junk Mail!**

There are two ways for you to remove yourself from the endless junk mail lists:

1. Pay to have a pro take you off most of the lists

New American Dream has partnered with an organization called <http://www.41pounds.org/newdream> who promises to completely remove you from up to 95% of the junk mail lists by contacting each organization from which you receive mail and/or catalogs for a one-time fee of \$41. As if removing your contact information from the junk mail lists isn't enough, they'll also be donating approximately 50% of their fee to the New American Dream junk mail campaign! What are you waiting for?

2. Use New American Dream's free forms to take yourself off some of the main lists

If you have a bit more time and would like remove yourself from many (but, certainly not all) of the junk mail lists, you're more than welcome to use our automatically generated forms. You'll be asked to fill-out, print, and mail-in many short letters to the major direct mailers and they'll remove your from their list. (Note: Many direct mailers require a small fee and/or request your social security number to find your record. New American Dream does not see or store this information and do not believe it is required - though, it may expedite the removal process.)