

Give it up for the Earth! – Climate Justice and Us

By Corry Wink

Citizens for Public Justice is an ecumenical social justice organization that is inspired by faith to act for justice. *Give it up for the Earth!* is their faith-in-action campaign to increase climate justice in Canada. It calls on us to act individually and in community with actions that will mitigate climate change and to be advocates for farther-reaching national policies on climate change.

To participate meaningfully in this initiative, we need to understand the causes of climate change and how it impacts the future of life on earth. We need to pray about our role and our country's role in the climate change crisis in which we find ourselves. As a community, we need to support each other in this journey to enlightenment and action.

We have known for a long time that our personal lifestyle decisions can be part of the problem. As a first step, we can review the way we live and decide whether we want to make some changes that reduce our carbon footprint. The choices we can make include creating an energy-efficient household by using energy-efficient appliances and upgrading the insulation in our homes. We can moderate our use of heating and cooling technology to reduce stress on the electrical power grids. We can use public transport more often to reduce consumption of fossil fuels. These suggestions are just a start for how we as individuals can contribute to improving the environment. Working as a community, we can inspire each other and multiply the benefits.

Personal actions alone can never be enough to reduce the devastating climate change events that threaten the survival of vulnerable people living on the earth today and threaten the future for our children and grandchildren. The situation is serious, to be sure: we must act to influence our governments to implement programs that will mitigate the worst effects of climate change. There is much controversy about whether a carbon tax is an effective way to influence people to change their behaviours so that less pollution is created. Some populist politicians claim that a carbon tax is a bad thing. It is up to us to educate ourselves on this issue and advocate for solutions that will benefit the earth and future generations.

Another grave concern among environmentalists is the continued subsidies that the Canadian government provides to the fossil fuel industries. The extraction of fossil fuels is itself a huge source of pollution. *Give it up for the Earth!* urges us to tell the government to stop these subsidies and instead invest the money in the development of green energy technology that will surely form an important part of a sustainable environment in the future.

Inaction is not an option. We need to work together towards climate change policies that will ensure a liveable environment for future generations.

For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, visit www.cpj.ca/fortheearth.