

The Word Matters

It's been a long, long time since words like justice, caring, and equality were anything more than the distant echoes of a social movement, when words mattered. They had an impact that lasted longer than a TV news sound-bite. But those words are still important and we need to start applying them to providing love and care for *all* of God's Creation. Of all creatures, great and small, human beings are the ones who are solely responsible for destroying the home, the Earth which God has given us. The Holy Bible commands us to care for the gift of Creation and God *even has enough faith in us* as human beings, mere mortals, to figure out how to do that. It's called good stewardship, and here's why it matters:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." [John 3:16] God **loved** the world and we should love it, too. We should love it by taking care of not only the environment, but also those who live in the world He created. The Word Matters.

Global Climate Changes, created by mankind, threaten our African American brothers and sisters in disproportionate numbers. We are negatively impacted by deaths during heat waves and from worsened air pollution. Right here in our home state, infant mortality, cancer, heart disease, asthma, and the threat of epidemic malaria from the migration of mosquitoes have worsened the health crisis in our communities. These dangers are all related to Global Climate Change and the shameful conditions it causes for people of color.

Communities of color, people living in poverty, and children are all living with a health crisis, as the result of Global Climate Changes, and economic deprivation. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one in six [1 in 6] pregnant women has enough mercury in her blood to pose a significant risk to her yet unborn baby. High concentrations of mercury in fish, which provides basic food needs for disadvantaged families, are found in the coastal plains waters of South Carolina, according to the SC DHEC statistics. I was down in the Lowcountry recently, by Old Sheldon Church. I walked across the road from the church ruins, down a little dirt road which led to a stream. There, I saw a family fishing at the edge of the water with poles

made of sticks from tree branches. Believe it or not, they were doing pretty good; pulling in a bucketful of fish for a meal I knew would be their only one of the day. I wondered if the fish they would eat were as pure as their hearts.

Federal Air Regulations aren't doing much better. Only as far back as March 15, 2005, the EPA issued the Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR) to deal with mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants. The twelve coal-fired utility sites in South Carolina are affected by CAMR. The CAMR sets limits on the amount of mercury that coal-fired power plants can emit. They have pledged to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants nationwide by 70% after 2017. How many people will die in the nine years preceding that target date? These are shameful times and we are calling for legislative action to purify the Creation that greed has supported, harming our black people and our communities.

The Word Matters. "Reduction" is not enough. These dangers must be **eliminated**. We CAN create a more **just, caring, equitable, and sustainable** world through our energy **choices**. People of faith have the opportunity to put our faith into action, all based on direct scripture from the Holy Bible. What are we going to do? Yes, words matter. But we are going to take action to make sure our families have safe food to eat, safe air to breathe, and jobs creating clean solar energy and other renewable energies. Pick it up. Say it loud and clear. We will change the world.