

**ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES OF OREGON**  
**POSITION PAPER ON JORDAN COVE LNG**  
**FRAMEWORK FOR CREATION JUSTICE WORK**  
**( Peter Sergienko)**

**A. PROJECT ANALYSIS AND POSITION**

1. Project Summary. Pembina Pipeline Corporation is a private, Canadian company based in Calgary, Alberta. Pembina owns and operates a system of pipelines that transport crude oil, natural gas and natural gas liquids produced primarily in western Canada, as well as gas gathering and processing facilities and an oil and natural gas liquids infrastructure and logistics business. Jordan Cove, LNG and Jordan Cove Energy Project, LP, Pembina subsidiaries, have applied for and are in the process of seeking all necessary governmental permits and approvals for the Project (defined below).

The Project generally involves the construction of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage, compression, and export facility on 240 acres of land on a sand spit adjacent to Jordan Cove. Jordan Cove is near the city of North Bend at the northern end of the channel into Coos Bay.

The LNG export terminal would include gas inlet facilities, a metering station, a gas conditioning plant, three 30-megawatt gas-fired steam turbine generators to provide electrical power to the facility, five liquefaction trains and associated equipment, two full-containment LNG storage tanks, an LNG transfer line, LNG ship loading facilities, a marine slip, a marine offloading facility, a new access channel between the Coos Bay Navigation Channel and the new marine slip, and enhancements to the existing Coos Bay Navigation Channel at four turns. In addition, the terminal would include emergency and hazard, electrical, security, control, and support systems, administrative buildings, and a temporary workforce housing facility. The LNG terminal would be designed to liquefy about 1.04 billion cubic feet per day of LNG for export to markets in Asia.

The Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline would deliver gas to the LNG export facility. This entails the construction and operation of an approximately 230-mile-long, 36-inch-diameter interstate natural gas transmission pipeline and associated aboveground facilities. The pipeline would originate near Malin in Klamath County, Oregon, traverse Douglas and Jackson Counties, and terminate at the LNG terminal in Coos County. The pipeline would be capable of transporting about 1.2 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas. The associated aboveground facilities would include the new Klamath Compressor Station (61,500 horsepower) near Malin, three new meter stations, five new pig launchers and receivers, 17 mainline block valves, and a gas control communication system.

Collectively, the LNG export terminal facilities and the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline constitute the “Project.”

2. Summary of Project Benefits and Environmental and Social Impacts. Pembina’s listed Project benefits are all economic—increased tax revenue to the state and counties in which the Project is located, the creation of 6,000 or more temporary construction jobs and 200 or more

permanent jobs, collateral economic benefits to local businesses primarily in the housing and hospitality sectors, and the creation of a community investment fund to support schools, infrastructure, public safety, and waterfront rehabilitation. Pembina's summary of benefits is here: <https://www.jordancoveling.com/benefits>

Project critics cite numerous environmental and social costs including unavoidable and potential harm caused by Project construction.

The Project's construction would require the crossing and disturbance of 485 wetlands and waterways, damaging salmon habit and putting drinking water supplies at risk among other impacts. The 230-mile long pipeline path would require all existing vegetation within an approximately 100-foot wide swath along its route to be completely cleared, including precious old growth forest. Regular application of pesticides would also be required to prevent regrowth for as long as the pipeline remains in service—at least 40 years. The pipeline must also be maintained and serviced regularly, which would require the construction of numerous new roads. These roadways must also be cleared of all existing vegetation, resulting in effectively permanent damage and disruption to the ecosystems the roads pass through. A summary of the Project's impacts, primarily to water quality and land, is here:

<https://www.sightline.org/2018/08/01/jordan-cove-energy-project-oregon-could-harm-water-quality-salmon-runs/>

The Project's annual and lifetime greenhouse gas emissions are massive. The LNG facility would be the largest source of emissions in the state by far, equivalent to the emissions from the annual operation of 7.9 million passenger vehicles. Project emissions would be inconsistent with Oregon's current statutory goals for emission reductions. Importantly, the Project would be inconsistent with any new legislation Oregon adopts to put the state on an emissions reduction pathway consistent with the Paris Accord's goal of avoiding dangerous climate change (existing policy is not sufficient to do this). A summary of the Project's greenhouse gas footprint is here:

[http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2018/01/JCEP\\_GHG\\_Final-Screen.pdf](http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2018/01/JCEP_GHG_Final-Screen.pdf)

The Project's economic benefits also come with tradeoffs and risks. Commercial and recreational fisheries, including shellfish, would likely be adversely affected by the Project. What the hospitality and housing sectors stand to gain through the temporary and permanent influx of workers to North Bend and Coos Bay and to communities along the pipeline route may be offset by a decrease in tourism for recreational pursuits. Most of the jobs created require highly skilled labor and will necessarily be filled by workers from outside of Oregon. Any ancillary jobs associated with the increased workforces in the area, temporary and permanent, are similar to the employment opportunities that are generally available at present.

There are also some general health and safety risks from the Project. Pipeline failure is virtually inevitable given industry experience over decades in conditions and situations similar to those present for the Project. Where, when, and how a failure occurs could result in adverse impacts to human health and the environment that range from immaterial to catastrophic.

There are also general, inherent risks associated with the operation of the LNG facilities and transport ships. The risks to the Jordan Cove facilities and any ships that happen to be present from a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami are considerable.<sup>1</sup> There is also a concern that the facilities and ships could be an attractive target for terrorists, but there has never been a terrorist attack on an LNG facility or transport ship. Finally, there have been incidents and accidents in connection with general operations of LNG facilities and ships, including accidents resulting in deaths. However, LNG facilities and ships do not appear to be inherently dangerous or to have accident rates that vary significantly from similar industrial activities and facilities.

3. Applicable Values. Love and Stewardship are the Creation Justice Program's primary values used to evaluate proposed projects such as Jordan Cove.

The Gospel shows us we are built for love, to be in relationship with a God we love and who loves us and all creation. We are interconnected with all creation through God's abiding love. Understanding this interconnection and protecting the well-being of nature are essential to the well-being of humanity. Only God's redeeming love can set humanity free from violence, division, and excessive consumption. Thus, the solutions to our environmental problems must be based in love.

We also believe that we belong to God, as does all creation, that God declared the entire creation good, and that the care of God's good creation has been entrusted to humanity in a covenant relationship. We are therefore obligated to use the resources of nature wisely as God's stewards and with reverence, preserving God's bounty for all generations to come.

Finally, Jesus taught us that everyone is our neighbor to love and care for, and that His followers should pay special attention to the needs and wellbeing of the poor, the widow, and the orphan.

Unfortunately, the adverse effects of climate change, including severe weather, drought, floods, heat waves, crop damage and failure, sea level rise, and water scarcity, are already being felt today. These effects will continue to become more severe until the carbon cycle returns to balance and the climate stabilizes, something that will take decades to centuries depending on humanity's efforts to mitigate our greenhouse gas emissions. While many privileged people in the United States remain largely immune from these adverse effects at present, women, children, the elderly, and the poor, here in our own country and around the world, are the least able to adapt and therefore the most likely to suffer both now and in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oregon's emergency managers note that there is a 40% chance of a 9.0+ magnitude subduction zone earthquake over the next 50 years. The linked image shows the modeled inundation from a tsunami that would occur in Coos Bay in the event of such an earthquake. The entire sand spit to the west of the Project site as well as the Project site itself are under water.

[https://www.oregon.gov/oem/Documents/Plate29\\_CoosBayNorthBend.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oem/Documents/Plate29_CoosBayNorthBend.pdf)

4. Statement in Opposition. Based on our values and the Project's environmental impacts, the Project must be rejected. Its environmental harms far outweigh any benefits from Project construction.

We are in the midst of a global environmental crisis. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently concluded that human caused greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced from 2010 levels by 45% by 2030 and by 100% by 2050 to preserve even a modestly reasonable chance of avoiding dangerous climate change. By definition, dangerous climate change would disrupt human civilization and threaten the survival of all life on Earth. Accordingly, all levels of government and all elements of civil society—especially including the fossil fuel industry—must work together in good faith to prevent dangerous climate change. The Project's greenhouse gas emissions and the lack of any requirement or plan to mitigate them are completely at odds with the reality of the climate crisis. The Project must be rejected for this plain and simple reason.

Regrettably, the global environmental crisis is not limited to climate. Wildlife and the ecosystems and ecosystem services that make all life possible have been severely compromised over centuries of human expansion. Human resource extraction has utterly devastated millions of acres of former wilderness areas and compromised millions of acres more globally. Oregon is roughly 63 million acres in size and there is literally no ecologically significant wilderness left in the state or along our ocean coastal zone.<sup>2</sup> With some 200 species becoming extinct every day globally, we are approaching a mass extinction event the likes of which have not been seen since the dinosaurs were wiped out some 65 million years ago.

Once again, all levels of government and all elements of civil society must work together in good faith to protect and restore the vital ecosystems and wildlife habitats that have allowed humanity to thrive and prosper. We have a clear moral obligation to protect God's creation from a mass extinction event that could even take human civilization down with it. The Project's 230-mile pipeline route requires over 150 miles of new right of way. While much of the biologically rich legacy of our state has already been degraded and compromised by human activities, the science of biodiversity preservation is now clear and unequivocal: we cannot continue to carve

---

<sup>2</sup> See Footnote 6 below. The cited paper maps “ecologically significant wilderness areas” globally, showing no such areas in Oregon or in the Pacific Ocean within hundreds of miles of Oregon’s coast. The paper’s authors define wilderness as those places that do not have industrial level activity within them according to the marine and terrestrial human footprint. Additionally, non-industrialized indigenous communities can live sustainably within wilderness as defined by the authors. <https://newsroom.wcs.org/News-Releases/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/11672/A-WILDERNESS-HORROR-STORY.aspx> The legal concept of “wilderness” under American law is different. It refers generally to areas where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor and does not remain. It also assumes that indigenous peoples are incompatible with the concept of wilderness. Nevertheless, within this broad definition, there are numerous conditions and exceptions to the prohibition of human presence in “wilderness” areas that preference certain resource extraction activities and that ultimately define “wilderness” for legal purposes under Federal law. <https://www.wilderness.net/nwps/legisact>

up God's creation solely to serve limited, short-term human needs while largely disregarding or misunderstanding ecosystems and the needs, significance, and inherent value of all non-human life. We must prioritize efforts to preserve, restore, and expand nature reserves and wilderness areas to protect ecosystems and to secure space for all life to thrive again over God's time.

Finally, the Project primarily serves the narrow economic interests of Pembina's owners. It delivers no products or services to Oregon's citizens. It would only incidentally create jobs and other economic activity here, with most of the skilled, family wage jobs being filled by out-of-state workers. To the extent that the Project would benefit LNG markets in Asia, those markets are and will forever remain a part of a fossil fuel economy that must contract rapidly and completely disappear over the next 30 years. If humanity takes climate change seriously, as we must to avoid dangerous climate change, the LNG markets in Asia will dry up long before the Project's operating lifetime is reached and perhaps even before the Project achieves a positive return on investment. Whenever and however the Project is rendered obsolete, the citizens of Oregon will probably be left holding the bag, forced to protect and decommission a massive and useless industrial facility that is forever at risk of damage and destruction from a subduction zone earthquake at taxpayer expense.

For all these reasons, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon calls on the DEQ and Governor Brown to deny the permits required for the Project and to reject the Project in its entirety now. No further state resources should be devoted to its consideration.<sup>3</sup>

## B. BRIEF SUMMARY OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

It is important for the faith community to enter into this work with basic knowledge of the science. Most of us are not scientists and none of us would presume to speak directly for scientists. However, understanding the science as best we can and being able to communicate scientific findings and their meaning to us as Christians will help to support critical and broader societal concepts that are at risk, including acceptance of objective truth, the value of reason, and the integrity of science and the scientific method. As we engage with public policy issues, it is especially important for Christians to stand for objective truth. We live in a time where our political leaders make claims for equally valid "alternative facts" and slur inconvenient truths as "fake news," and where government actors and corporate interests use propaganda and disinformation to shape public opinion.

Thus, as an entry point for sharing our understanding of scientific and objective truth and how this informs our faith and public policy advocacy, we begin with a brief review and summary of four major scientific reports or papers that have been published recently and that underscore the severity of the global environmental crisis. The basic message here is straightforward: there is an urgent need for all people to face the truth and to act responsibly.

---

<sup>3</sup> Additionally, although the Project should be denied in its entirety, all water quality permits for the Project should be denied for all the technical reasons cited by the League of Women Voters in their July 20, 2018 letter to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Ecumenical Ministries adopts and supports the comments in that letter as if they were our own.

On October 6, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a special report assessing the impacts of global warming of just 1.5 °C.<sup>4</sup> The report affirms that human activities, primarily from the developed countries, have caused all the atmospheric warming observed in recent decades, that the atmosphere has already warmed by 1.0 °C, and that while the impacts of 1.5 °C of warming are severe, the impacts of 2.0 °C of warming (or more) are potentially catastrophic. The report concludes that, in order to have any reasonable chance of avoiding dangerous climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced dramatically—by about 45% by 2030 and effectively by 100% by 2050 compared to 2010 levels. This magnitude of reduction is impossible in the absence of a massive and immediate global effort across all areas of civil society. Governments, corporations and businesses, nonprofit organizations, families and individuals, and, yes, houses of worship and faith communities, must all process this information and act decisively on it. The future well being of today’s young people and the planet as a whole depends on it.

In late October, the World Wildlife Foundation issued its biennial Living Planet Report assessing the status and health of Earth’s wildlife, biodiversity, and ecosystems.<sup>5</sup> The startling headline from the report is that 60% of the world’s wildlife has been wiped out over just the last 40 years. Human consumption is the driving force behind the planetary change that is occurring on our watch. Biodiversity loss and habitat destruction are already disrupting the natural systems that support not just highly specialized species in remote tropical rainforests, but the very systems that are essential to human life and wellbeing. Moreover, the biodiversity crisis is fast becoming a mass extinction event. About 200 species are becoming extinct each day. Earth hasn’t seen such losses of life since the dinosaurs went extinct 65 million years ago.

On October 31, a paper was published in Nature cataloging the world’s remaining, intact wilderness ecosystems.<sup>6</sup> The paper’s key finding: human activities have modified 77% of the Earth’s land (excluding Antarctica) and 87% of its oceans. The vast majority of the remaining, intact wilderness ecosystems on land are the boreal forests of Canada and Russia and the arctic tundra of Alaska. Large amounts of the Amazon forest in Brazil are still intact, but are under renewed and increasing development pressure. The remaining large, intact wilderness areas are primarily deserts in Africa and Australia. There is no intact wilderness ecosystem land in Oregon. There is no intact wilderness ecosystem in the Pacific Ocean within hundreds of miles of the Oregon Coast. Thus, over roughly 150 years of modern economic development in Oregon, we have completely eliminated all ecologically significant wilderness areas from our landscapes and coast.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Summary for Policymakers is here: [http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15\\_spm\\_final.pdf](http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> A PDF of the report is available here:

[https://c402277.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/publications/1187/files/original/LPR2018\\_Full\\_Report\\_Spreads.pdf](https://c402277.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/publications/1187/files/original/LPR2018_Full_Report_Spreads.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The paper is available here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07183-6>

Finally, also on October 31, another paper published in Nature demonstrates that warming in the world's oceans is far greater than had been previously understood.<sup>7</sup> Earlier scientific methods used to measure and to estimate ocean warming relied on a combination of actual temperature measurements, which have only been available over the last few decades, and estimated temperatures to fill in gaps in measured temperatures, with the gaps basically representing deep ocean waters where measured temperature data is non-existent.

The new study uses a much more accurate "proxy" method to measure ocean heat content. It shows that the quantity of recent ocean warming is at the high end of previous estimates, likely sixty percent greater than previously thought. This has profound implications for climate change science and for the actions we take in response to climate change. For example, recommendations to policymakers from the October 6, 2018 IPCC report do not take into account this more recent information about ocean warming. The new study suggests that the "carbon budget" for avoiding dangerous climate change should be reduced by at least 25%. This means, simplistically, that the time frames for reducing emissions from the IPCC report should be reduced by 25% as well. Thus, to preserve even a reasonable chance of avoiding dangerous climate change we have only nine years instead of 12 to halve global greenhouse gas emissions and only 24 years instead of 32 years to achieve carbon neutrality.

Whether and how we act on this information are moral choices. Given the overwhelming quantity of readily available peer reviewed science, the time of consequences for our shortsightedness, for our waste, pollution, and abuse of nature, is now clearly at hand.

### C. BECOMING BELOVED EARTH COMMUNITY: CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CREATION JUSTICE PROGRAMS

1. Overview. The Episcopal Church has adopted a set of interrelated commitments around which Episcopalians may organize efforts to respond to racial injustice. The overarching intention is to become beloved community through lifelong, guided, and intentional Christian formation. Because Ecumenical Ministries shares the intention to become beloved community and because environmental stewardship, environmental justice, and ecological justice issues share some of the characteristics that make eradicating racism difficult, a framework for becoming a Beloved Earth Community could guide the intentions for Creation Justice Programs.

The framework uses an image of a labyrinth.<sup>8</sup> We are invited to enter into a labyrinth journey from any one of four points: Telling the Truth, Repairing the Breach, Proclaiming the Dream, and Practicing the Way of Love. Each point of entry poses questions that relate to Episcopalian baptismal covenants. Although we enter at one point, the labyrinth journey moves us through all quadrants of the labyrinth, with all focus areas for examination and all their underlying questions for reflection becoming a part of our walk. Importantly, this is not something we do once or a few times in order to complete a task or to solve a problem, it is a

---

<sup>7</sup> The paper (behind a pay wall) is available here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-018-0651-8>

<sup>8</sup> The image and summary is here: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/beloved-community>

spiritual practice to be repeated over and over again throughout our lifetimes as part of our faith journey. Because racism is so entrenched in our culture, we must continually engage with these questions, trusting that our responses to them will form us and, in part, become the work of racial reconciliation. That same level of engagement seems necessary to eradicate the systemic economic, environmental, and ecological injustices that are so deeply embedded in our common economic life.

This basic framework, made ecumenical/interfaith and appropriately modified, may help structure Ecumenical Ministries' engagement with environmental and ecological justice issues. The remainder of this section explores this possibility.

2. Telling the Truth: The Environmental Crisis and the Community of Faith.<sup>9</sup> This entry point into the journey begins with two questions: Who are we? What have we done and left undone regarding environmental and ecological justice issues?

Who are we? Social scientists at George Mason and Yale have been conducting surveys to track societal attitudes toward global warming since 2008. Based on the gathered data, Americans have been grouped into six categories: Alarmed, Concerned, Cautious, Disengaged, Doubtful, and Dismissive, with the most recent 2018 poll results as follows: 21% Alarmed, 30% Concerned, 21% Cautious, 7% Disengaged, 12% Doubtful, and 9% Dismissive.<sup>10</sup>

Following the publication of Pope Francis's Laudato Si in 2015, George Mason conducted a survey and issued a report in early 2016 to tease out how faith and moral beliefs informed American attitudes toward global warming.<sup>11</sup> The results of this survey show that the Alarmed group is the least religious (36%) and the most egalitarian. The Dismissive group is the most religious (68%) and the most individualistic. The Concerned, Cautious, Disengaged, and Doubtful groups are all roughly about the same in terms of religious belief (the percentage of believers ranges from 48% to 53% across these groups). Only the Alarmed and Concerned view global warming as a moral issue. Importantly, all groups believe we should care for other people, future generations, and the environment. Only the Dismissive group rejects the moral or biblical notion that we have a responsibility to protect the Earth as stewards rather than simply using it for our own benefit.

---

<sup>9</sup> I've chosen this entry point because it most resonates with me personally.

<sup>10</sup> The Alarmed are very certain global warming is real, human-caused, and harmful, strongly supporting societal action to reduce the threat. The Concerned are moderately certain global warming is real, harmful, and human-caused. They support societal action but tend to see global warming as a future threat. The Cautious believe global warming is real but are uncertain about the cause and less worried about it than the Concerned, viewing it as a distant threat. The Disengaged have no strongly held beliefs about global warming, know little about it, and view it as irrelevant to their lives. The Doubtful are uncertain about global warming's existence but tend to attribute it to natural causes and they see it as irrelevant to their personal lives. The Dismissive are certain global warming is not happening, many regard it as a hoax, and all are strongly opposed to action to reduce the threat.

<sup>11</sup> The report is available here: <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/faith-morality-environment/>

The report suggests that the faith community has mostly failed to communicate our responsibility to care for Creation as God's stewards in ways that lead to informed and engaged action in response to global warming. The report highlights some barriers and opportunities in the quest to change this dynamic and to improve Christian practices of environmental stewardship.

One key barrier is that a majority of those polled with a formal Christian affiliation prefer religious explanations when science and religion are in conflict. Thus, resistance to scientific information among the faithful and grounded in religious belief can prevent us from acting on climate. Based on my understanding of doctrine, this should primarily be an issue for traditions that embrace biblical literalism. It should be less of a barrier or not a barrier at all for members of the Catholic Church or for mainline Protestant traditions.

The corresponding opportunity here is for faith leaders who embrace science to communicate the truth of human-caused global warming and to become more vocal in emphasizing reason in seeking to resolve any perceived conflicts between faith and science. Following from that, faith leaders should highlight how morally informed actions can be effective in preventing dangerous climate change. Where agreement on biblical literalism is lacking, faith leaders should emphasize the nearly universal belief in a moral imperative to ease suffering among the poor, to protect God's creation, and to preserve opportunities for our children, grandchildren, and future generations. Thus, to the extent we invoke climate science in these contexts, it is important to emphasize how we know about the harm global warming is causing and how that harm disproportionately affects the poor, damages the environment, and restricts the opportunities and choices of our children and future generations.

What have we done and left undone? Anecdotally based on the author's limited experience in interfaith and ecumenical settings, with a strong tilt to work within the Episcopal tradition, the ecumenical and interfaith community's response to these and similar, prior studies and reports seems generally to reflect societal response as a whole, with some interesting and significant differences.

At the level of church leadership, the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, and the mainline Protestant churches have all published written statements of faith, ranging from the breadth and depth of Laudato Si to short statements or resolutions calling attention to the environmental crisis as a religious and moral issue. These pieces generally acknowledge the environmental and climate crises and explain how our faith compels us to act as God's stewards to protect the Creation.

The main task of Christendom now appears to be to move from clarity about the problem (mostly) and unity about our moral obligations as God's stewards to address the problem (mostly) to making our voices heard in the public sphere while taking meaningful, effective, actions to ease the suffering and loss caused by the environmental crisis. Importantly, we can all take internal and external actions within the contexts of our own traditions as well as in broader solidarity with organized ecumenical, interfaith, and society-wide efforts.

My general impression of how this dynamic is playing out currently at the congregational level is that a relatively small number of congregations are alarmed. These congregations have active green teams, advocacy groups, and property committees working diligently on matters of environmental stewardship and creation justice. They publicize the pronouncements of denominational and interfaith leaders and are aware of and use institutional resources that support better practices of environmental stewardship.

Unfortunately, institutional support for environmental ministry may remain passive, leaving it to motivated congregations to find and use institutional resources instead of institutional leaders actively encouraging all congregations to engage with and use these resources. Funding for specific types of actions such as major energy efficiency projects or projects that significantly re-imagine the use of church properties may be lacking. So, too, may other forms of institutional support that might prove useful to the process of advancing necessary cultural change such as the development of networks and other forms of mutual ministry support for everyday congregants who have a passion for environmental ministry.

My general impression is that the vast majority of Catholic and mainline Protestant congregations and congregants would fall into the Concerned and Cautious groups. Global warming and climate change are considered real, human caused, and a problem, perhaps even a very serious problem, but they are not seen as an urgent problem and certainly not as an urgent enough problem to displace other priorities that are seen as more immediate. The more urgent needs that are often cited as we leave environmental ministries to one side or for another day are pastoral care for congregants in need of spiritual support and ministries that directly serve the immediate needs of the poor, such as food ministries, shelter ministries, clothing ministries, school supply ministries, and so on.

What we have left undone, therefore, seems largely to be a failure to imagine ourselves as having the capacity or agency to contribute meaningfully to the programs and actions that will prevent and ease the suffering inflicted by the environmental crisis as we also do other important and necessary work—eradicating racism, easing economic suffering, and so on. In the context of the environmental crisis, we hope and pray for those afflicted by climate change and we send money to those in need in times of natural disaster, but we largely see ourselves as unable to participate meaningfully in the quest to prevent harm, instead relying on political leaders, governmental institutions, and nonprofit organizations to find and implement policies to put us on track to a more just and sustainable world. There certainly seems to be an opportunity here for EMO to organize the interfaith community, especially those in the alarmed and concerned categories, into a more cohesive and effective voice and force for positive change.

A barrier to more engagement could be the difficulty in acknowledging our own complicity in causing the environmental crisis. Some Christian traditions view our relationships with the Creation as broken and that in order to heal this brokenness we must name and repent of our sins, seek reconciliation through an honest and prayerful self-examination, and then strive to realize a renewed understanding of God's desire for us. Only then can we begin to repair the damage we have caused.

Acknowledging and accepting responsibility for and repenting of our excess consumption, waste, and pollution of the Earth is hard for a number of reasons. Many of us are not confronted with the effects of this in our day-to-day lives. This makes it relatively easy to ignore or to fail to prioritize.

Acknowledging and accepting responsibility for the harm that our consumption causes to others and to wildlife may be less conceptually difficult, and may therefore provide a bridge to deeper engagement with environmental stewardship. For example, images of cities choked with polluted air and photographs of wildlife injured or killed by plastic waste have been used to build support for governmental actions. In my experience, congregational response to these types of appeals has been more easily and readily positive compared to issues that seem more distant such as climate change/global warming. Similarly, efforts to reduce our own impacts by living more simply, reducing consumption, recycling, and transitioning to renewable sources of energy in our homes and churches seems to meet mostly with positive response.

In summary, what we have left undone, even for congregations that are concerned or alarmed, is similar to what society at large is leaving undone: a response that is proportionate to the magnitude of the environmental crisis. We must reexamine and reprioritize our values. We must find new ways forward based in love, with solutions that emphasize cooperative, inclusive, and community-centric decision making. We must prioritize relationships, simplicity, and nature. And we must live within the limits of ecological sustainability to preserve fair and just opportunities for our children, grandchildren, and future generations so that they may have abundant life. This is necessarily intersectional and holistic/holy work. Creation justice is racial justice, economic justice, and intergenerational justice.

3. Repairing the Breach. This entry point into the journey begins with two questions: What institutions and systems are broken? How will we participate in the repair restoration, and healing of people, institutions, and systems?

The well-documented environmental crisis, which has been ongoing for decades, should have led to reform in the approval processes for projects like Jordan Cove a long time ago.

Given the biodiversity losses and the precipitous decline in wildlife over the last 50 years, it should no longer be possible to approve a project that would leave a permanent, 100-foot wide by 230-mile long scar across the state, harming wildlife, degrading habitat, and interfering with the natural flow of hundreds of rivers and streams.

Given the climate crisis, it should no longer be possible to approve a project that would be the largest source of carbon pollution in the state for decades to come at a time when greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced rapidly, not increased. It should no longer be possible to approve a project that would make it impossible for Oregon to reduce its emissions consistent with state laws and policies as part of the necessary and urgent global effort required to avoid dangerous climate change.

Given the environmental crisis, it should no longer be possible, in general, to prioritize industrial development over environmental protection. More specifically, it should no longer be

possible to approve a project that must serve the public convenience or necessity of Oregonians when none of the LNG will be sold in Oregon or anywhere else in the United States, and it should not be possible to grant a private Canadian company constructing the project solely for its own profit the governmental power to condemn private property.<sup>12</sup>

While it should be relatively easy and straightforward to reject a project such as Jordan Cove, it remains likely that FERC will green light the Project and that the DEQ and governor Brown will continue to process Pembina's permit applications as if business as usual were a rational option. Indeed, it is probable that, should push come to shove, Pembina will file litigation to force the DEQ and our governor to issue the environmental permits required for the Project should state permits and permissions be denied. Federal courts could ultimately side with Pembina notwithstanding all of the Project's adverse climate effects and all of the Project's more direct adverse effects to Oregon's citizens and resources.

The dysfunction and denial at the core of our basic institutions for evaluating large industrial projects—the literal insanity of requiring the construction of a massive industrial project as a matter of legal right even though the project will significantly contribute to the catastrophic disruption and destruction of nature and the natural order—speaks to the obvious and immediate necessity for systemic reform.

These are governmental and societal systems, not religious or church systems. To the extent that the church or religious systems support or enable broken governmental and societal systems, followers who are implicated in the dysfunction must repent, seek forgiveness, and speak the truth about what we now understand to be broken. But that is only a small start. Believers must participate in the repair, restoration, and healing of people, institutions, and systems by rejecting false, binary, choices such as jobs versus the environment. Instead, we must stand for environmental protection, restoration, the renewal of God's creation AND for the eradication of racism and other forms of prejudice that divide us into privileged groups and "other than" groups, for family wages, a robust social safety net, universal health care and affordable housing for all. The abundance of God's Creation is more than sufficient to meet humanity's needs if shared and distributed equitably. We must advocate for a just distribution of God's abundance in the context of Creation Justice work because it eases human suffering. By easing suffering, we can create the space necessary to move into a new, restorative, ecologically sustainable economy.

4. Proclaiming the Dream. This entry point into the journey asks three questions: How can we publicly acknowledge things done and left undone? What does Beloved Community

---

<sup>12</sup> This is a complex situation and the legal nuances of the approval process are beyond the scope of this paper. However, a Canadian company could be granted all required certificates and permits, including the power to condemn property for a project that, possibly, moves only fracked gas from Canada through a network of pipelines to the LNG facility at Jordan Cove for export to Asia. If configured that way, the Project would literally serve no American or Oregonian interests whatsoever. Even if the Project does move gas from American fields to Jordan Cove, the Project still fails to deliver any product or service to Oregon's citizens.

look like in this place? What behaviors and commitments will foster reconciliation, justice, and healing?

Notwithstanding the criticism in the prior section, our legal decision-making structures for major decisions involving the issuance of governmental permits and permissions are democratic and better than most. When stripped of their complexity, the laws and regulations are generally intended to provide a fair, reasonably transparent, public process that seeks to balance economic interests with environmental protection. However, these structures also have embedded values and assumptions that are now dangerously out of date, clearly prioritizing the short-term, largely private economic benefits of project construction, over public needs, especially the long-term public benefits of preserving and protecting nature for our children, grandchildren, and future generations.

Viewed at a high level, our decision-making tools for evaluating industrial projects assume we can adequately protect natural resources for ourselves and for future generations through project-specific mitigation efforts. We dutifully evaluate the damage to air and water quality, wetlands, forests, species, and so on that a particular project will cause, balance these harms against the economic benefits of the project, require some measures to offset the immediate damage we have quantified, then the project is approved, permits are issued, and it's on to the next project.

Obviously, we live on a finite planet. To the extent that our decision-making structures have assumed we could always compensate for degraded or polluted air, water, and land by enhancing or protecting similar resources elsewhere, that assumption no longer comports with reality, if it ever did. The world's scientists are telling us there is no more "elsewhere" and that a planetary ecological crisis exists here and now.

Our decision-making structures were also designed for the fossil fuel age, preferencing the privatization of public lands for fossil fuel extraction (and other forms of resource extraction), the building of the necessary infrastructure to bring fossil fuel products and other natural resources to market. Those systems no longer serve the interests or needs of people or nature, and must be substantially reformed.

While the ecological crisis demands economic reform, economic reform resists change because fossil fuel companies are deeply entrenched and among the most politically powerful corporations in the world, protecting and defending the status quo against even incremental change. We've seen this most recently and most vividly in the recent vote on Washington State's carbon tax initiative. Fossil fuel companies funded a massive, self-interested, and deceptive advertising campaign to defeat a very modest effort to price carbon.

Necessary reforms are frustrated by current political realities, as well. We live in a post-truth era. We cannot even seem to agree that human-caused climate change is real and that we have precious little time left to begin the herculean task of transitioning from the fossil fuel era to an economy based on renewable and non-polluting sources of energy. Fear, division, hatred and violence also mark our current political climate.

Beloved community and our commitment to it must include our own work to develop and share a compelling vision for human and economic development that respects ecological sustainability and for a politics and social contract that prioritize the values of love, compassion, simplicity, and truth. Embedded within the IPCC report is a pathway for avoiding dangerous climate change that embodies these values in the form of greater democracy, increased respect and rights for women and people of color, increased economic equality, and of course far less pollution and far more environmental preservation, protection, and restoration. The “Green New Deal” is another suite of public policies that offers a more communitarian and egalitarian vision for the future that is more consistent with Christian values than business as usual policies.

Underneath such a broad vision, and at the same time, we should identify and support all reasonable measures that will advance the necessary transition to a sustainable, post-fossil fuel economy. We should strive to be prophetic, to proclaim a compelling vision of beloved community, but remain willing to be pragmatic when necessary. A “better is good” approach to our work can help create space for our vision of beloved community to be realized over time (recognizing that time is short). The IPCC and other reports are suggesting a sort of urgent pragmatism—we don’t have time to do anything other than everything possible and all at once.

Understanding the urgency of the situation, we must also be willing to speak truth to the ownership class, to the stockholders of the fossil fuel giants and the banks that finance them. Both incremental and transformational change to the renewable energy economy will come at real cost and require sacrifice. While our legal system ultimately protects capital to the greatest extent possible, the fossil fuel companies that don’t manage change will lose value and, much more readily, their workers and workers in secondary and tertiary industries that support the fossil fuel economy will be displaced.

We’ve seen how this may play out on a much broader scale through the recent disruption to the coal industry. Over the last five to ten years many coal companies have collapsed and filed for bankruptcy protection. Through this process ownership can walk away relatively unscathed, but leaving legacy environmental pollution and unfunded pension plans behind. The result is that taxpayers must pay to cleanup the industry’s toxic waste, retrain and reintegrate displaced workers into the economy, and care for retirees. And it’s not just taxpayer dollars at stake. Collapse is not a reasonable alternative to managed transitions and should not be the default choice as the fossil fuel era necessarily comes to an end.

Among the hard truths to reckon with in this transition is the reality that business as usual ultimately leads to depravation and collapse, environmentally and economically. The rich simply cannot continue to consume the planet’s resources and the economy as a whole simply cannot continue to ignore the ecological limits to sustainability. The transition to a new economy will undeniably require sacrifice, especially from the global rich because the rich are mostly responsible for present and historic waste and pollution. No truth is more vehemently denied across our society.

5. Practicing the Way of Love. This entry point into the journey asks two questions: How will we grow as reconcilers, healers, and justice bearers? How will we actively grow relationships across dividing walls and seek Christ in the other?

In his writings on the Sermon on the Mount, Saint Augustine explained that peacemakers are blessed as Children of God because they find peace within themselves first. Then, embracing God's truth and coming into union with God's will, peacemakers are able to spread God's justice and peace throughout their communities as truly enlightened leaders. Importantly, true peacemaking leadership preserves the well being of all God's creation, recognizing that humanity is but one part of a perfect and interconnected order.

Nowhere, it seems, is it more difficult to realize this vision for peacemaking than in matters of economic development and natural resource extraction. It is and will be incredibly difficult for us to serve as peacemakers in the transition to a post fossil-fuel economy.

While this paper responds to a particular project and, for the most part, its environmental impacts, it's not just the decision-making process for such projects that is broken, it is the social contract itself.

We must remain mindful that for most Oregonians, as for most Americans, our most pressing needs are economic and social. Family wage jobs, access to health care, affordable housing, and quality education provide stability and an opportunity for all of our citizens to reach their fullest God-given potential. Anyone who is struggling to meet any of these basic needs for themselves or for their family may not be able to realize their full potential as a beloved child of God. They will certainly find it difficult if not impossible to engage with more abstract and seemingly distant issues such as global warming and the biodiversity crisis. We must therefore stand for universal healthcare, affordable housing, family wages, strong unions, and for robust public education, including free or affordable college education, and the eradication of racism and other forms of prejudice beneath the umbrella of an ecologically sustainable economy.

Unfortunately, and again whether we chose to act on this information or not, the news from our social scientists and economists isn't any better than the news from our environmental and climate scientists. We've experienced a steep decline in family wage jobs amidst rapidly expanding income inequality, especially in rural areas of the state. We've seen a decline in life expectancy and in the quality of human health. There's been a sharp increase in corporate influence over public decisions coupled with a steep drop in corporate tax revenue, resulting in a continuous disinvestment in public schools and public goods of all kinds.

None of this should be acceptable to anyone. It should certainly not be acceptable to us as Christians. Yet society clings to an ever more fragile and failing status quo because it's what we know and the transformational change required to address the human and ecological crises we face seems impossible and is readily dismissed by those in power as utopian, naïve, and unaffordable. And this, perhaps, is where the Christian community can be most relevant and uniquely helpful. When a situation becomes hopeless, and the people are fearful, we respond in love through service and servant leadership. Love casts out fear. Based on the radical belief that nothing is impossible with God, we can and must help foster the societal reconciliation and renewal that is truly our best way forward out of hopelessness and into the realization of beloved community, marked by sustainability, cooperation, harmony, and love.