



NEWS RELEASE

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Governments must do more: Churches give guarded welcome to Bali Climate Change Conference

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church welcomes the final political consensus this past weekend at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia but urges governments to show greater leadership to save the planet from the destructive force of global warming.

Representatives at the conference have announced a range of measures to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it runs out in 2012, but these do not include defined targets for cutting greenhouse emissions.

Graham Sparkes, Head of the Faith and Unity Department at the Baptist Union of Great Britain, says; "As the UN Secretary Ban Ki-Moon says, this is the 'defining challenge of our age'. We must act now, and the reluctance of some countries to set clear goals to do so, is lamentable. Developed nations have a particular responsibility to take urgent action to reduce the impact of global warming on poorer, developing countries so we welcome the progress made on managing and financing a fund to help countries adapt to climate change."

Anthea Cox, Co-ordinating Secretary of the Public Life and Social Justice Department at the Methodist Church, says there is still much more to be done; "As negotiations continue over the next two years, we urge governments and industry to do more and make the sacrifices that need to be made to mitigate the impact of climate change. This is a justice as well as a security issue and we recognise that voluntary action is insufficient. Political will and action is now vital if we are to build a low carbon economy in the UK and globally."

Convener of the Church and Society Committee at the United Reformed Church, Simon Loveitt says; "As Christians, the care of God's creation has been for too long a side issue,

and this cannot continue. We should be at the forefront of protecting our environment not lagging behind. We should be lobbying our governments to bring about deep cuts in national carbon emissions while modifying our own lifestyles and church life.”

The three church denominations have agreed a joint response to the British government’s upcoming Climate Change Bill and have produced a briefing paper on the bill for their church members. Whilst welcoming the lead shown by the government in producing this bill, concern is noted that it delivers insufficient cuts in carbon emissions in the UK and individuals are requested to write to their MP to voice this concern. Both documents can be accessed from the Joint Public Issues Team website:

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/jpitenvironment.htm>

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Notes

1. For more information about the Joint Public Issues Team, visit www.jointpublicissues.org.uk.

The Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) is the Baptist family in England and Wales (there is also the Baptist Union of Wales). It is made up of churches, 13 regional associations, the national resource centre and Baptist colleges. The Union works with others in mission locally, regionally and internationally.

It is a diverse union with small and large congregations, different nationalities and differing styles of worship yet united by core values and a common purpose of changing lives and transforming communities with the message and love of Jesus Christ. There are some 140,000 members of our 2000 Baptist churches associated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain. <http://www.baptist.org.uk/>.

The Methodist Church has about 295,000 members and 800,000 people are connected with the Church. It has about 5,800 churches in Great Britain, and also maintains links with other Methodist churches totalling a worldwide membership of 70 million.

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/>.

The United Reformed Church comprises one hundred thousand people in 1600 congregations. It has brought together English Presbyterians, English, Welsh and Scottish Congregationalists and members of the Churches of Christ. Worldwide, more than 70 million Christians are members of the Reformed family of churches, the largest Protestant tradition. The name ‘Reformed’ is used because the churches began to emerge with reform movements in the sixteenth century. <http://www.urc.org.uk/>.

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The three denominations are the largest of the Free Churches in Britain.

The Joint Public Issues Team, created in September 2006, combines the expertise of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church in

the area of public issues. Through close collaboration, the churches aim to increase the effectiveness of their engagement in public life and parliamentary affairs.

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