

“What Would Jesus Drive?”
A Campaign Discussion Paper

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Introduction: What Would Jesus Drive – Get Serious

The first reaction by some to the question “What Would Jesus Drive?” is to laugh. However, we consider it one of the crucial questions of our day. Jesus cares about what we drive. Obeying Jesus in our transportation choices is one of the great Christian obligations and opportunities of the twenty-first century. Pollution from vehicles has a major impact on human health and the rest of God's creation. It contributes significantly to the threat of global warming. Our reliance on imported oil from unstable regions threatens peace and security.

The question “What Would Jesus Drive?” is a more specific variation of “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD). All the bumper stickers, bracelets, and tee shirts asking “What Would Jesus Do?” may have become a cliché to some. But we take the question seriously because it pointedly reminds us that we have confessed Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, that we are his followers. It is completely natural for individuals to ask what their leader would do when faced with a moral decision – especially when that leader is the Living Lord Jesus. “What Would Jesus Do?” is also another way of asking, “What is God’s will for me in this situation?” There is not a more serious question for a Christian to ask.

For Christians, the Lordship of Christ extends throughout every area of our life. Nothing is excluded from His Lordship. This includes our transportation choices. That is why the more specific question, “What Would Jesus Drive?,” is a question that all Christians should ponder seriously.

That we have choices today that were not available during the time when Jesus of Nazareth lived in Palestine does not make the question irrelevant. Because of the resurrection of Christ, because the Risen Lord lives in all Christians, because the Church is His living Body, Jesus Christ lives today. If we confess and understand these basic Christian beliefs, then we realize that contemporary moral questions are indeed questions for Jesus Christ and His followers to face together. Thus, the question, “What Would Jesus Drive?,” while initially amusing, actually calls Christians to “get serious” about considering their transportation choices as moral ones.

I. Who Jesus Is

Our answer to the question, “What Would Jesus Drive?,” must be grounded in our central Christian beliefs that Jesus Christ is Creator, Savior, Lord, Great Physician, and Prince of Peace.

A. Creator –

The New Testament clearly proclaims that as the Second Person of the Trinity, Christ created the universe and continues to sustain it. As such, all of creation belongs to Him. He is Creator, Sustainer, and Owner. (Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:16-17, 19; Jn. 1:1-4.)

Therefore, pollution harms *His* creation.

B. Savior –

Christ is not a Creator who simply creates the universe and lets it fend for itself. When humanity is in trouble, Christ comes as Savior to save us from our sins (Mt. 1:21; Mk. 10:45; Jn. 1:29; 3:16; Rom. 5:6-11¹).

Further, God's grace made available to us by the blood of Christ shed on the cross empowers us to live lives of righteousness in accord with His Lordship (Rom. 6:18²).

If we choose to cause pollution that hurts people, we contribute to the sin that Christ carried for us on the cross.

C. Lord –

The confession that “Jesus is Lord” is the oldest of Christian confessions. It is used so frequently in the New Testament to refer to Jesus that it has become part of his name (Mt. 14:30; Jn. 6:68; Mk. 16:19; Acts 2:36, 16:31³).

Just like the disciples in the New Testament, we are called to follow Him and put into practice what he teaches us (Mk. 1:16-20; and Lk. 6:46-49⁴). We are to have the “mind of Christ” including His attitude of humble, sacrificial servanthood (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil 2:5-8).

One of the simplest, most profound of Jesus' teachings is the Golden Rule: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk. 6:31; Mt. 7:12).

When asked to sum up how we are to live our lives, Jesus said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk. 12:30-31).⁵ These are called the Great Commandments.

The Golden Rule and the Great Commandments are commands to be proactive in doing what is good, and not simply refrain from doing what is bad. Righteousness is the presence of right relations between ourselves, God, and others. To fail to do the good in these relationships is a sin.

When we choose to cause pollution that hurts people, we violate the Golden Rule and the Great Commandments. Our contribution to pollution runs counter to Jesus' Lordship in our lives.

D. Great Physician –

Christians understand Jesus Christ to be the Great Physician of both body and soul. Bodily healing constituted an astonishing amount of Jesus' ministry (Mt. 4:23 & 9:35). Just as grace is freely given to all, the Gospels attest that Jesus healed whoever came to him, including many considered unclean and outside the bounds of his community such as the Roman centurion's servant (Mt. 8:5-13). His healing compassion extends to the powerless and most vulnerable – precisely those most hurt by pollution today.

¹ Many biblical texts could be cited on the theme of Christ as Savior. Other examples include Jn. 1:29; Rom. 6:18-19; 1 Cor. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:54-57; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 3:13-14; Heb. 4:15; 5:8-9; 9:14-15; 10:10; 13:12-13.

² See also Jn. 1:12; Rom. 6:1-4, 12-14; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Pet. 1:1-7, 2:24.

³ See also Mt. 18:21; Lk. 5:8, 10:1, 11:1, 24:3; Jn. 20:28-29, 21:7, 15-17; Acts 4:33, 7:59, 9:17, 10:36; Rom. 1:4; 5:11, 21; 10:9; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:3.

⁴ See also Mt. 4:18-22; Lk. 5:1-11.

⁵ See also Mt. 22:37-40; Lk. 10:25-28; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8; Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18.

The New Testament teaches that Christ is the source of the abundant life, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. This is what Jesus came to bring (Jn. 10:10b). In creating and sustaining all things, purifying us from our sins, holding all things together, and reconciling all things, Christ makes physical and spiritual health possible. He is the author, and with the Second Coming he will be the perfecter, of our health (Jn. 1:1-4; Mt. 8:16b-17; 1 Peter 2:24).⁶

As pollution harms people by impacting their health, it works against the work of the Great Physician.

E. Prince of Peace –

Handel's *Messiah* reminds us of what Christians believe Isaiah proclaims concerning Jesus: He is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). The peace that Jesus Christ brings is *shalom*, a holistic well-being based upon the presence of justice and the reconciliation of humanity and the rest of creation with God. Indeed, understanding Jesus as the Prince of Peace brings together all we have discussed concerning Jesus thus far. Creator and Savior are united because God loves the world and in Christ does not count our sins against us (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19;). As such the Creator and Savior reconciles (or makes peace between) us and God; indeed he reconciles "all things" (the entire universe) to God (Col. 1:15-20). The biblical understanding of peace (*shalom*) requires Jesus to be the Great Physician not just of the soul, but the body as well. Finally, the wellspring for Christ's Peace is the love of God. In following Jesus and acknowledging Him as our Lord we are called to be like our Father in heaven and love even our enemies. In so doing we will become children of God (Mt. 5:44-45; Lk. 6:35-36). Peace is the presence of right relations or righteousness with everyone and everything. It is loving neighbor as self – even if that neighbor is an enemy. All of this is made possible only by the love of God in Christ, through whom we have the grace that makes possible reconciliation.

Pollution resulting in ill health and/or harm to the rest of creation is counter to Christ's reconciliation of all things. Dependence on foreign oil from unstable regions heightens the potential for armed conflict. Both work against the Prince of Peace.

II. Transportation as a Moral Issue

Today we in the U.S. are driving much more than we were in years past, and our driving is having harmful consequences. Here are some key findings about U.S. transportation to provide a context for our discussion:

- U.S. transportation energy use accounted for more than one third of the total world transportation energy use in 1997.⁷
- In 1994, nearly 60% of U.S. households owned two or more cars and 19% owned three or more.⁸

⁶ See also Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:15-20; I Cor. 15:20-26; Rev. 21:3-6; cf. Isa. 53:4-5.

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme, *North America's Environment: A Thirty-year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective*, (2002): 18, <http://www.na.unep.net/publications/NA/NorthAmerica.pdf>.

⁸ U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center, *Trends in Personal Motor Vehicle Ownership and Use: Evidence from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey* (April 23, 1998): 12, <http://www-cta.ornl.gov/npts/1995/Doc/Envecon.pdf>; and United Nations Environment Programme, *North America's Environment: A Thirty-year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective*, (2002): 22, <http://www.na.unep.net/publications/NA/NorthAmerica.pdf>.

- Since 1970, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) have increased 149% while U.S. population increased 39%.⁹
- The 2000 census revealed that 3 out of 4 workers drive to work alone, an increase from both 10 and 20 years ago. The 2000 census also revealed that less than 5% use public transportation and less than 3% telecommute.¹⁰
- Fuel economy for passenger vehicles peaked in 1988 and is at a 22 year low. This is due to the increase in vehicles from the “light trucks” category (SUVs, vans, and pickups). Such vehicles are allowed by the federal corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards to use one third more fuel than cars. Since the CAFE law passed in 1975 they have seen explosive growth (SUVs have increased by a factor of 10 since 1975) and now account for nearly 50% of the market.¹¹
- Federal law allows vehicles in the “light truck” category (e.g. SUVs) to emit 75% more smog forming emissions than cars.¹²
- Forty-five percent of the rise in global warming pollution from personal vehicles in the 1990s was due to the increase of vehicles in the “light trucks” category.¹³

A. Health

Currently more than one in three Americans live in areas with unhealthy outdoor air, and in many areas it is getting worse, especially in poorer neighborhoods. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), tailpipe pollution from cars and trucks accounts for almost a third of outdoor air pollution in the United States, including approximately half of the pollution that creates smog (or ground level ozone). In addition, production and distribution of gasoline accounts for half of the toxic air pollutants released (e.g. benzene). In 1996 health care costs due to transportation pollution totaled \$56 billion.¹⁴

According to the EPA, it has been known for some time that outdoor air pollution associated with vehicles can:

- cause acute respiratory problems;
- aggravate asthma;
- cause significant temporary decreases in lung capacity of 15 to over 20 percent in some healthy adults;
- cause inflammation of lung tissue;
- lead to hospital admissions and emergency room visits (10 to 20 percent of all summertime respiratory-related hospital visits in the northeastern U.S. are associated with ozone pollution);
- impair the body's immune system defenses, making people more susceptible to respiratory illnesses, including bronchitis and pneumonia;¹⁵ and,
- increase a person's risk of cancer.¹⁶

⁹ Environmental Protection Agency, *Latest Findings on National Air Quality: 2001 Status and Trends* (2002): 4, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>.

¹⁰ http://www.ameristat.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Ameristat/Topics1/2000Census1/Going_to_Work_Americans_Commuting_Patterns_in_2000.htm.

¹¹ Environmental Protection Agency, *Light-Duty Automotive Technology and Fuel Economy Trends: 1975 Through 2001* (September 2001): i, iii, <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/cert/mpg/fetrends/s01001.pdf>.

¹² United Nations Environment Programme, *North America's Environment: A Thirty-year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective*, (2002): 21, <http://www.na.unep.net/publications/NA/NorthAmerica.pdf>.

¹³ United Nations Environment Programme, *North America's Environment: A Thirty-year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective*, (2002): 21, <http://www.na.unep.net/publications/NA/NorthAmerica.pdf>.

¹⁴ American Automobile Association, “Driving Costs,” (1996).

¹⁵ Environmental Protection Agency Fact Sheet, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/naaqsfm/o3health.html>.

For the first time recent studies have linked outdoor air pollution to:

- harming the blood vessels of healthy individuals¹⁷;
- birth defects, low birth weight, premature births, stillbirths and infant deaths¹⁸;
- measurable lung damage in healthy children, which could lead to lung disease¹⁹;
- healthy, active children becoming 3-4 times more likely to develop asthma²⁰.

Asthma is reaching epidemic proportions²¹:

- Asthma has increased 74% among children and teenagers ages 5-14 since 1980, and an astounding 160% for children 1-4.
- By 2020 asthma sufferers are projected to double to 29 million with one family in five forced to live with the disease.
- Currently seven percent of children suffer from asthma, which is the number one cause of school absences.
- African-American children are five times more likely to die from asthma than white children.²²

According to the EPA,²³ pollution from vehicles not only harms human beings, it impacts the rest of God's creation as well by:

- interfering with the ability of plants to produce and store food, so that growth, reproduction and overall plant health are compromised;
- making plants more susceptible to disease, pests, and environmental stresses;
- reducing agricultural yields for many economically important crops (e.g., soybeans, kidney beans, wheat, cotton);
- affecting the long-term health of whole forests or ecosystems;
- killing or damaging leaves so that they fall off the plants too soon or become spotted or brown (significantly decreasing the natural beauty of an area, such as in national parks and recreation areas);
- contributing to fish kills and algae blooms in sensitive waterways, such as the Chesapeake Bay; and
- contributing to the formation of acid rain, which also causes serious damage to the rest of God's creation.

The more we learn about the effects of outdoor air pollution on human health and the health of the rest of creation, the more we who are called to follow the Great Physician and love our neighbors as ourselves should be motivated to protect our loved ones and others from this threat.

¹⁶ Environmental Protection Agency, *Control of Emissions of Hazardous Air Pollutants from Mobil Sources: Final Rule* (Federal Register, March 29, 2001) <http://www.epa.gov/OMS/url-fr/fr29mr01.pdf>; and Environmental Protection Agency, *Health Assessment Document For Diesel Engine Exhaust* (May 2002): <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=29060>.

¹⁷ <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3001181>

¹⁸ Beate Ritz, et al., "Ambient Air Pollution and Risk of Birth Defects in Southern California," *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 155 (2002): 17-25; Gary Polakovic, "Air Pollution Harmful to Babies, Fetuses, Studies Say," *Los Angeles Times*, December 16, 2001, <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-121601smog.story?null>.

¹⁹ <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/living/DailyNews/younglungsWIRE011128.html>.

²⁰ Rob McConnell et al., "Asthma in Exercising Children Exposed to Ozone: A Cohort Study," *The Lancet*, 359, #9304 (2002): 386f, <http://www.thelancet.com/search/search.isa>.

²¹ Pew Environmental Health Commission, *Attack Asthma: Why America Needs a Public Health Defense System to Battle Environmental Threats* (2000): 4, <http://healthyamericans.org/resources/files/asthma.pdf>.

²² President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risk and Safety Risks to Children, *Asthma and the Environment: A Strategy to Protect Children* (May 2000): 8, <http://www.epa.gov/children/whatwe/fin.pdf>; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Fact Sheet (Feb. 21, 2001): <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2001pres/01fsasthma.html>.

²³ EPA Fact Sheet <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/naaqsfm/o3health.html>.

Using less gasoline, whether by driving less or by driving a more fuel efficient vehicle, reduces pollution that hurts others and the rest of God's creation.

B. Peace, Justice, & National and Economic Security

Congress originally passed the corporate average fuel economy law (CAFE) in 1975 for national security reasons, to make us less dependent on foreign oil from unstable regions. This is still an appropriate rationale. Unfortunately, for years members in the House of Representatives have attached a rider to the Department of Transportation (DOT) Appropriations bill to prevent the DOT from doing the mandated study necessary to raise CAFE standards. Thus, fuel economy is at a 22 year low, and we are more dependent than ever on foreign oil.

- In 2001 the U.S. imported over 50% of the nation's oil,²⁴ with about 25% coming from the Middle East.²⁵
- The U.S. spends \$20-40 billion a year to defend Middle Eastern oil resources.²⁶
- The U.S. sends \$200,000 overseas each minute to buy oil products.²⁷
- By 2020 oil imports are projected to be 64%.²⁸
- Up to 75% of the world's oil reserves are in the Middle East and are controlled by the OPEC oil cartel.²⁹
- Oil price spikes from 1979 to 1991 cost the U.S. economy about \$4 trillion, and the economy went into recession after each major price shock.³⁰

Furthermore, as pointed out above, we in the U.S. definitely uses more than our fair share, accounting for more than one third of the total world transportation energy use in 1997.³¹

As followers of the Prince of Peace, Christians should strive to lessen circumstances that could lead to violent conflicts by reducing our consumption of oil.

C. Global Warming & "The Least of These"

The United States is the world's largest emitter of the pollution that is causing human-induced global climate change. In the 1990s electric utility generation accounted for 29%, while the

²⁴ Department of Energy, *Oil Dependence and Energy Security*, accessed October 3, 2002, www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/oildep.shtml.

²⁵ David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 2, 4, <http://www.senate.gov/~commerce/hearings/120601Friedman.pdf>. Calculations made using data from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook 2001, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/>.

²⁶ David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 2, 4, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>. Calculations made using data from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook 2001, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/>.

²⁷ David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 2, 4, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>. Calculations made using data from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook 2001, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/>.

²⁸ David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 2, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>. Calculations made using data from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook 2001, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/>.

²⁹ Department of Energy, *Oil Dependence and Energy Security*, accessed October 3, 2002, www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/oildep.shtml.

³⁰ Department of Energy, *Oil Dependence and Energy Security*, accessed October 3, 2002, www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/oildep.shtml.

³¹ United Nations Environment Programme, *North America's Environment: A Thirty-year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective*, (2002): 18, <http://www.na.unep.net/publications/NA/NorthAmerica.pdf>.

transportation sector accounted for 26% of U.S. global warming pollution.³² However, transportation's share rose throughout the decade, becoming the largest source in 1998 (over 30% in 1998).³³ It is projected to continue to be the largest source for the next 20 years.³⁴

As far back as 1971 evangelical Christian ethicists started to warn of the dangers of global warming.³⁵ Recently, Christian scientists and leaders have begun to speak out collectively on the threat global warming poses to humanity and the rest of Christ's creation.³⁶ In July 2002 at a conference in Oxford, England, prominent scientists and evangelical Christian leaders issued the *Oxford Declaration on Global Warming*. It warns that climate change "poses a great threat to the common good, especially to the poor, the vulnerable and future generations."³⁷ The scientific basis for the *Oxford Declaration*, as well as for the international process that has led to the two global warming treaties (Rio and Kyoto), comes from the most authoritative scientific voice on global warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Its latest three volume report makes it clear that the impacts from global warming are a profound violation of the Great Commandments and the Golden Rule, and work against Christ's reconciliation of all things (Col. 1:20).³⁸ One message is loud and clear: the poor and the rest of creation will be hit the hardest. Global warming is therefore a profound challenge to Christian justice and our call to care for "the least of these" (Mt. 25:40, 45). Here are some facts and biblical texts to consider together.

- Developing country economies are much more dependent on agriculture than developed countries. Most developing countries are in tropical and subtropical regions, where the IPCC projects that global warming will significantly reduce agricultural output.³⁹ An additional 80-90 million poor people could be at risk of hunger and malnutrition later in the 21st century simply because of global climate change⁴⁰ (Lk. 4:18-19; Acts 14:17).
- Developing country economies are also much more dependent on coastal industries, which are projected to be heavily impacted.⁴¹ Approximately 60% of people in developing countries derive 40% of their protein from fish.⁴² (Mk. 6:30-44).
- Developing countries are much less able to withstand the devastation caused by extreme weather events, and climate change is likely to increase such events. For example, global warming could increase the number of people impacted by flooding by 20-50 million⁴³ (Job 38: 8-11; Ps. 104:9).

³² Environmental Protection Agency, Recent Trends in U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions (accessed October 3, 2002): Box ES-5 and Box ES-4, <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/emissions/national/trends.html>.

³³ Environmental Protection Agency, *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks, 1990-1998* (April 2000): 2-8, <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/publications/emissions/us2000/energy.pdf>.

³⁴ United Nations Environment Programme, *North America's Environment: A Thirty-year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective*, (2002): 18-19, <http://www.na.unep.net/publications/NA/NorthAmerica.pdf>.

³⁵ Eric Rust, *Nature – Garden or Desert?* (Waco: Word, 1971): 64.

³⁶ See Christian Environmental Council resolutions on the Kyoto Protocol and on domestic sustainable energy policy, *Creation Care* (Spring 2000, #9): 6. See also An Evangelical Scientists' Statement of Concern on Climate Change and the Need for Clean Energy, *Creation Care* (Winter 2002, #16): 10-11.

³⁷ *Creation Care* (Summer 2002, #18): 6. See also <http://www.climateforum2002.org/statement.cfm>.

³⁸ All three of the IPCC reports can be found on its website, www.ipcc.ch.

³⁹ IPCC Summary for Policymakers, *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): 5, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pub/wg2SPMfinal.pdf>.

⁴⁰ IPCC's *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 19.4.2, Box 19-3, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/674.htm.

⁴¹ IPCC Summary for Policymakers, *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): 5, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pub/wg2SPMfinal.pdf>.

⁴² Mostafa K. Tolba and Osama A. El-Kholy, *The World Environment: Two Decades of Challenge* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1992): 107, 299.

- Human health risks will be greater in developing countries due to the potential for increased geographical distribution of infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, and encephalitis.⁴⁴ For example, by 2080 additional 300 million people could be at risk of malaria due to global warming⁴⁵ (Mk. 6:54-56).
- Each of these stressors increases the likelihood of environmental refugees and violent conflicts (Micah 4: 1-4; Isa. 9:6).
- Although the developed countries will likely have the resources to adapt to the impacts of global warming, the poor in these countries will suffer disproportionately. For example, large cities in the U.S. “may experience, on average, several hundred extra deaths per summer.”⁴⁶
- The harmful impacts from global climate change will not happen in isolation. By 2050 the human population is projected to be approximately 9.3 billion⁴⁷ and worldwide economic activity is projected to have quadrupled from 1990 levels.⁴⁸ Depletion of the ozone layer, various forms of air and water pollution, depletion of fresh water supplies, acid rain, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and soil erosion and depletion—these problems continue as well. Combined with global warming, the synergistic impacts could be devastating.
- Entire ecosystems may be lost⁴⁹ (Lev. 25:23; Rev. 11:18).
- Other ecosystems will be severely impacted.⁵⁰
- Fully one third of the world’s forest ecosystems—home to the vast majority of God’s land-based creatures—will experience major changes⁵¹ (Ps. 104:16-17).
- For coastal areas—home to the vast majority of God’s sea creatures—whole food chains could be disrupted⁵² (Ps. 104:24-26).
- Geographically fixed safe areas for endangered species such as national parks could be rendered impotent as ecosystems shift (Ecc. 3:19-21).
- Threats to many species (e.g. the Bengal tiger, the African mountain gorilla) are at the level of survival⁵³ (Gen. 1:20-22; Ps. 104:27-30).

Pollution that causes the threat of global warming violates the Great Commandments, the Golden Rule, and the biblical call to care for “the least of these,” and therefore denies Christ’s Lordship and His reconciliation of all things “through his blood, shed on the cross” (Col. 1:20).

⁴³ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 7.2.2.2, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/310.htm#72214.

⁴⁴ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 19.4.2, Box 19-4.

⁴⁵ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 9.7.1.1, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/360.htm.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, Box 19-4.

⁴⁷ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision Highlights* (2001): v, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2000/highlights.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Paul C. Stern, et al. eds. *Global Environmental Change: Understanding the Human Dimensions* (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1992): 79.

⁴⁹ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers*: Q3.18-20, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/syr/009.htm and IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 19.3, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/667.htm.

⁵⁰ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 19.3.3.1, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/668.htm.

⁵¹ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 5.6.2, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/245.htm.

⁵² IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): Chapter 6, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/284.htm.

⁵³ IPCC’s *Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (2001): section 5.4.1.2, http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/218.htm#5412.

D. Safety

Last but certainly not least is the issue of safety. The moral concerns of health, peace, justice, national security, economic security, and the threat of global warming all point towards the need to reduce pollution from the transportation sector. Besides choosing transportation options other than personal motor vehicles, the best way to reduce pollution is to choose fuel-efficient vehicles. Unfortunately, for many types of vehicles such choices are not available – although they could be using technology that exists today. The fuel efficiency of new vehicles must be increased to address the moral concerns articulated above.

But will increasing fuel efficiency lead to vehicles that are less safe? If done right with technologies available today, the answer is no.

The obvious solution is to increase fuel efficiency while maintaining or even increasing overall safety of drivers of passenger vehicles. Reducing the weight of larger vehicles and designing them to be less aggressive will actually *increase* safety for those in smaller vehicles.⁵⁴ Due to their design (e.g. high bumpers) and weight, some types of vehicles, e.g. many SUVs, unduly threaten passengers of other vehicles. Light truck category vehicles increase the risk of fatality more than four times when striking a car (compared to a car striking a car).⁵⁵ Furthermore, compared to the top four best selling cars, risk of death for the top four SUVs is 26% higher, and it is 68% higher for the top four selling pickups.⁵⁶

When choosing a vehicle to drive, Christians must think of the safety of others as well themselves and their family members.⁵⁷

III. Action Principles

Empowered by grace and guided by the Holy Spirit, Christians are called to fulfill the Great Commandments to love God and neighbor, indeed to love sacrificially with a humble desire to serve others, and to act as Jesus' ministers of reconciliation of all things (2 Cor. 12:9; Mt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-28; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8; Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Jn. 13:34; I Jn. 4:7-8; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 1:15-20; 2 Cor. 5:18).

We are to do the will of God by following Jesus – the Creator, Savior, Lord, Great Physician, and Prince of Peace.

How should we do this in light of the five moral concerns highlighted in Section II and the transportation options available to us? What transportation choices would Jesus choose?

⁵⁴ National Research Council, Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards (2001): 69-77, 117-124, A-4.

⁵⁵ David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 14, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>.

⁵⁶ David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 14, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>.

⁵⁷ One sure way to improve safety is to increase seat belt use and improve seat belt design. Increasing use by 20% would save 6,000 to 10,000 lives, and improving design could save 3,000 to 5,000 lives. See David Friedman, Testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee (November 6, 2001): 13, <http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd01/summary.pdf>.

Based upon the Scriptures and words of Jesus presented thus far, we provide three principles to guide Christians when choosing transportation options. These principles are to help us discover what Jesus might be counseling us in our hearts today.

1. **Principle One** – Choose the least polluting, most fuel-efficient transportation option available for the task at hand.
2. **Principle Two** – If a personal vehicle is essential, purchase the least polluting and most fuel efficient vehicle available that truly fits your needs.
3. **Principle Three** – Advocate for and support policies of governments and practices of businesses that provide citizens and consumers with the most pedestrian-friendly, fuel-efficient, least polluting and safest transportation options now and in the future.

IV. Action Suggestions

The following action suggestions are based upon the three principles articulated above. These suggestions help Christians fulfill Jesus' teaching of the Great Commandments and the Golden Rule.

- Christians should organize their lives so that it is easier and more desirable to walk, bike, car pool and use public transportation more, and use personal vehicles less.
- When they move to a new location, Christians should choose a place that makes it is easier and more desirable to walk, bike, or take public transportation.
- When a new passenger vehicle is required, Christians should purchase the most fuel efficient and least polluting vehicle available that truly fits their needs and does not significantly threaten their safety or the safety of others.
- Christians could donate a significant portion of the money they save from fuel savings to missions.
- SUVs should only be purchased by those who truly need them, such as individuals in rural areas and those genuinely needing 4-wheel drive.
- Christian business leaders should encourage their employees to use public transportation and participate in ride-share programs, avoid subsidized parking, and purchase fuel-efficient business vehicles.
- Local churches should educate their congregations about public transportation options available both for their daily activities and for church services, and create ride-share programs to transport members to worship services and church activities.

- **Churches, denominations, and Christian organizations should educate their members that transportation choices are moral choices. (See our website, www.whatwouldjesusdrive.org for educational and worship resources.)**
- **Christians and Christian organizations and denominations should advocate for government policies that make it easy for individuals to do the right thing when it comes to transportation. This includes:**
 - **making communities pedestrian and bike friendly;**
 - **making public transportation easily accessible, readily available, and affordable;**
 - **requiring new passenger vehicles to be more fuel efficient by raising fuel economy (or CAFE) standards to 40mpg by 2012 and;**
 - **supporting research and development for hydrogen fuel cells and other promising alternative technologies.**
- **Christians and Christian organizations and denominations should encourage automobile manufacturers to make more fuel efficient and less polluting vehicles by purchasing them and by contacting them to make their views known.**
- **Christians should express their views to others, such as writing a letter to the editor of the local paper on the topic of What Would Jesus Drive?, using facts and arguments provided by this campaign.**