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Other Views

## Global warming: An injustice to future generations

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When I was a young man, working my way through college, I worked for an independent oil company cleaning up oil spills from pipelines in East Texas. After trying in vain one day to siphon off oil that had leaked into a wetland, my crew supervisor simply set fire to the whole swamp. I watched in silence as the water boiled. The experience left a lasting impression and an awful insight: it's all too easy to ignore the big picture – clean air and water, neighbors, our children's future -- for an expedient but flawed solution in the here and now.

When I listen to the debate over what we should do about global warming, I think back to that swamp. In these difficult economic times, it's very tempting to light that match – ignore the big picture and push off hard decisions to another day. But God has given us the gift of awareness, responsibility, and the ability to take action. It's time for individuals and lawmakers wake up and take action to make sure future generations don't have to pay for the mess we have made.

I am encouraged by changes being considered in the United States Congress in the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act. This bill recently passed through the House bill and is currently under consideration in the Senate. It signals a real commitment on our part to collectively face the crisis of climate change. Oregonians need to encourage Senators Merkley and Wyden to strengthen and swiftly act to pass this bill.

My wife and I serve three churches in the Pendleton area. What we hear from our congregations is, 'What can individuals do about global warming? How can I make sure there's something left for the next generation?' There are no easy answers to those questions, but I do know we all have a part to play. I urge my congregation to take small steps – from carpooling to weatherizing their homes. We have performed an energy audit at my church in Milton-Freewater, and plan to follow up on those recommendations. Most importantly, I urge individuals to get informed and speak out about their beliefs. To make good decisions, reflecting the values of our communities, our leaders need to hear from us.

My wife and I have seven children—four adopted, two in a pre-adoption status and one foster child. It takes concerted effort and deliberate leadership to stave off chaos and create an environment where we can all be our best. Our most important rule is, "There is no right way to do the wrong thing."

When it comes to global warming, the same rule applies: I don't believe there's a 'right way' to do the wrong thing. And in this case, the 'wrong thing' is to continue the status quo on global warming. I don't want to teach my children to alter their lives, lower their expectations and to be prepared to inherit a diminished world. I believe we can do better than that. We can show our children that, to preserve our planet, we are willing to make the difficult decisions today.

As a father, husband, and a church pastor, I can now speak out where my 21-year-old self could not. I believe global warming is much more than an environmental problems -- it is an injustice to future generations. We have all received the blessings of creation — it's beauty, richness, and variety. It is our responsibility to protect that precious gift for the next generation to treasure. As our state and national leaders contemplate how to tackle global warming, I encourage them to approach the problem with their God and their grandchildren in mind.

The Reverend J. Quinton Kimbrow is pastor at the Milton-Freewater and Weston United Methodist Churches.