

# Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

## Statement of Social Principles and Concerns

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### PREAMBLE

This *Statement* describes the basis on which *Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)* makes decisions and takes action with regard to social concerns and policy advocacy in order to fulfill its mission in public life.

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### BASIC PRINCIPLES

As an ecumenical organization, we recognize and respect the traditions and the stated social views of each of our member congregations, denominations and associations. Among these are a belief in the authority of scripture, Holy Spirit, church tradition, reason, freedom of conscience, and the ongoing moral and ethical work of people of faith.

We affirm the value of love, the respect of all life, and the dignity of every human being. We are dedicated to civil and religious freedoms, social and political equality, economic justice and environmental stewardship. We hold a vision of a world free from injustice, violence, racism, sexual prejudice, exploitation and human deprivation.

In our public witness we embrace compassion and forgiveness in all relationships, non-violence, and working in constructive and creative ways to make a better world. We commit ourselves to a society in which all persons are free to live together in peace and harmony. We affirm an inclusive community for nurturing the shared life of humankind.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon draws strength and inspiration from its Judeo-Christian heritage and from the wisdom and insights of other traditions. Inherited assumptions, old divisions and current understandings of our world and ourselves demand continual re-examination in light of changing social conditions. Social concerns, by their nature, change as society changes, but these basic principles and the following areas of concern remain central commitments of our public witness.

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### SOCIAL CONCERNS

#### **Peace and Global Justice**

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon strives for peace and justice among all peoples and nations through dialogue and understanding. EMO supports efforts to end global poverty, oppression, disease and conflict, and supports international institutions dedicated to non-violent conflict resolution and global cooperation for social progress. EMO endorses redirecting military spending toward education, health, housing, poverty-reduction and other forms of constructive social development.

#### **Human Rights and Religious Freedom**

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon affirms the human rights of all people, including rights to faith, hope, love and life. Human and civil rights also include those codified in our federal and state constitutions, and expressed in the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These include the

right to free elections, free speech and a free press, freedoms of religion and association, and personal liberty. We abhor hunger, homelessness, slavery, genocide, torture or any inhumane treatment that erodes human dignity. We affirm rights to universal education, safe and affordable housing, food, health care, honorable employment, equal opportunity and an equitable system of justice. We support the application of these rights to all persons, regardless of immigration status.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

The earth—with its life-nourishing balance of water, air, nutrients and climate—is a precious gift of God and a sacred trust. Our religious traditions affirm the intrinsic value of all creation and our role as stewards of the earth. Today, however, we confront complex environmental threats, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable food production systems, the widespread use of toxic chemicals, barriers to water access and declining water quality. In this context, EMO seeks to eliminate environmental injustice and works to heal and protect creation for future generations.

### **Economic Justice**

We are called to “love justice” and to act in solidarity with those on the margins. Justice requires us to establish social and economic systems that encourage, enable and empower all people to develop and use their capabilities to meet their needs and to contribute to the social welfare. Properly functioning market economies require both ethical and legal regulation to safeguard the environment and public health and protect the health and well-being of workers, consumers and the general public. EMO supports government action when necessary to promote these values, and we affirm the rights of workers, consumers, and communities to organize and to engage in dialogue or collective bargaining with employers.

### **Family & Community Well-being**

Even as understandings of “family” continue to change, we affirm this evolving institution as an important locus of personal relations and childhood development. EMO is committed to promote both the welfare of all children and the overall health and economic stability of families and communities. We affirm the right of each person to be free from domestic violence and any form of abuse, and we support programs that provide shelter, security, educational and economic opportunity for those who otherwise may feel trapped in a violent or abusive situation.

### **Public Witness and the Common Good**

Our faith traditions call us to be thoughtful and active advocates for peace, social justice, human dignity and environmental stewardship. Through reflection on core principles, understanding of the political process, and knowledge of the issues, EMO seeks to empower people of faith and all Oregonians to fulfill their role in the democratic process.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon also recognizes the important role of government in maintaining a system of laws, regulations and public services, and we share a corresponding commitment to an equitable system of taxation that can adequately fund both these core public functions and those additional initiatives required for social progress, economic justice and environmental stewardship.

In sum, we seek a government and social order that is founded on principles of human dignity and political equality, is responsive to human needs and aspirations, sustains robust civic participation and religious freedom, and furthers social justice and the common good.