



# Resolutions To Action

LCWR Global Concerns Committee

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## Living in Right Relationships: Crisis Abatement 101

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### EXPERIENCE

An activated call light in a health care facility indicates that someone is in “crisis.” Conscientious providers immediately respond to minimize “crisis” impacts. Appropriate responses are not dictated by economic status, race, creed, citizenship status, or religion. Good care givers respond not only because it’s required, but because it is the “right thing to do” out of respect and love.

Unfortunately, providers don’t always instantaneously respond. Delays happen due to distractions, neglect, multiple demands requiring prioritization, or even intentional ignoring. Awareness and prioritizing are influenced by held ideas, attitudes, and knowledge of the situation and culture. Sometimes, the light isn’t heeded because what one caregiver perceives as a “crisis,” another may not. Personal worldviews, formed by experience, knowledge, and belief systems, are the “root” of all personal actions.

Immediate responses vary, but the resultant outcomes impact not just the immediate situation but the “wholeness” of the world. Mutual, relational interdependence can be built or shattered in a momentary action. The begged-for response is the Christ response of unconditional loving kindness and care-filled, contemplative action. It is “reading the signs of the times” in our suffering earth community and meeting those needs with “right relationships.”

### SOCIAL ANALYSIS

*When suffering happens, it forces us to confront life in a different way than we normally do. -- Philip Yancey*

Living being in distress is a “crisis” begging for corrective action. According to Bill McKibben, since the year 2000 crises are continuous, overlapping, more frequent, stronger, with larger areas and numbers of living beings impacted. He concludes, “the reality today is that it is an illusion that there is a secure and safe future.” Reading the “signs of the times” is filled with uncertainty. Media highlights

crisis outcomes but rarely identifies root causes or developing crises like those stemming from racism, forced migration or environmental degradation.

A crisis does not discriminate but the suffering and outcomes are inequitably felt. Those living in poverty, pollution, or with limited political power are the most adversely impacted and the least resilient.

Since systemic change is the only permanent crisis abatement, a good method for finding the root causes

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of social and ecological injustice is to identify the basic physical, social, and spiritual needs that are not being met. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can help. It uses the human gift of rational abilities and free will to identify, learn and respond to what is limiting a full life for another living being.

Human rational gifts enable instinctive behaviors to be overridden. When appropriately used, they enable actions that consciously build up the "common good." Since inappropriate actions have resulted in the social and environmental crises of our times, humans must deliberately choose actions to mitigate root causes. This requires self-examination and the understanding of others to generate "heart level" exchanges that encourage others to make the needed behavioral changes.

Our attitudes, values, and beliefs, i.e. our worldviews, are the foundation of every personal action. Changing one's own behavior, or inviting another to change, requires the acquisition of new knowledge and deep understanding in order to identify alternative ways of being. To invite another to change requires speaking from the learner's perspective, not from your own. [Miller & Spoolman](#) provide a tool for assessing held environmental worldviews to facilitate such "heart level" learning exchanges:

1. The utilitarian view: Nature exists to meet the needs and wants of humankind. Humans are creative enough to invent alternative ways when natural resources become depleted.
2. The stewardship view: Humans must act responsibly because nature is limited and the needs of today as well as the future must be considered.

3. The non-anthropocentric view: Humans are one of many different living beings with immediate and future needs. Each living being and species is innately endowed with unique gifts meant to contribute to the cosmic common good. Humans are the only species *totally dependent* on the rest of nature for all basic physical needs. Humans must take only what they need today in order to enable the abundant resilient Earth to support future generations.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis carefully applied these environmental worldviews to motivate others to change. Analysts of *Laudato Si'* suggest that while it aligns most closely with the stewardship perspective, Pope Francis' own actions spring from a non-anthropocentric view. Choosing to write from the stewardship perspective allowed him to invite those with different worldviews to contrast his ideas with their own, and conclude that alternative action is possible. It is a positive approach that invites others to contemplate new information and consider behavioral changes.

## REFLECTION

- How are white supremacy and racism related to denied basic physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs?
- How is forced migration related to denied physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs?
- How does your environmental worldview impact your relationships with others?

## ACTION

Celebrating the 5<sup>TH</sup> anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis boldly stated that decisive action is needed to limit climate change to the 1.5 C needed for a resilient earth community. He invited people to revisit Chapter 6 of the encyclical and to reexamine actions needed to address the root causes of the cries of earth and the poor.

- Enhance your personal awareness of crisis situations by following global social and environmental events through resources including NCR's EarthBeat and the work of the [Catholic Climate Covenant](#).
- Teach the next generations "radical hope" by sharing stories of the resilience of our species in the past.

We have witnessed how global pandemics and social injustices can unite and bring out the best behaviors in people. We are graced with choose behaviors for positive impactful actions. What we do in each present moment is the only thing that defines the future.

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