



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Church of God in Christ

General Information

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) was founded in 1897. Currently, it is the largest African-American denomination in the United States and one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the world.

More information about Church of God in Christ, including the Church's beliefs, structure, and history, can be found by going to cogic.org.

Number of Members in the US: 3.7 million

Number of Members Worldwide: 6 million

Official Statements on Animals

In the beginning, God gave Man authority over animals and the rest of His creation

- ★ According to COGIC doctrine, God created the first human beings for "the Lord's pleasure" and "to exercise authority over God's creation." The original humans were sinless, wise, and immortal. It was humanity's original intelligence that allowed Man to "name the entire animal creation."

"Why was man created? For the Lord's pleasure...*and to exercise authority over God's creation...Where did man come from? Man was created from the dust of the earth... Adam and Eve were the first human beings...The whole human race descended from this single pair...What was the original nature of man? Spiritually, man possessed the nature of God...Thus, he was perfect, holy, or sinless. Mentally, man was so intelligent that he was able to name the entire animal creation...He knew wrong from right...and was given a free will to choose between the two. Physically, man was immortal..."

--from Bishop P. A. Brooks and Charles Hawthorne, *Understanding Bible Doctrine As Taught In The Church Of God In Christ, Centennial Edition* (Detroit: Church of God in Christ, 2002), 23.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they forfeited humanity's right to rule creation

- ★ Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat from the forbidden fruit. When they did so, they committed treason against God and lost their right to rule creation. That right now belongs to Satan.

"What happened to change man's nature? Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Eve to take of the forbidden fruit...Eve 'took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and give also unto her husband with her, and he did eat' (Gen. 3:6)...In so doing, Adam sinned against God...In so doing, Adam committed high treason. He turned his God-given authority to legally rule the earth over to Satan. At that point, Satan became the god of this world."

--from Brooks and Hawthorne, *Understanding Bible Doctrine*, 23.

Although humanity is fallen, sanctification gives Man the ability and obligation to live an "exemplary lifestyle" and perform "good works" toward Men and Nature

- ★ **Although creation currently is ruled by Satan and is destined for destruction, humanity is not free to denigrate life. "Saints" (all those who are saved) are called by the Church to renew their "whole nature in the image of God": living exemplary lifestyles and performing good works.**

"Sanctification is that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Ghost, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God and enables him to perform good works."

--from The Church of God in Christ, *The Doctrine of the Church of God in Christ: Salvation*.

"What impact should this doctrinal truth have on saints today? Saints should make proper preparation so as to be ready for the Lord...Saints should live in earnest expectation of Christ's return...Saints should have an exemplary lifestyle."

--from Brooks and Hawthorne, *Understanding Bible Doctrine*, 37-38.

"...[T]he global challenges of the future must be embraced as our 'call' to train, develop, and commission a new generation of leaders. A band of leaders who are equally committed to reversing the ill-conceived trends of urban centers, family disintegration, violence in our communities, global famine and disease, environmental threats, political upheaval, moral leadership deficiency, poverty, and the loss of our youth to subcultures that rob our precious human commodity of their Divinely-inspired destiny. "

-- from The Most Reverend Charles E. Blake, Presiding Bishop Church of God in Christ, Inc., *The Centennial Proclamation: An Apostolic Missive*, September 2007.

Contemporary Statements on Animals

COGIC calls upon its leaders to commit themselves to reversing social trends that threaten creation

- ★ **In a 2007 Apostolic Missive, COGIC's Presiding Bishop called upon the Church to provide leadership in reversing current "ill-conceived" social trends, including trends that threaten the environment.**

"Let me add that while we have such a rich heritage, the global challenges of the future must be embraced as our 'call' to train, develop, and commission a new generation of leaders. A band of leaders who are equally committed to reversing the ill-conceived trends of urban centers, family disintegration, violence in our communities, global famine and disease, environmental threats, political upheaval, moral leadership deficiency, poverty, and the loss of our youth to subcultures that rob our precious human commodity of their

Divinely-inspired destiny. Our future, if we are to remain a constructive influence in society, must be guided by godly principles that penetrate the culture and bring glory to our God. We must take the high road of integrity and authentic leadership around the world. Church of God in Christ, we must lead! And lead, we will!"

-- from Blake, The Centennial Proclamation: An Apostolic Missive, September 2007.

COGIC identifies environmental sustainability and health--including the health and sustainability of endangered animals-- as essential for the achievement of basic human rights and health

- ★ **COGIC is a signatory on two interfaith documents that identify environmental sustainability and health as essential for the achievement of basic human rights and health. These documents were prepared in anticipation of and support for the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and its compendium "Millennium Development Goals."**

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights demands meeting basic human needs. The abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty to which more than a billion people are currently subjected, must be decisively altered. The human destruction of the environment has to be stopped. The process of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (eight targets that 189 countries have pledged to meet by 2015) represents a key indicator of the commitment of States to realise human rights for all."
—from COGIC, 2008 Faith in Human Rights Statement.

"Millennium Development Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability. Target 1: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Target 2: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss. (a) Marine areas and land conservation need greater attention. (b) Deforestation slows and more forests are designated for biodiversity conservation. (c) The number of species threatened with extinction is rising rapidly. (d) Fish stocks require improved fisheries management to reduce depletion."
—from United Nations, Millennium Development Goals Report, 2008.

"The world's faiths and traditions share an understanding of the need for balancing the health of society and the environment. There are significant links between ill health—including reproductive ill health—and environmental degradation. Environmental toxins such as industrial chemicals, air pollution and pesticides are linked to numerous health problems, including infertility, reproductive cancers and birth defects. Policy makers and members of civil society should promote greater understanding of the linkages between the environment and reproductive health, and encourage integrated actions to address both these areas. We stand compassionately for justice for those couples whose fertility has been compromised by environmental abuses and call for equal concern for their right to create a family as we do for those couples whose emphasis is at times on fertility control."
—from United Nations, "A Faith-Filled Commitment to Development Includes a Commitment to Women's Rights and Reproductive Health: Religious Reflections on the Millennium Development Goals," (signatories include Rev. Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou, Church of God in Christ).

For more Religious Statements on Animals and other HSUS Faith Outreach resources, visit humansociety.org/faith.