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# A Time to Grow in Generosity

December is a very special season for various faith communities. Our general US society puts a big focus on giving gifts (with more than one motivation, granted).

I have been thinking about this 2007 season. It seems like a very special one with unique urgency entailed this time.

It seems we are called to think about gift giving and its root generosity in whole new ways. The caller: the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change!

Please remember: this panel's work is considered "cautious" because its consensus involves government leaders from 130 (of 192) United Nations Member States.

The 4th part of this year's 5-year report on speeding up global warming has our United Nations Secretary General very frightened. We are experiencing changes this planet has not seen for 650,000 years (levels of carbon dioxide emissions) and 22 million years (demise and re-emergence of coral).

Carbon dioxide is making our oceans more acidic – with potentially very big impacts on the whole chain of ocean life and human benefit from it. This ocean acidification provides strong cause to reduce significantly carbon dioxide emissions – apart from their role in global warming! See the report at <http://www.ipcc.ch/#>

Some big reflection points for me:

- This is really big stuff. God knows that. God has given us many gifts, too. What does God hope I will do? "Nothing" is the wrong answer. What are the right ones?
- The IPCC chair, Dr Rajendra Pachauri, sites ex-

pert consensus that our global community will have to start radical reductions within just eight years if there is any hope of preventing dangerous climate change impacts. What further changes can I make now, building on a bunch I already do? Personal things? With the good people in my circles of influence? Consumer advocacy efforts? Citizen advocacy efforts?

- How can we help one another get a grip on this really big thing?
- What would generosity and gift giving to others look like in these next eight years? Especially to people nearby and in countries who are economically poor? To humanity 7 generations forward?
- How would I describe "the common good" in all this?

How do I view Earth? Ever really think about it? How does God view it? What does it tell us about God?

The vast majority of us really don't like to think about such big things. However, this truly global dynamic is unfolding on us, like it or not. In addition, like it or not, we need to individually and together really start thinking about it all and changing our ways that often are so wasteful and expensive for others. Like so many other big, long-time-building issues, I personally am not responsible for all the harm building up – but I am here now in 2007 and I and we must deal with it – constructively.

I will be a mere 76 in 8 years. What will the intervening years be like? Always, how does God hope I will live them? What gifts does God hope I will give?

November 21, 2007