

Individual Consent Form

“The extension of Christian congregational practices to meet the Anthropocene”

You have been selected to participate in a research study of how Christian congregations are responding at the grassroots to the challenges of climate change and ecological despair. This project is interested not only in cataloging creative responses to these challenges, but also documenting some of the struggles that come with local Christian congregations seeking to claim a sense of agency (that is, the ability to “do something”) in the midst of a perceived planetary crisis.

At the end of this study, three deliverables will be produced:

1. A practical resource, made freely available, for pastors and church leaders seeking project ideas that help them to sustain faithful ministry in an increasingly warming world. This will most likely take the form of a 16-page PDF guidebook and/or PowerPoint presentation.
2. A philosophical and/or narrative non-fiction resource on what it looks like when a congregation moves past despair or complacency on climate change and instead adopts an orientation of hope (e.g., a publicly available 10,000 word longform essay).
3. An anonymized database that will aid future researchers and creatives who are seeking to better understand and respond to the dynamics of congregations responding faithfully to climate change and ecological despair.

You are encouraged to read through this form carefully before agreeing to be in this study.

What will my participation consist of?

For individuals, participation can consist of the following elements:

- I. Participation in a “Focus Presentation” discussion group (recorded and transcribed)
- II. Formal one-on-one interview with the Investigator (recorded and transcribed)
- III. Informal conversation with the Investigator (no live recording, although anonymous paraphrasing may included in field notes and used later in the deliverables)
- IV. Having one’s photograph taken and potentially used in the deliverables
- V. Taking a survey

This consent form formalizes your participation for any activity that will be recorded and/or transcribed, including photography (elements I, II, and IV above). Consent to participate is considered implicit in other project activities (elements III and V above). By signing, you offer permission to the Investigator to use your name, photo, or other relevant information that may make you personally identifiable in Deliverable #1 (practical guidebook/presentation) and Deliverable #2 (longform essay). Standard care will be taken to protect confidentiality with regards to any recordings, transcriptions, or photography stored in Deliverable #3 (anonymized database for future research and creative use).

If any part of this makes you uncomfortable but you would still generally like to participate in the study, you can choose to “opt-out” of any part of your participation at the bottom of this form.

What are the risks and benefits of participation?

The goal of the Investigator is that participation in this research study is a fruitful and beneficial experience for each participant. That said, so that each potential participant can make an informed decision about participation, documented below are what are believed to be the most obvious risks and most obvious benefits.

Risks

- There may be some **social risks**. At present, climate change is a polarizing political issue in the United States and Canada, and so participation may be interpreted as “taking a side” although all perspectives are welcome to participate. There also is technically the risk of accidental

disclosure of private affairs of the congregation, although the Investigator will naturally seek to avoid the broadcasting of any material that has the potential to be embarrassing or insulting.

- There may be some **psychological risk**. Extended mediation on the topic of climate change and the corresponding ecological crisis may evoke a sense of anxiety or helplessness in some participants. Participants experiencing climate-related anxiety are recommended the following resource by Jen Christensen of CNN: "Climate anxiety is real, but there's something you can do about it", available at: cnn.com/2019/05/07/health/climate-anxiety-eprise/index.html

Benefits

- For any Christian congregation or relevant initiative the participant is involved in and refers to during their participation, there is the potential benefit of garnering **positive reputation gains** through representation in the deliverables. This legitimization can be an asset for future work, including volunteer recruitment or any level of fundraising, done by the organization.
- Climate change and ecological despair are tough abstract issues, and Christian ministry can be a very involved and detailed work with minimal time for reflection. With that in mind, participation in this project may aid participants in developing a **"balcony" perspective** on their work, helping them see how their local efforts are contributing to the global situation, and also strategically better chart out future courses of action.

Who is responsible for the project?

The Investigator of this project is Kaleb Nyquist, a recent divinity school graduate with an additional masters degree in public policy (the University of Chicago). Kaleb has previously worked as a youth ministry director (Ravenwood Evangelical Covenant Church) and as a faith-based activist for responsible climate change policy (Young Evangelicals for Climate Action). You may contact Kaleb at kaleb@ravenscov.org or (971) 237-0531.

This project is financially supported by the Pastoral Study Project program of the Louisville Institute. The institutional sponsor of this project is Ravenswood Evangelical Covenant Church, a long-standing neighborhood congregation on Chicago's north side. Any premises or conclusions related to this research are the Investigator's own and do not represent an official public stance of the funder or sponsor. The project website is churches.eco.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. A copy of this form has been made available to me. I consent to participate in this study, either fully or opting-out of specific elements as detailed in the box below.

I wish for my participation to be limited to exclude the following:

Congregation / Organization: _____

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____ **Date** _____

If participant is under age of 18:

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Investigator Signature: _____ **Date** _____