

## Climate Change and Care of the Earth: What Does Faith Have to do With It?

The purpose of this two to three session experience is to expand our spiritual connection with creation and to look to our faith tradition for guidance in facing today's challenges.

**(Each session 2 ½ hours; alternate possibility is one 6 hour, including lunch, session)**

Participants are asked to read Carol Johnston's *And the Leaves of the Tree Are For The Healing of the Nations* before the session begins. It is available on-line at the PCUSA site or booklets can be ordered for \$2 (10 or more) from the PCUSA site.

An additional resource for the group leader is *Awakening to God's Call to Earthkeeping* – Evangelical Lutheran Church

---

### Handout Packet Content

- Background Thought Questions
  1. How does your faith inform your understanding of the relationship of people with the land?
  2. What do you think it might mean to live in an "earthkeeping" relationship with the land?
  3. How can our faith help us to move into the unknown?
- Readings (assembled in the packet) Any of these books are well worth a full reading beyond these few excerpts.

*And the Leaves of the Tree Are For The Healing of the Nations: Carol Johnston*

*Inhabiting Eden: Patricia Tull: pages 19-33 (Humans and Creation), pages 76-84 (Food for Life)*

*Grounded, Finding God in the World: A Spiritual Revolution: Diane Butler Bass, pages 32 – 64 (Dirt), pages 268 – 280 (Revelation)*

*Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage: Dianne Glave, pages 43-56 (Religion) and 127 – 138 (Environmental Justice)*

*Active Hope, How to Face the Mess We're In Without Going Crazy - Joanne Macy: pages 57 – 81 (Honoring our Pain for the World)*

*Making Peace with the Land: God's Call to Reconcile with Creation – Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba: Prologue and pages 19 – 56.*

## **Session One**

Distribute Handout Packets

Reflection Content:

- *Thomas Berry and the Earth Community* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0XBlUQ8qU>) 6 minutes and 49 seconds
- Selected Scripture pertaining to God's presence in creation, God's love of creation
- Reading on spiritual connection and unity
  
- *Genesis: Re-thinking Dominion* (<https://vimeo.com/35978676>) 5 Minutes (show in middle of session)

Questions for Discussion:

- Have you had personal experiences where you felt a strong spiritual connection with the land (trees, water, sky)?
- Did you think of those experiences as revealing God's presence?
- What might the writers of the scripture (read at the beginning) have been trying to say?
- How is the idea of oneness, or unity, of creation different from current approaches to the human/earth relationship? Consider definition of the word "environment".
- Is anyone willing to put in your own words *why* Carol Johnston sees our relationship with earth as "theology"?

Closing hymn, poem, or other reading on God's presence in creation

## **Session Two** (Sessions Two and Three could be combined in a 3 hour session)

Reflection Content:

DVD *The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism and Community*: 59 minutes

Scripture pertaining to courage, trust, and moving into the unknown

Begin with Macy's exercises on identifying what you love and would miss

Questions for Discussion:

- How do we begin to enter a new relationship with the land?

- What are our fears? Read excerpt from Tull on fear.
- What does scripture say about trust and fear?

Closing Poem/reading on oneness and spiritual connection, perhaps also a hymn on oneness of creation

### **Session Three:**

Reflection Content:

Thomas Berry Speaks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3jd1lvMKoA&index=52&list=PLF649EA8839F99D6F>  
3 min. 39 sec.

Scripture from the prophets on human misuse of creation

Questions for Discussion:

What connections are there between the prophets' admonitions about land and justice and our economy?

What are some individual options to "live more gently" with the rest of creation?

What impact do individual choices have on our community? (use of land, changes in employment, different interactions)

What are the concerns others will raise and how can we respond?

Closing Prayer, reflection, and/or hymn