



A Cloud of Witnesses

By Dr. Kevin O'Brien

The world is in trouble. Many of us who value democracy are shaken by populist waves bringing isolationist and nationalistic leaders into power across the world.

Many of us who believe that Jesus' most fundamental call was to humbly serve the poor are saddened by Christian faith used instead to support the rich and powerful. Many of us who worry about rampant climate change are struggling to get anyone to pay attention to rising seas and ravaging droughts that already endanger our neighbors around the world.

Creation is troubled. But we are not the first people to face such trouble, not the first called to struggle against powerful interests on behalf of justice. We can draw strength from those who have gone before.

Early Christians who endured deep hardships and injustices were reminded of this lesson in the Biblical letter of Hebrews. The letter reminds its struggling readers that Noah, Abraham, and Moses also struggled. Then, insisting that Christians have generations of Jewish history from which to learn, the letter offers this inspirational call to action:

Continued on page 12

3 Goings-On
6 Compassion
7 Resistance
8 What Are You For?

10 From Resisting Religion to Resisting Through Religion
11 You Are a Prophetic Leader
14 The Path of Resistance



Earth Ministry/WAIPL Staff

LeeAnne Beres, Executive Director
Jessie Dye, Program & Outreach Director
Jessica Zimmerle, Outreach Coordinator
Emily Martin, Outreach Coordinator
Diane Bell, Operations & Development Manager
Alicia Healey, Bookkeeper

Earth Ministry Co-founders

Rev. Jim & Ruth Mulligan
Rev. Carla Pryne

Earth Letter Staff

Rev. Meighan Pritchard, Editor
LeeAnne Beres, Assistant Editor
Rev. Jim Mulligan, Editor Emeritus
Jean Miller, Graphic Design

Board of Directors

Nancy Berry
Tom Bugert
Rebecca Cate
Rev. Marilyn Cornwell
Anna Dyer
Reuben Gelblum
Rev. Steve Grumm
Rev. Holly Hallman
Evita Krislock
Dr. Brian Naasz
Chris Olson
Rev. John Rosenberg
Ryan Scheunemann
Rev. Tom Soeldner
Sr. Jessica Taylor, SP
Rev. Terry Teigen

Membership

Join Earth Ministry/WAIPL and add your voice to the growing movement of people of faith caring for creation! Membership includes a subscription to *Earth Letter*.

Individual Membership Levels:

\$35 Individual
\$60 Family
\$100 Advocate
\$250 Steward
\$500 Sustainer
\$1000+ Sacred Circle

Join at www.earthministry.org or www.waipl.org, by phone at (206) 632-2426, or by sending in the enclosed envelope. Please contact us for congregational membership information.

ABOUT US

Earth Ministry engages the religious community in environmental stewardship. We work in partnership with individuals and congregations to respond to this great moral challenge through education, modeling sustainable lifestyle choices, and organizing for social change through environmental advocacy.

Founded in 1992, Earth Ministry has a history of leading the way in caring for the environment from a faith perspective. Our Greening Congregations Program was the first in the country to help houses of worship implement sustainable practices, and our faithful advocacy program is on the cutting edge of empowering clergy and lay leaders to speak out on public policy issues.

Earth Ministry supports a growing network of congregations and has a national membership. While Earth Ministry is rooted in the Christian tradition, we actively engage all religious communities on climate and energy issues through Washington Interfaith Power & Light. Our programs and resources are available to all.
www.earthministry.org www.waipl.org

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In recent months uncertainty has weighed heavy in our hearts and polarization has eaten at the core of our democracy and our communities. Climate progress and our public lands are under attack, and there is real fear that many of our environmental and social justice gains in the last decade will be lost.

We are standing directly in the path of history and the moral arc of the universe. Everything we do – and don't do – will make a difference. In light of this new reality, Earth Ministry is committed to twin values of compassion and resistance that will inform our actions in the days ahead.

Some people confuse compassion with weakness, but it is actually strength beyond measure. It is a positive and powerful force against darkness. Compassion flowed through the Civil Rights Movement, because non-violence requires that we respond to evil with peace. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." The faith community is uniquely positioned to model this kind of meaningful response.

Yet we must also resist evil when we see it. Resistance means standing up for justice, speaking out for equality, and putting our faith into action. Resistance protects our neighbors, our communities, and our land, air, and water from harm. It is extremely powerful, but it requires both honesty and courage.

With your support, Earth Ministry raises a voice that is not strident but loving, not antagonistic but kind, yet is powerful and effective. Read on to learn more about how you can join us in reflecting compassion and resistance in the world.

Blessings, 



GOINGS-ON at Earth Ministry

Earth Ministry relies on donations from individuals like you to make this important work possible. Join or renew your membership in Earth Ministry, sign up for monthly giving, or make a special gift at www.earthministry.org or by calling (206) 632-2426. Thank you for your support!

Gathering for Conversation, Healing, and Forward Motion

Over 50 supporters of Earth Ministry/WAIPL gathered at University Temple United Methodist Church in late 2016 for a Colleague Gathering to debrief and reflect on the election, celebrate our shared victories over the last year, and look toward our path forward together. Later that month, Jessie Dye facilitated a similar conversation with members of King County Catholic parishes, including St. James Cathedral, Christ Our Hope, and St. Joseph.

Earth Ministry staff have also been busy with other gatherings that uplift the spirit of reconciliation. We attended a sign-restoration ceremony to support our brothers and sisters at the Muslim Association of Puget Sound, participated in a Just Transition Forum in Spokane, organized a group at the Womxn's March in Seattle, and have been attending trainings for Historically White-led Environmental Organizations working to be better allies. In addition, Earth Ministry is coordinating a Rapid Response Team of denominational religious leaders supporting tribal rights to land, water, and sovereignty threatened by fossil fuels.

Now more than ever it is important that we take time for sharing, for reflection, and for planning a way forward that honors our faith values and protects Earth's ecosystems and God's creation. Thank you for engaging in respectful dialogue for stewardship in the midst of these challenging times.



Dedication of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound's new sign, which sadly has since been vandalized again.

Victories Over Fossil Fuels

After reviewing a Final Environmental Impact Statement that stated dangers of a crude-by-rail facility in Grays Harbor, the Washington State Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the project does not comply with the state's Ocean Resource Management Act. Thank you to everyone who submitted a comment to the decision makers at the City of Hoquiam last fall; now we wait to hear their decision.

We are also celebrating a victory against the last remaining of 6 coal export terminals originally proposed along the coast of Washington and Oregon. Before leaving office, Washington's Department of Natural Resources Commissioner, Peter Goldmark, rejected the aquatic lease permit for the proposed coal export facility in Longview, a significant roadblock for the project to proceed.

The commissioner also placed 45 acres into aquatic reserve at *Xwe'chi'eXen*, or Cherry Point, to uphold the sovereign treaty rights of the Lummi Nation. Protecting this land at the request of the Tribe protects the marine area habitat from future fossil fuel projects.

Together, these decisions are a huge success in holding the Thin Green Line of the Northwest against fossil fuels.

Connecting with Faith Leaders in Montana

Last November, Earth Ministry/WAIPL's Jessica Zimmerle led four faith and environment workshops in Missoula, Montana. Climate Action Montana is an ecumenical group exploring ways to work together in caring for all of God's creation, and its members were happy to learn from the successes of Earth Ministry and Washington Interfaith Power & Light. Jessica also enjoyed connecting with faith leaders at several Dakota Access Pipeline protests during her visit.



Faithful Advocacy in the Washington State Legislative Session

Earth Ministry/WAIPL has been busy representing *you* in the state legislature. From educational workshops to trips to the capitol, we provide a wide range of opportunities for people of faith to raise up the moral voice for equitable environmental policies.

So far this session, Earth Ministry staff have trained over 200 people of faith at two Interfaith Advocacy Days in Olympia and Spokane, and accompanied dozens of faith leaders speaking up at legislative hearings and in meetings with elected officials.

Sound interesting? Contact us to set up an advocacy workshop for

your congregation or to schedule a trip to Olympia with us. This year is a long legislative session, which means there is plenty of time to get involved!

Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light's 2017 legislative priorities reflect our values of environmental stewardship and justice and focus on clean energy, safe electronics for our children, funding for toxic cleanups, oil transportation safety, solar power, and practical access to safe drinking water. Keep up to date on the progress of these bills at our website: www.bit.ly/2017bills.



Earth Ministry's Emily Martin leads an environmental workshop at Interfaith Advocacy Day.



*A room full of happy winners at
Mardi Gras Brunch BINGO!*

Brunch BINGO

Earth Ministry/WAIPL hosted a fun-filled Mardi Gras Brunch BINGO fundraiser on February 25. It was wonderful to fill a room to bursting with people having a great time for a good cause! We had over 30 happy winners of fabulous prizes, including the grand prizes of a beautiful handmade quilt and the opportunity to be a Theatersports improv judge.

The real winners were everyone who came out to support the great work of Earth Ministry. Thanks to you, we raised over \$20,000 to protect our air, water, climate, and communities. Mark your calendar for next year's Mardi Gras Brunch BINGO on Saturday, February 10, 2018 — we'll be back with even more great prizes. See you then!



Earth Letter Spring 2017 Photo Credits

Cover: Julie Baker;

Page 3: Faisal Aminy

Page 6: Alice Hughes; Page 7: Sian

Pages 8–9: Meighan Pritchard

Page 10: Jan Michael Ihl

Page 11: Lisa

Pages 12–13: Nicholas Tsai

Page 14: Moyan Brenn

Page 16: Oliver Clarke

All others: Earth Ministry

Compassion

Embedded in Earth Ministry’s mission is the commitment to care for all God’s children, the least among us – including the fry of the salmon, the cub of the polar bear, the small child from Syria, as well as the ecosystems that keep them all healthy.

Pope Francis labels this religious value “integral ecology,” meaning that the health and well-being of human communities depend on the ecosystems that support them, and damaged human groups will harm the land that gives them life. Earth Ministry’s advocacy is based on maintaining healthy relationships, both with our neighbors and with the common home on which we dwell.

But the stakes have become much higher in 2017. In these challenging times, we expect ourselves to stay true to our most authentic beliefs and identity, even when our balance is shaken daily and our basic expectations of democracy are undermined. Our task is to love God and our neighbors in a polarized and fraught era.

Our authenticity as a people of deep values—the religious environmental movement—depends on staying true to absolute compassion in the face of these attacks. Many whom we have perceived as the opposition, from bigwig corporate execs to red-state politicians, may have a part to play before the end, and we are beholden to our God and to ourselves to stay open to their participation.

Our code of conduct is absolute non-violence and our inner stance is compassion. Because our moral legitimacy is our strongest asset, we can only prevail if we do not ourselves become mean and disrespectful in response to a pernicious and chaotic administration. We are all beloved children of God, irritating as that is.

The good news is that loving your enemy is an effective political strategy. American history is rife with examples of faith leaders who stood for what was right in the face of historic uncertainty and overwhelming political power. We will successfully navigate the narrow passage of these times by keeping our hearts open and our phasers set on stun. Creative, non-violent resistance and persistent, targeted advocacy withdraw support from bad leaders and build community consensus for the common good.



We can do this. But how?

In the flow of bad news from the internet, grief for those who have lost so much, and rage at the theft of our public lands, our national status, and possibly our democracy itself, the risk to our inner balance is real. And compassion requires balance.

There are endless pieces of advice about how to survive as an advocate—breathe, do yoga, take a walk in nature, pet the dog, turn off the blaring TV or time-sucking computer. All good, and whatever helps you keep your perspective is of value. Intimacy with ourselves requires knowing how we feel at any given time, and those feelings let us know what we need to get through.

Two great faith leaders of our times, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, who each know something about political oppression and grief, have published a remarkable book called *The Spirit of Joy*. It is a veritable textbook about compassion.

In it, these holy men teach that when a burden of loss is terrible, grief can lead to renewed meaning in life through a commitment to lift the burden of others who have also suffered. For all the loss at the hands of authoritarian governments that these two experienced from Tibet to South Africa, inner balance and compassion has led them at the end of their lives to enduring joy. May it be so for us.

Resistance

If compassion is about nurturing, resistance is about limits.

The guard rails on a roadway give us safety by identifying boundaries; parents set bedtimes and enforce them as an act of love. Limits are gifts of integrity and strength.

Physically, resistance builds strong muscles. And like going to the gym, practicing democracy is more than a once-every-four-years workout. It's a regular, rejuvenating exercise of will.

Resistance is standing up for justice, speaking out for equality, and putting our faith into action. It's a call to confront evil when we see it, a way of being that sets clear ground rules on the way we and others are treated, and on decisions that affect us all.

When carried out in community, resistance can be extremely powerful, though it requires honesty and courage. This tactic has strategic purpose in protecting our neighbors, our communities, and our land, air, and water from harm.

We must know who we are and what we stand for in order for resistance to be effective – our values are our grounding. When we believe that investing in clean energy and protecting public lands are patriotic, that safeguarding our children's health is vital, and that it is fully American to celebrate diversity, we gain strength to speak truth to power in defense of all we hold dear.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of some of the deepest limits in the American psyche: freedom from oppression and equal opportunity for all God's children. Knowing what we want, what we respect – what we are *for* – gives us clear indication where our boundaries lie and what to resist.



In the wonderful documentary of the Civil Rights era, *Eyes on the Prize*, participants in the Freedom Ride, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and school integration were trained in non-violent resistance. They practiced it. They knew they would be baited, spat on, and beaten. The power of resistance is setting a limit and keeping it, regardless of how it is received.

We have to prepare ourselves to tolerate the outrageous tweets, the rating of our bodies, and disdain for our values that are the hallmark of authoritarian rule. It is counterproductive to throw our outrage on an already inflamed situation. The goal is calm strength in the face of corrupt opposition.

Of course, the goal of resistance is also to be effective. Mass protests are very satisfying – Earth Ministry has organized many rallies and will again in the future – but they are not sufficient on their own. Strategic, targeted, long-term campaigns with clear goals for victory are also needed. Legal, media, grassroots organizing, and other creative tactics all have a role. Robust and respectful conversations within families and among friends are key to changing hearts and minds. Every open-hearted “no” to the forces of hatred and divisiveness deepens the practice of resistance.

With your support, Earth Ministry is raising a voice that is not strident but loving, not antagonistic but kind, yet powerful and effective. Together, we are lifting up shared values and a moral compass in debates about the future of our country that will have great resonance in the coming years.

What Are You For? By Rev. Meighan Pritchard

I'm a Christian. Let's just start there. As soon as I say that outside the walls of my church, I feel as though I need to spend about ten minutes defining what being Christian means to me. I could talk about the ways that Christians are often perceived in the public sphere that are usually not what "Christian" means in my own life. But rather than focus on the kind of Christian I am not, I could tell you about the kind of Christian I am.

Eleven years ago, in 2006, I joined a small group of progressive Christians called CrossWalk America to walk across the country talking about our understanding of what it means to follow Christ. We carried a document called the Phoenix Affirmations, which listed 12 affirmations about love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self.

These affirmations recognized that Jesus was a path to God that worked for

us, but that there are multiple paths to God through a variety of religions. We also affirmed that we try to treat each person authentically, as Jesus did, regardless of race, educational background, sexual orientation, and all the other ways in which we separate into "us" and "them."

Along this walk, I learned how to talk with anyone and everyone about my faith journey, not in terms of what I was against, but in terms of what I found life-giving.

These days, there seems to be more and more talk of "us" and "them." As a nation, we seem less and less able to converse across political party lines, and also across lines of race and class. And yet the environmental challenges we face will affect the entire planet.

We need everyone to mobilize on the issue of climate change, yet our nation has just brought to power an administration that is determined to drive full speed ahead off the climate change cliff by extracting as much fossil fuel as quickly as possible, making a lot of money for a very few people, and trashing the entire planet in the process.

It is certainly tempting to focus on what I am against right now. But railing against those who are choosing to wield their new power in these destructive ways is a great recipe for an ulcer and a heart attack. So I am trying to focus instead on what I am for.

At the Womxn's March in Seattle on January 21, there were thousands of signs. Some stated what they were against. I found myself focusing on the ones that said what they were for:

*We march for solidarity with all persons,
climate justice, a world without nuclear
weapons*

We will always be stronger together

Imagine all the people living life in peace

Jewish men for womxn's rights

Rebellions are built on hope

United in love we stand for human rights

Love not hate makes American great

In his book *Don't Think of an Elephant* (quick—what animal image is in your head right now?), George Lakoff writes that the one who defines the topic holds the power in the conversation.



If one person says, "I am pro-penguins," she has defined the topic, and others can then agree, disagree, or try to find some neutral ground. If you disagree, you may be labeled a penguin hater, which defines your stance in opposition to the original topic. But the topic is still penguins. However, you could define a different topic: "I am pro-artichokes." And then people have to line up around that topic.

If our topic is the environment and climate change, we can keep defining that topic regardless of tweets or other attempts to yank us off topic. We continue to say, "This is what we are for, and here is what we can do about it."

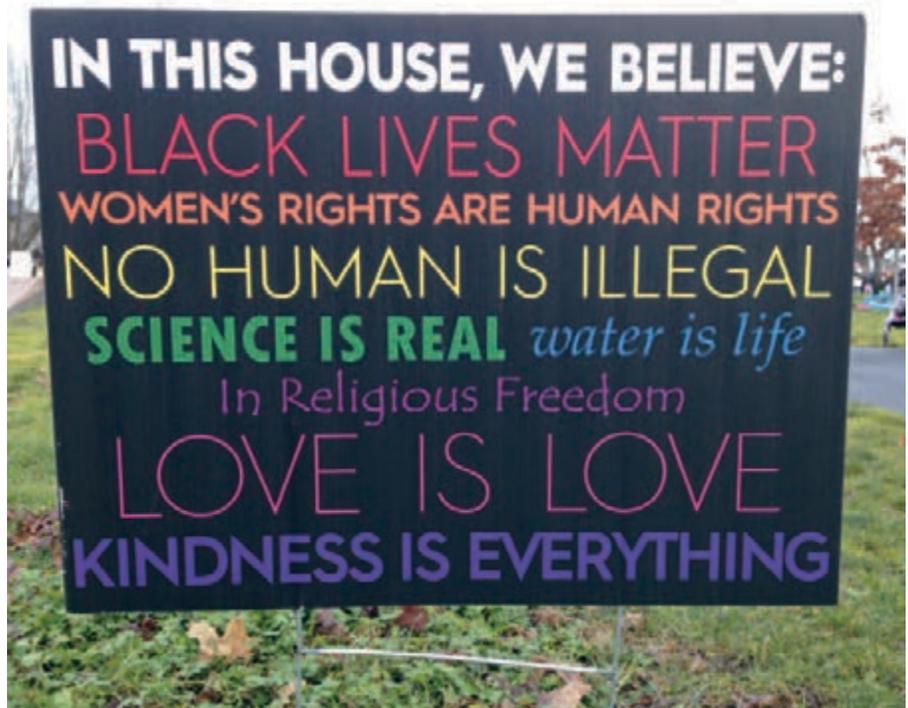
George Lakey (not to be confused with George Lakoff) recently published his ideas on how people who care about justice and equality can organize in our current political climate. The gist is that the more we stand together in solidarity across boundaries of race, immigrant status, class, etc.; the more we refuse to cooperate with hate and oppression; the more we focus on offense instead of defense; the harder it is for injustice to hold sway.

Our movement for environmental justice can join forces with movements for economic and racial justice, for example, because we all ultimately want the same things: a healthy planet and sustainable opportunities for all to succeed and live in peace. We are stronger together.

In Brené Brown's book *The Gifts of Imperfection*, she writes that those whose lives are full of hope—even in the face of daunting challenges—have three things in common:

- They are able to set realistic goals.
- They are able to chart a path to achieve those goals, even when roadblocks emerge.
- They believe in themselves.

When we focus on what is beyond our control or what we are against, we may lose hope. When we focus on what we are for and show up with our whole selves every day to do whatever we can to advance those causes, we can effect change for the better. Does this mean we will win everything every time? No. But we will certainly be a force to reckon with.



I met a man recently who believed that the only way we can make a difference on climate change is if Congress passes laws about it. Certainly that would be an excellent thing, but I think he's in for a long four years. If we are waiting for our national politicians to lead on this issue, we are already lost.

As Gandhi said, we are the ones we have been waiting for. There is plenty that can happen on the individual, community, city, and state levels that can make a difference, if we stay true to what we are for.

.....
Rev. Meighan Pritchard is the environmental justice curriculum trainer for the United Church of Christ and pastor of Prospect United Church of Christ in Seattle, Washington. She is also the editor of Earth Letter.

From Resisting Religion to Resisting Through Religion

By Emily Martin

I've always had a stubborn sense of right and wrong. As a child, I would drive my mother crazy with demands for her to explain injustices to me (usually about how wrong it was that my older sister always got to sit in the front seat of the car). When I finally exasperated my mom with questions about how she could allow such a thing, she would eventually say, "Sometimes life just isn't fair," an answer I could never accept.

My passion for fighting the good fight eventually led me to my high school's debate team, then to an internship with the Washington State Legislature, and finally to non-profit advocacy.

This same fire in my belly is why I initially avoided organized religion like the plague. Like many angst-ridden teens, I viewed religion as an anesthetic that kept people numb and passive to injustice in the world. I thought people of faith viewed suffering as a part of God's plan and that their motto was that call to apathy: "everything happens for a reason."

A class on world religions exposed me to the history of diverse faith traditions and began to teach me a different story. Each religion is unique but they share common threads, one of which is that they all tell stories of resistance to oppressive systems of power.

Prophets and other religious leaders have historically been countercultural; the visions they fought for stood in direct opposition to the political status quo of their lifetimes. The most iconic social justice activists of all time were inspired by their faith.

From the earliest Jewish stories of Abraham, Moses, and Deborah to the Hindu non-violent resistance of Gandhi; from the unification of warring tribes under Islam by the Prophet Muhammad to the compassionate yet firm push for Tibetan liberation by the Buddhist Dalai Lama; the histories of world religions illustrate that no oppressive government has stood the test of time once the members of its society collectively realize their power.

The most powerful revolutions history has ever seen were brought about by those who knew that God does not want us to bury our rage with prayer. God calls on us to harness the fire in our bellies, using its flames to consume injustice and leave

nothing but that same fire's illuminating and loving glow.

We are called to action. We cannot sit by idly while the health of our brothers and sisters and that of the environment is degraded for profit. Treating each other and our planet with love and respect is not radical, it is necessary if we are to call ourselves people of faith.

I avoided the faith community for most of my life, thinking that religious folks thought God would take care of everything for them. My exploration of faith has led me to the United Church of Christ where I am a proud member today. My newfound congregation is a justice-driven and advocacy-focused community that both inspires me and moves me to action. I know now that faith groups are the most effective when we recognize that God by any name works *through* us, not for us.

Emily Martin is Earth Ministry's Outreach Coordinator.



You Are a Prophetic Leader

By Jessica Zimmerle

Early last year I found myself overwhelmed at a conference for young adults in ministry. You know the feeling – that creeping realization that one person can only do so much. A mentor noticed my discomfort and sat down for a conversation that would completely shift my perspective.

He listed five types of leaders: apostles, shepherds, evangelists, teachers, and prophets; then asked which I think I am. Without enthusiasm I guessed the shepherd.

“Interesting,” he said, “I’d rank shepherd low for you. I think you’re a prophetic leader.”

My initial reaction was, “WHOA don’t put that on me!” In my mind, being a prophet meant being the next Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I could easily brush that notion aside with degrading self-talk. I’m not *that* kind of leader.

With a smile, my mentor encouraged me to consider the prophet differently. Instead of the person whom everyone looks to for inspiration, what about the prophet who creates inclusive spaces to uplift voices that aren’t being heard? How about the prophet with heightened awareness of our interdependence, called to heal where we are broken and celebrate where we’re not? Now that’s more like it!

Nearly one year later I was in a seminary classroom engaged in conversation about prophets. The professor described the prophet as one who sees or hears the present reality compassionately with critical eyes and ears tuned in on a Gospel vision.

Let’s break that down. Prophets are aware of where we are, but know we have a long way yet to go. So they respond, not react, so as to balance criticism with compassion. This approach, one that requires both creativity and collaboration, is encompassed in religious values of justice and peace.

After the class I approached another student and thanked her for being a prophet. Similar to my initial response, she denied her prophetic qualities by saying she wasn’t doing enough activism because she’s a busy mother who is also in school. I encouraged her otherwise, sharing how I am inspired by the beautiful insights and challenging questions she brings to our cohort. She began to cry in gratitude, I hugged her, and we both left the room feeling more resilient.

Can you recall a time when you’ve been the prophet? Instead of downplaying this role, can you claim your prophetic qualities



as God-given gifts? How would doing so strengthen your community?

Earth Ministry certainly believes in your prophetic abilities, and we’re happy to remind you that you are making a difference. As members of the Earth Ministry community, you are spreading the prophetic message of creation care, you are implementing creative solutions in your congregations, and you are working together to advocate for policy reform. Even on days when you don’t have capacity for any of that, you are supporting an organization that reflects your values and puts your faith into action.

So, my friends, let’s walk boldly through the world as prophets. Let’s respond with loving criticism and take steps to build a brighter future for all of God’s children. And let’s find strength in knowing we are not alone on this journey.

Jessica Zimmerle is Earth Ministry’s Senior Outreach Coordinator.

Continued from page 1

“Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

We have a long and complicated race ahead of us if we care about the climate, if we seek to serve the poor and the refugee, and if we want to advance the causes of justice and peace. This work will never be easy. But we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, by thoughtful and inspirational people of faith from our history. Let me call attention to three of these witnesses.

First is Jane Addams (1860-1935), a Presbyterian activist whose deep concern about the poverty and anti-immigrant sentiments of her time drove her to move to a poor neighborhood of Chicago mostly populated by immigrants.

She co-founded Hull House, a center of community programs that became a model for social workers and organizers for generations to come. From that base, she worked with her neighbors to develop day care for children, classes for adults, social programs for the community, and political advocacy for institutional change.

Born into a wealthy family, Addams took her first paid job at age 34, when she was elected garbage inspector so that she could institute new laws and policies to ensure that her neighbors’ streets were cleaned. For the rest of her life, Jane Addams remained politically active, not only locally but also nationally and internationally. In 1931, she won a Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

She understood all this work as a commitment to democracy, insisting that the only way anyone will truly thrive is if everyone is taken care of. As she wrote in her excellent book

Democracy and Social Ethics, “None of us can stand aside; our feet are mired in the same soil, and our lungs breathe the same air.” This lesson remains true in the 21st century, and we can learn from Addams about how to stand up for true democracy.

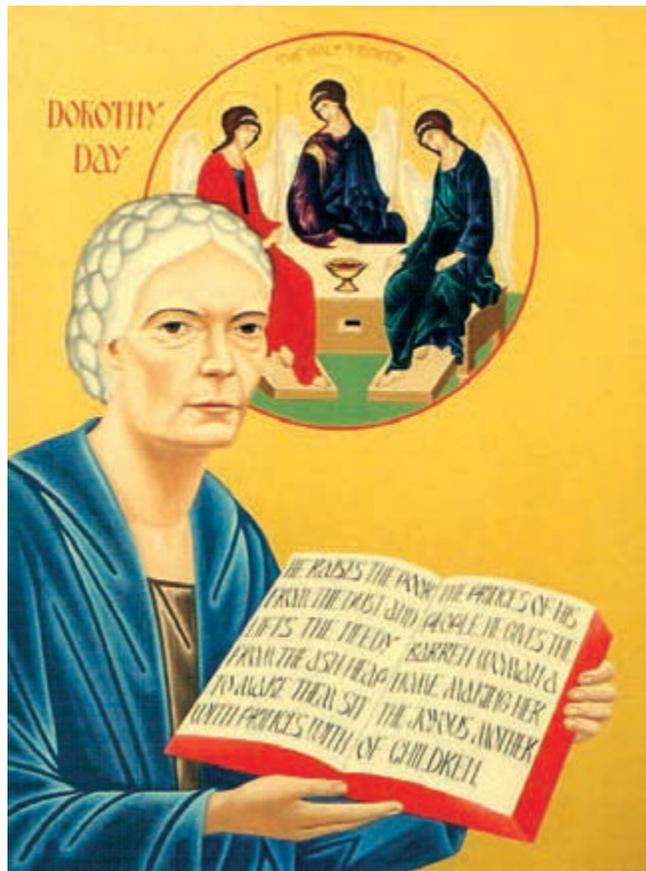
While Addams worked mostly within the political system, other witnesses offer a sense of how to draw boundaries and refuse to cooperate with corruption. Consider Dorothy Day (1887-1980), the activist and author who helped to found and to run the Catholic Worker movement.

Like Addams, Day sacrificed her own comfort to live with the poor — in her case, in New York City. But unlike Addams, Day had little hope that the system would help her neighbors. Instead, she

called for Christians to help the oppressed themselves, on a personal level, and to reject any government that fails to live up to the highest ideals of Christian faith.

Day was an expert protestor, and in addition to supporting the poor, she marched for racial justice, for workers’ rights, and in opposition to nuclear weapons. She was frequently jailed for these protests, and because she refused to submit to any law she disagreed with.

In her account of her movement, *Houses of Hospitality*, she insisted that such resistance was a deeply Christian act,



an expression of righteous anger: “St. Thomas says that anger is not a sin, provided there is no undue desire for revenge. We want no revolution, we want [universal family]. We want [everyone] to love one another. We want [everyone] to have sufficient for their needs. But when we meet people who deny Christ in His poor, we feel, ‘Here are atheists indeed.’”

Late in her life, Day protested on behalf of farm workers in California. She aligned herself with the movement led by a fellow Catholic, Cesar Chavez (1927–1993). Unlike Addams and Day, who chose to live with the poor, Chavez was born into poverty. His family lost their Arizona farm during the Great Depression and moved to California as migrant laborers. He left school before finishing 7th grade to work in the fields full time.

In his adulthood, Chavez began to organize his fellow workers, and in 1962 he and Dolores Huerta co-founded what became the United Farm Workers. This union still aspires to represent agricultural laborers across the nation.

Chavez devoted his life to ensuring the fair treatment and pay of farm workers. But he also understood that these workers can only be healthy if the environment around them is healthy, so he repeatedly aligned his work to the environmental movement. He fought against pesticides on behalf of everyone who picked or ate food, he advocated for animal rights on behalf of all God’s creatures, and he urged people to live in harmonious communities rather than to separate themselves with big houses and piles of material possessions.

In a 1976 speech, he articulated an environmentalism that brings together national pride and spiritual concern: “What could be more joyful than working to restore and preserve the sacredness of land, water, and air? For patriotism is not protecting the land of our fathers, but preserving the land for our children.”

Cesar Chavez, Dorothy Day, and Jane Addams have all gone on from this life. None is around to tell us how to respond to today’s politics. None of them were aware of the dire problem of climate change that we face today, and so none offers clear instructions to the fight for climate justice. Even if they did, they likely wouldn’t agree with each other on what should be done. But their examples are much better than any simple roadmap, much more inspiring than simplistic answers.

They, and other witnesses like them, reveal that we can be part of a noble tradition, that a cloud of witnesses exists to help us find our own way forward in our time. Building on their legacies, we can speak out, organize, and resist today’s challenges.



Jane Addams, Dorothy Day, and Cesar Chavez resisted what they saw as wrong in the world. If we are discontent with our politics, with our economy, and with the state of creation, then we should draw inspiration from each of them. The struggle for a more just and sustainable future will not be easy — we have a long and difficult race to run — but we can run with perseverance if we are supported by a cloud of witnesses.

.....
*Dr. Kevin J. O'Brien is Dean of Humanities at Pacific Lutheran University. This excerpt is taken from *The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Nonviolent Activists* (Georgetown University Press, 2017).*

The Path of Resistance

By Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

All the world's religious and spiritual traditions acknowledge that people sometimes stray from the path of justice, kindness, and mercy. It's called sinning, missing the mark, succumbing to addictions and compulsions, or being under the influence of delusions, confusions, greed, anger, hatred, and other negative emotions.

For individuals, this can lead to personal pain and suffering. When governments exhibit these tendencies, whole communities become their victims, peace is prevented, and the earth is trashed.

How, then, do we respond when we see governments and organizations pursuing policies and committing acts that seriously harm people and the planet? Throughout history, the religions have offered an option: Resist!

The following quotes, prayers, readings, and practices have been chosen to support you on the path of resistance.

QUOTES

"The biblical prophets were not hesitant to challenge the rulers of their day. That task generally found them in the desert (the usual location for the biblical prophets), rather than in the corridors of power, where the king's false 'court prophets' resided — the advisors who just told him what he wanted to hear. It's always safer for your soul to be arrested for protest outside the White House than to be invited in for breakfast.

Having experienced both, I find the former perhaps less comfortable but much less dangerous. A little quote from Dorothy Day hangs on the wall of my study: 'Most of our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system.' Perhaps not very poetic, but the sentiment is a crucial reminder to anyone seeking social change."

— Jim Wallis in *Faith Works*

"Developing an ongoing commitment

to justice, service, or *tzedakah* also can give us a sense of ourselves as powerful agents, able to change the world around us. Many of us look around at the problems in the world and feel ready to throw up our hands in defeat. But committing ourselves to ongoing justice work, together with a community of like-minded individuals, can restore hope in the possibility of change and in our own abilities to bring about this change."

— Jill Jacobs in *Where Justice Dwells*

"If we try to fix a troubled world while we ourselves are filled with anger and confusion, we are of little value. Our ultimate contribution is who we are. We do not cover the truth of who we are with good intentions or the fight for causes. First we sit down on the [meditation] cushion and face ourselves. When we are ready, we can bring true ease of heart wherever we go."

— Brenda Shoshanna in *Jewish Dharma*

"As far as possible, we ought to live as we believe we should live in a liberated world, in the form of our own existence, with all the unavoidable contradictions and conflicts that result from this. . . . Such endeavor is by necessity condemned to fail and to meet opposition, yet there is no option but to work through this opposition to the bitter end. The most important form that this will take today is resistance."

— Theodor W. Adorno in *The Silent Cry* by Dorothee Soelle

PRAYERS

A Prayer for Strength by Joyce Rupp: bit.ly/prayerforstrength

Addressed to God as Rock and Refuge, Stronghold of Souls, Unshakeable One, Provider of Purpose, Firm Foundation, Enduring Love, this prayer by Joyce Rupp covers a wide range of needs familiar to those involved in resistance: patience, hope, forgiveness, trust, and courage.



A Prayer for the Courage to Resist by Alison L. Boden:

bit.ly/courage2resist

"We are in the world of empire but wish to be not of it." So, this prayer continues, we ask for the courage to resist "inner voices of fear and of selfishness that make us hoard what privilege we have." We also pray for the faith to "speak truth to power, be ministers of reconciliation, and builders of your beloved community."

A Prayer to Break Open Our Hearts by Mary Lou Kownacki:

bit.ly/prayerhearts

This prayer by Mary Lou Kownacki envisions that when our hearts are broken open, anger will pour through cleansing us of complacency, courage will pour through flooding out fear, and zeal will pour through filling us with passion to "break down the walls of injustice and build a land flowing with milk and honey." Frances Sheridan Goulart adds two suggestions for how to use the prayer in your spiritual practice.

READINGS

Arundhati Roy on the **Politics of Resistance**:

bit.ly/politicsresistance

Indian activist Roy calls upon writers, poets, artists, and others to tell the stories that will help us understand what is really happening to people in the world today. "Cynics say that real life is a choice between the failed revolution and the shabby deal . . . But even they should know that there's no limit to just how shabby that shabby deal can be." We need a new kind of politics to deal with it because "the only thing worth globalizing is dissent."

Corrine McLaughlin on **New World Values**:

bit.ly/newworldvalues

The path of resistance is not just about what we oppose; it requires that we have a vision of what we support. In this excerpt from her book *The Practical Visionary*, McLaughlin identifies some of the values on which a "New World" could be based. They include spirit, community, whole systems thinking, multiculturalism, diversity, compassion, and accountability.

Ken Jones on **Dealing with Enmity**: bit.ly/dealingwithenmity

One of the dangers facing any resistance movement is enmity, feelings of ill will, bitterness, resentment, and animosity toward those we are trying to get to change. Whether there be grounds for it or not, it doesn't help the cause. Buddhist teacher Jones reminds us of the warning in the Dhammapada: "Hate is not conquered by hate; hate is conquered by love." This excerpt suggests ways to deal with enmity, starting by looking within.

PRACTICES

Find Something to Do in the World by

Megan McKenna: bit.ly/dointheworld

Catholic peace and justice advocate McKenna offers a litany of things you can do as individuals, families, and communities. Some of our favorites: Resist despair. If you feel like you can't do anything, stand there, pray, and resist with your soul force. Live with invincible gentleness.

Be Like the Mountain by Frederic and

Mary Ann Brussat: bit.ly/belikemountain

Although it may seem counter-intuitive, practicing equanimity – remaining even-tempered and centered in the midst of distressing events – is a valuable practice for resisters. You can feel deeply about something without being knocked off your center by it. And you will find through experience that addressing problems from a place of calm is more effective. Maintaining equanimity also enables you to remain open to possibilities, including God's grace.

Nourish Positive Emotions by Thich Nhat

Hanh: bit.ly/positiveemotion

Anyone who regularly faces up to the suffering in the world and seeks concrete ways to alleviate it, anyone who wants to stay on the path of resistance, needs to practice self-care. We are not invincible; we need companions on the path, and we need to offer ourselves and them opportunities to experience calm, joy, equanimity, openness, and happiness. This breath practice by the renowned peacemaker and resister Thich Nhat Hanh will help you create true peace.

This piece, curated by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, originally appeared on inauguration day, January 20, 2017, at SpiritualityandPractice.com, a multifaith website providing resources for spiritual journeys.

EARTH MINISTRY/WAIPL
6512 23RD AVE NW, STE 317
SEATTLE, WA 98117-5728

Address Services Requested

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE WA
PERMIT NO 1886

*Most of us walk
unseeing through the
world, unaware alike of
its beauties, its wonders,
and the strange and
sometimes terrible
intensity of the lives that
are being lived about us.*

— Rachel Carson
Silent Spring

*It is indeed true that we
live in tragic times. But
too many people confuse
tragedy with despair.*

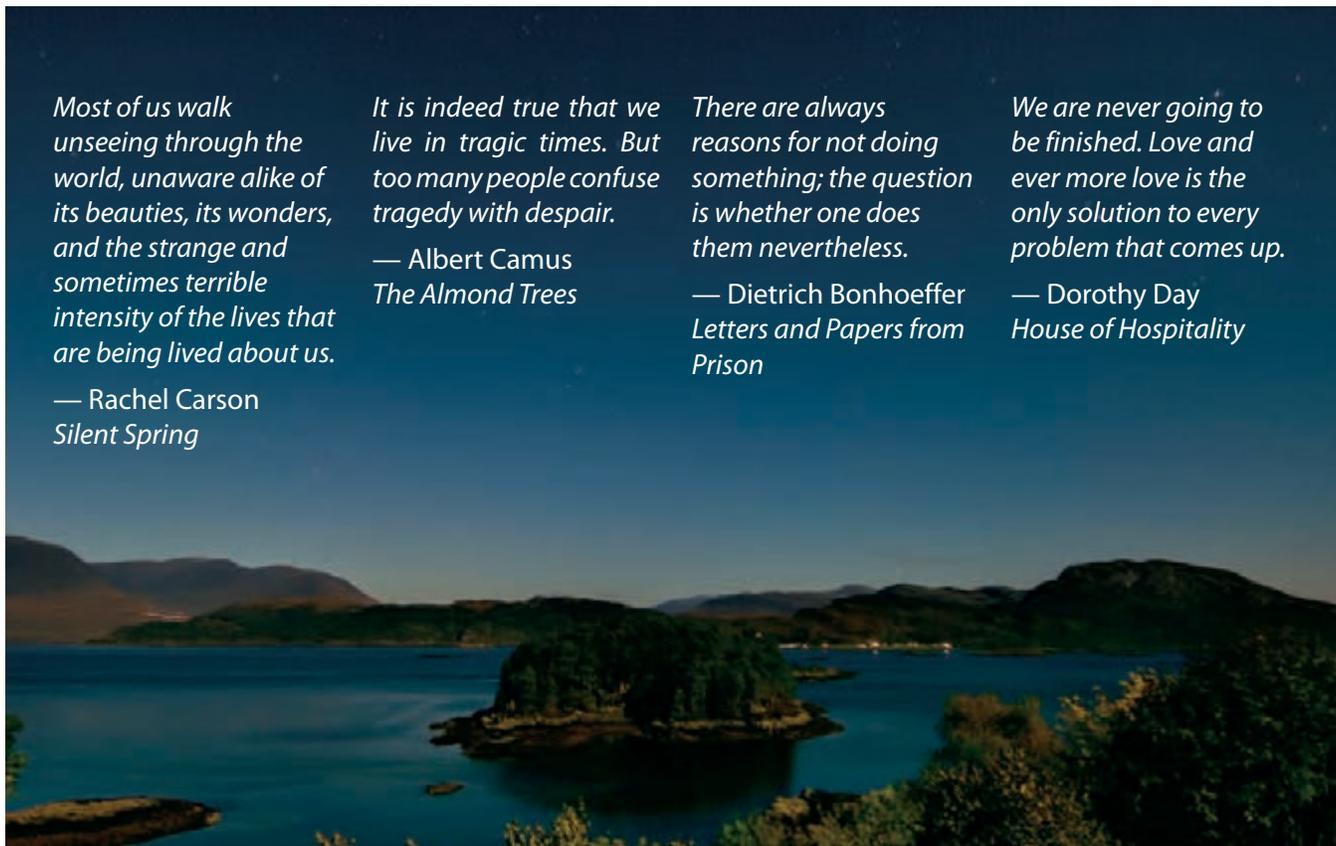
— Albert Camus
The Almond Trees

*There are always
reasons for not doing
something; the question
is whether one does
them nevertheless.*

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer
*Letters and Papers from
Prison*

*We are never going to
be finished. Love and
ever more love is the
only solution to every
problem that comes up.*

— Dorothy Day
House of Hospitality



www.earthministry.org

www.waipl.org