



Resolutions To Action

LCWR Global Concerns Committee

Volume 18, Number 4

October 2009

Choosing Simplicity in a Context of Deep Time

Miriam Therese MacGillis, OP

Director/Founder of Genesis Farm

The first part of this article was published in July 2009. The primary source of these reflections are the writings of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme as they have articulated their insights on a new cosmology.

REFLECTION

From the perspective of deep time, we see our unity with everything that has come before us. We can see the significant patterns which have guided the natural world, from its humble beginnings in single cells, through its increasing *complexification* into the beautiful community of ecosystems, by which Earth continues the elaboration of life expressions as a single living being. All the relationships by which these patterns of life have developed are remembered in the exquisite strands of DNA wrapped within the vessel of every living cell in the totality of Earth's being. Earth is a single organism expressing life as a seamless garment of being of which humanity is a single strand.

We might then reflect on how the deep mystery of unity about which Jesus spoke and on which he fash-

ioned his life had its inspiration in the Universe itself. "Behold the lilies of the field..." is not just a beautiful reference to the outer world of Earth, but an attempt to bring the human heart into alignment with the fundamental physics, chemistry and biology of Earth's intrinsic unity with the past present and future.

When Jesus speaks of the "reign of God", and his interrelatedness to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, he speaks of a fundamental understanding of the Triune nature of the Divine and therefore reflected in what the Divine has created. He reveals one of the most profound discoveries of contemporary science: that the original pure energy of the Universe emerges into a greater complexity through the dynamics of differentiation, subjectivity and communion. The entire universe, especially amplified in Earth is the result of these dynamics at play throughout all time and space. They reveal the inner life of the Trinity.

And why has this immense journey of energy emerged in the miracle of life if not for life to contemplate itself in its total mystery, fall in love with its Source and participate in its ongoing mystery? The thrust for conscious life lived in freedom seems to have been inevitable from the

beginning. "I place before you life and death; choose life". This covenant with life is central to the depth of the western religious mind....

The evangelical life based on the deepest teachings of Jesus, have been lovingly contemplated and drawn from his insights on the beatitudes. We religious so valued these teachings that we publicly vowed to make them the core practices of our lives. We might consider that there are deeper meanings to poverty, chastity and obedience when considered through the lens of deep time, rooted in the basic chemical, biological principles by which all other species live in relationships which bond

Resolutions to Action is an occasional publication of the Global Concerns Committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Members of the committee are: Kathleen Bryant, RSC; Jacquelyn Doepker, OSF; Judith Justinger, SSJ; Janet Lehmann, SC; Miriam Mitchell, SHSp; Kathleen Storms, SSND; and Marie Lucey, OSF, staff. Please address correspondence to:

LCWR
8808 Cameron Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-588-4955
www.lcwr.org
fax: 301-587-4575
mlucey@lcwr.org

them and their activities to the greater good of the whole, the commons...

What would they mean and how would they be expressed in this context? Is our contemporary struggle with their meaning a result of too small a context for them to be the eschatological witness of what is possible, even in these dark days of planetary crisis?

ACTION

Our actions, as always, must be a personal commitment to our own transformation and to the transformation of our human culture. Human thought shapes the institutions and structures which reflect our presence and impact on the natural world. When we realize that our *primary identity* is to be Earth and Universe become self-consciously aware

And why has this immense journey of energy emerged in the miracle of life if not for life to contemplate itself in its total mystery, fall in love with its source and participate in its ongoing mystery?

in, by and through our very person we awaken to a truth profoundly transformative. This truth can empower us to awaken from our own addiction to the industrial, consumerist economic way of life which so violates the sacred web of life. Here are some simple actions to consider.

Personal actions:

- Enter the informal economy. As much as possible refuse to buy new things. Give extended life to what is still useful; everything is

Earth in that form. It should not be condemned to a landfill where it is unable to re-enter the flow of life.

- Wherever possible support main street businesses and avoid box stores and chain outlets. Dollars spent on main street can remain in the community contributing to its human and natural well-being.
- Withdraw from the corporate industrial food system. Support local food and farmers' markets. Support Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA); form community gardens in your own neighborhood and grow some of your own. We must discern everything we put into our bodies and the bodies of our children and the children of other species.
- Look around our homes and convents. Simplify and de-clutter. Create an oasis which is spare and beautiful with spaces where the spirit finds rest... Resist the lure of "House Beautiful" marketing, which amplifies the disparity between rich and poor, and demands enormous use of Earth's materials.
- Resist the privatization of water. Demand that "tap" water be made safe and accessible to all. Filter it and drink it. Examine how often we bathe when we don't need to

Our actions, as always, must be a personal commitment to our own transformation and to the transformation of our human culture.

and launder our clothes when unnecessary.

- Conserve energy and commit to studying the sources, as well as possible alternatives to the energy coming into our homes.
- Resist unnecessary air travel. Commit to using and helping to

improve public transport, energy efficient cars and safe and easy conversion to bicycle travel. Initiate car-sharing plans for your neighborhood.

- Give retirement years to a greater cause. We have skills and resources that are needed now more than ever.

Collective actions:

- Bring our congregational institutions into alignment with these new understandings as we plan for our future. Commit to a more effective presence in our local and bioregional places.
- Fundamentally and radically rethink our relationships to the lands we hold in common. Collaborate with others in the public and private sector of the land conservancy movement and endow these lands to the future where they may become vital sanctuaries of life. Open the use of our lands to sustainable farming for our own institutions and local communities.
- When we renovate or construct new buildings, make them green and sustainable. Model innovative practices and teach others in the process. Utilize green cleaning supplies and reject disposability. Design with qualities that value what is spare, authentic, functional, natural and beautiful. Reject the superficial. Commit to salvaging and reusing all possible materials.
- Enter into civic and parish communities as we struggle to break our dependency on fossil fuel to a dependency on each other.
- Find spiritual practices that unite us in our diversity and draw us into deeper communion with each other, other faith traditions, and the natural world.