

The Theology and Ecology of Common Ground

Drew Theological Common Ground Camp & Conference Retreat Certification Prog.

January 2005, Epworth-by-the-sea, St. Simons Island, GA

Instructors: Laurel Kearns and David Fewell

Required Texts:

Ministering with the Earth, Mary Elizabeth Moore?Food and Faith, ed. Mike Schut?Super Natural Christians Sally McFague?Gaia and God, Rosemary Ruether?The Environment and the Christian, Cal DeWitt

Articles:

*indicates article that will be mailed to you.??“Race, Sacrifice and Native Lands,” Joanna Higgins- Freese and Jeff Tomhave. Earthlight Mag #46, Summer 2002 ,: www.earthlight.org/2002/essay46_sacrifice.html

*Elizabeth Johnson, “Losing and Finding Creation in the Christian Tradition,” and in Christianity and Ecology, Hessel and Ruether, eds

* David Kinsely “Christianity as Ecologically Harmful”, “Christianity as Ecologically Responsible” and Shamara Shantu-Riley, “Ecology is a Sistah’s Issue Too “ in This Sacred Earth, Roger Gottlieb, ed.

*Sally McFague, “An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity have It?” Worldviews, Religion and the Environment, ed. Richard Foltz

* Elizabeth Roberts “Place and spirit in public land management” in Nature and the Human Spirit: Toward An Expanded Land Management Ethic . Edited by B.L.Driver, Daniel Dustin, Tony Baltic, Gary Elsner, and George Peterson.

Recommended

Loving Nature, James Nash

The Great Work or Dream of the Earth, Thomas Berry

Earth Ethics, Earth Community, Larry Rasmussen

Models of God or The Body of God, Sally McFague

EarthWise and Caring for Creation Cal DeWitt

Women Healing Earth or Intergrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions, Rosemary Ruether

Christianity and Ecology, Eds. Dieter Hessel and Rosemary Ruether

Theology for Earth Community and After Nature’s Revolt, Dieter Hessel

The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places, G. Nabhan, S. Trimble

Cherish the Earth, The Environment and Scripture, James Kirk and D. Kirk

Invoking the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in the quest for a Sustainable World. G Gardner.

Free PDF of this at <http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/paper/164>

Ecology of a Cracker Childhood, Janisse Ray. This novel is set in the south Georgia Pinelands

Assignments:

1. NOTES: Please read all the texts in advance for the class, as I will not cover anyone text in a particular session, but will draw from all of them. In order to prepare for our class time together, I suggest that you get a spiral notebook (with recycled paper content) with dividers (or put tabs on whatever notebook you use) and take notes under the categories listed below whenever you come across something noteworthy. Make sure to designate to which book your insight, question or statement in your notes refers. Our class discussions will parallel these categories to a great extent.

1. History
2. Scriptures
3. Theology (God, Jesus, Salvation, meaning of being a Christian, etc)
4. Nature/Creation
5. Right Relations (between people, with God, with the Creation; this will also cover justice and economic issues)
6. Ministry
7. Good Ideas, Great Quotes, Significant Insights, etc
8. Misc Questions

2. Environmental Autobiography (see appendix) Due by the beginning of the class, preferably e-mailed to me before we get there.

3. Class presentation on some aspect of Methodism (or your own denomination) and the environment. This can include specific agency or conference program initiatives, church statements on a particular issue (including why they took that stance, and perhaps some note if the church position differed greatly from others denominations), a profile of the work of a “green” church, relevant concepts/theology of Wesley or a particular Methodist theologian. In other words, these presentations will help the class members become more versed with the work and heritage of their denomination in relation to “caring for creation.” Please clear your topic with me before hand so that I can help avoid duplication. Plan to do a brief 10-15 presentation for the class, and to hand in a 4-6 page paper on the topic you have chosen.

4. Bible verse, prayer, hymn or exercise. Each student should come prepared to start off a class session or meal with one of the above as well as to discuss why they chose their selection. Also, please come prepared to share with us any relevant programs or initiatives at your camps.

5. Compare the following and be prepared to discuss them:

Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation www.creationcare.org/resources/declaration.php

Earth Charter www.earthcharter.org (click on “view the earth charter” on the page bottom)

Cornwall Declaration <http://www.stewards.net/CornwallDeclaration.htm>

6. Practical Application: Use the course materials to design a specific project, program, or curriculum for use in your own camp or conference/retreat setting. There will be time during the

week to work on this with others in the class. This paper should be a minimum of 12 pages, include significant discussion that ties it with the required texts and class discussions, and can be handed in (by mail or e-mail) within 30 days of the end of class, or by March 1. I will expect you to have carefully proofread the paper and to use correct citation and bibliography styles.