

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE:

Strength and Hope

by Diane Waddell

Dear Friends seeking Earth-Justice,

Blessed be! Springtime, Resurrection and Renewal are upon us, with the opportunity for hope and for strengthening our resolve for Eco-Earth-Caring!

In that vein, Presbyterians for Earth Care has been gathering hope and assembling resources for another opportunity for Renewal and strengthening: "Down-to-Earth Advocacy and Action" at the beautiful Montreat Conference Center, Sept 15 - 18, 2015. Please do put us on your calendar!

We begin with a selection of fascinating choices for Sept. 15: pre-conference tours near Asheville and the Blue Ridge Mountains (with a reminder to arrive late Sept. 14 for overnight accommodations). We welcome the leadership of Trisha Tull, author of *Inhabiting Eden*, who will keynote for us, beginning with biblical and scientific groundings, moving forward in creating social movements for change, and then empower us as we shift to a flourishing future! We are equally thrilled to announce that J. Herbert Nelson, Director of the PCUSA's Office of Public Witness, will join us to challenge us in areas of prophetic ministry and public witness, as we carry the banner of Eco-Justice. We are honored to host Earth Care Congregations as they gather with Rebecca Barnes for their Earth Summit. We heartily welcome Hunger Action Enablers (a part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program). And you will want to keep an eye out for bright orange -- the Fossil Free PCUSA folk, as they gather momentum for General Assembly in 2016 and beyond!

Come for refreshment in worship; joy in celebrating our 20 years of Earth Caring as PRC/PEC, fellowship with others who have deep passion for eco-justice, and workshops on many current and provocative environmental, economic and social justice issues of our times. May you be blessed, and continue to bless the Creation every season of the year through Hope, Renewal and Resurrection. Amen.

Diane Waddell, Moderator

DOWN-TO-EARTH ADVOCACY AND ACTION

September 15 - 18, 2015

Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC

Keynote speaker: Rev. Dr. Patricia K. Tull.

A.B. Rhodes Professor Emerita of Old Testament, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary

Special Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. J Herbert Nelson II, Director,
PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

Special Celebration

INHERITING A SACRED TRUST FOR THE FUTURE

Thursday, September 17, 6:45 p.m.

Share your reflections of PEC/PRC at www.PECmemories.com

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TREADING LIGHTLY

The Earth quakes before them.
Joel 2:10

Sixteen hours before technological magic caused these words to move from my fingers to the tiny specs of light via rafts of "1's" and "0's" on rivers of metalloids cutting through sand-turned-silicon, there was an earthquake in Langston, Oklahoma. The red dirt of central Oklahoma was where my grandmother moved after remarrying in her 70s. Our family used to drive there to visit each New Year, through mesas and wheat fields and parched pastures specked with oil derricks and gas wells. With few trees dotting that garden of dust and wispy grass God planted there, the whole landscape seemed heavy and fixed, then pressed down by such a big sky. Or maybe it was the sky being supported by such a sturdy clay pedestal.

And now it shakes. Everyday. Perhaps 16 hours before you read these words. Perhaps as you read them.

The experts say that hydraulic fracturing cannot be definitively blamed. The now poisoned water formed by the process; a resource destroyed for the sake of a re-

by Bryce Wiebe

source extracted, must be shot back down into Earth as a slicing, high-speed vertical river of techno-industrial creativity. And this must not be a problem since no one ever bothered to see if it was a problem. Could it be this river has pried loose the base of the pedestal and now it wobbles under the pressure of all that sky? The energy and economic needs of America require that we not look into it. For the sake of un-flickering electricity, ever-fattening homes, complete with fixed temperatures and pressed down by as much cheap stuff as can fit in them. We cannot look. Perhaps we can move fast enough to not notice Earth shaking. Perhaps bigger homes and more things will finally hold Earth still again; press her back into control.

Or maybe we, having already pried the pedestal free, must tread lightly. Shut off our lights and slim down our homes and use those things we already have. Perhaps Earth can be restored when we move tip-toe slow. We can, for the first time, float on new visions and dreams down a Spirit stream, poured out among a people made of the same clay that we now see steadied and still.

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC) invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing earth care movement within the Presbyterian Church (USA). PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church. Founded in 1995 as a grassroots organization to help the denomination educate and energize church members to address environmental concerns from a faith perspective, it works in partnership with PC(USA)'s Environmental Ministries Office and the Office of Public Witness to promote earth justice with a biblical and theological base. Regional representatives recruit presbyteries, churches, organizations, and individuals to help form a national network of Presbyterians to work toward the common goal of restoring creation for ecology and justice. Check out PEC's web site at www.presbyearthcare.org If you would like to become involved or have questions, contact Jane at presbyearthcare@gmail.com or your regional representative.

ECO-STEWARDS UPDATES

by Vickie Machado

Eco-Stewards 2015 Visioning Trip

Since 2007, The Eco-Stewards Program has been a wonderful experiment working to combine faith with environmental stewardship. Realizing the importance of beginning each journey thoughtfully and prayerfully, we have decided to use this year as a way to discern our vision for the future, by considering such questions as: What will be the focus and location of our programs for 2016, 2017 and beyond? What will be our role in the larger faith and environmental community?

From June 1-7, we will meet to discuss the future aspirations, goals and intentions of The Eco-Stewards Program. We want to move into the future purposefully and sustainably. Together, we have decided to return to Montana for this Visioning Trip, the site of the 2011 Eco-Stewards Program. This event will be open to past Eco-Stewards, leaders and steering committee members, in an effort to guide the program into the future.

The Eco-Stewards Program is an annual place-based, week-long program for young adults (ages 20-30) to connect their faith and environmental issues. We usually hold our programs in the summer. If you or anyone you know might be interested in our 2016 trip, please contact Rev Rob Mark at revrobmark@gmail.com for more information. If you would like to contribute to making these trips possible, please donate to PEC be sure to designate your donation for the Eco-Stewards Program.

Workshops at PEC's Down-to-Earth Action and Advocacy Conference

As we gear up for PEC's 2015 Conference at Montreat this Fall, we thought it might be helpful to take a sneak peak into one of the workshops offered: *First Decolonize Your*

Mind: Imagination, Food & Eco Justice. Andrew Kang Bartlett, national associate for Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Vickie Machado, member of the Leadership Team for the Eco-Stewards Program, will lead an experiential workshop energized by our desire to liberate minds, hearts, and hands. The purpose of this workshop is to free our souls so we can offer our authentic selves in service to the world.

New consciousness is needed to find our way out of the mess we have created with past thinking. Questions of race, difference, privilege, and exclusion will also be explored as we seek to decolonize ourselves from negative socialization. By freeing our selves and giving up the boundaries of today, we can re-think how to re-shape tomorrow.

Realizing the troubles of the world—climate change, racism, slavery, low-wages, environmental destruction, over-consumption, eco-injustice, etc.—is a start. This workshop ventures a bit further by offering a space in which we create a better tomorrow, one that is fruitful, filling, and sustainable. By breaking down the boundaries that often hold us captive, we take a step towards a more harmonious and god-centered life.

Together we will flex our muscles of hope as we envision the transformed future, and identify our contributions to the Great Turning. Food justice and eco-justice provide a framework for us to explore ways our gifts can be used for healing self, community, and planet.

Andrew and Vickie led this workshop at the 2014 Wild Goose Festival, in Hot Springs, NC, and at Montreat's 2014 Peace Bound Conference last December. Each time new ideas arose, allowing participants to jump unsparingly into the future. We hope you will join us!



See you at Montreat!

A LIFE-CHANGING PILGRIMAGE IN PERU

by Patricia K. Tull

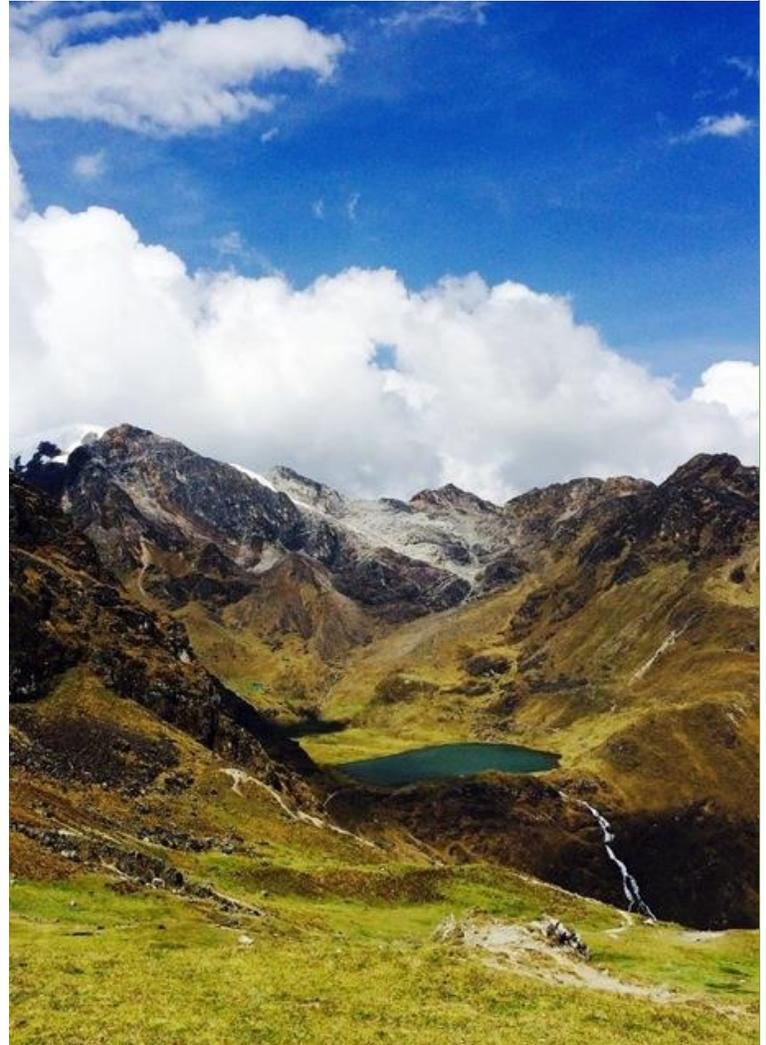
When the invitation came to join PCUSA Hunger Program leaders in Peru in December, I paid attention not because I knew it would coincide with the UN COP 20 meeting to develop historic climate change agreements (I did not), nor because Peruvians could teach me much about the daunting environmental and social ills of foreign mining (I did not know that either). I did not know what was in store. I wanted to see where my friends Ruth and Hunter Farrell had served as mission coworkers for years, and hoped to practice my Spanish. But I returned with so much more.

Living close to both coal mining and power plants here in the US, I knew about toxic waste and environmental justice, and wrote about both in *Inhabiting Eden*. I knew abstractly that industrial disruptions of human well-being and natural habitats are multiplied wherever regulations remain weak. But coming face to face with particular realities in a particular locale, endangering people—who spoke to us with wisdom and passion—awakened new, unforgettable insights.

The night our group landed, we rode through Lima's congested maze of speed bumps, Spanish colonial palaces, and concrete-and-rebar constructions to our quarters at the Convent San José de Cluny. There we spent a day being oriented before we rode almost straight up into the Andes for two nights in the lively city of Huancayo, and then back to Lima, to be joined by young adults from Peru and Bolivia for conferences, a prayer vigil, and a People's Climate March, Peru style.

Hardworking mission coworkers Jed Koball and Jenny Valles were our in-country hosts, along with the knowledgeable and compassionate director of the PCUSA initiative Joining Hands in Peru, Conrado Olivera. When Conrado called our journey a *camino*, a pilgrimage, I thought he was overestimating our piety. We weren't following Jesus' footsteps through the Holy Land, nor suffering the five-hundred-mile Camino de Santiago in Spain. But he was reminding us that we

were, for a few days, accompanying Peruvians on a quest for environmental justice that stretched back to the conquistadors and forward into the foreseeable future.



Lima, the world's second largest desert city, hugs the Pacific coast. To its east, the Andes straddle the country, and to their east, the Amazon rainforest begins. Our bus ride the second morning followed an old mining railroad that includes some of the world's highest bridges and tunnels. At first the dramatic slopes appeared barren, but as we climbed higher, dark green scrub carpeted the mountains, softening their starkness. We drove past one foreign mining operation after another, with their towns, until we began our descent from Ticlio Pass at 16,000 feet.

CONTINUED on Page 5

PILGRIMAGE, CONTINUED from Page 4

We reached La Oroya in late afternoon. There, Doe Run, a lead smelting operation owned by an American multi-billionaire, has severely poisoned the town's children (see the Youtube video: "House of Lead: A Story of Greed"). La Oroya's river runs sickeningly orange. But the town's vertical slopes arise breathtaking, haunting, as this dusk photo (on page 4) shows.

The next day took us first to farming countryside to see a Joining Hands project called Healthy Homes, which upgrades living standards family-by-family. At the pilot farm we visited, a passive bio-digester—a large sausage-shaped membrane in a trench—converts cow manure into methane gas and liquid fertilizer. The gas is piped to a small cooktop, where it burns cleanly and cheaply. A basic solar water heater improves showers and sanitation in the Andean cold. A pen houses guinea pigs for meat, and a greenhouse provides produce that would not otherwise survive there, supplying healthy diets and food security to the farming couple who helped build these systems and now manage them. Healthy Homes hopes to expand such technologies to thirty more families.

We drove next through wild and fierce landscape to Huaytapallana. We came there for what we could not see—a glacier, shrunk by half in two decades. The melt means plenty of water now, but soon its loss will bring drought to coastal cities.

Back in Lima, we attended two conferences and heard American economist Jeffrey Sachs. We participated in a climate vigil and a colorful climate march through Lima's streets. We experienced much more than I can recount here. Not only was COP20 a key step toward the long-awaited Paris climate summit next December but, as Sachs explained, 2015 will also see two crucial development summits with game-changing potential to reduce economic gaps.

The chasm between Peruvian urgency and U.S. awareness, even my own, is appallingly wide. But I draw



hope from respected world leaders' crescendoing calls that echo a theme we heard repeatedly: "Cambiamos el sistema, no el clima"; "Let's change the system, not the climate," for well-being for all on earth.

Read more at my blog (<http://inhabitingeden.org>), and Rebecca Barnes's Eco-Justice Journey (<http://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/2014/11/19/lima-peru-climate-trip-dec-2014/>).

Photos by Rebecca Barnes.

Call for Award Nominees

Each year, PEC gives out two awards:

the *Bill Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award* to individuals whose faith-based work for the environment deserves recognition and

the *Restoring Creation Award* to a group or organization for environmental work that is particularly praise-worthy.

If you are a member of PEC, you are invited to nominate awardees by mail or email, presbyearth-care@gmail.com. The awards will be given out during the conference in Montreat in September.

OUR GRATEFUL APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO SUPPORTED

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BUILDING ADVOCACY

by Holly Hallman

PEC is like a cairn. It serves several functions, all of which are about giving direction and support. I first learned about cairns as a Camp Fire Girl. We marked our trail with stacks of rocks and did in a way that would guide us back to where we started. Our PEC foundation is built on the polity, people and social justice policies of (USA). We build on that base with our emphasis on how we live and have our being on this planet and by working to bring more and more attention to wrongs that the Church can help right.

We want to be a conduit by which our members and followers can advocate and through which we keep those same people apprised of our efforts on behalf of the planet. Right at this time, we are changing things to prepare for the General Assembly in 2016. Our 2012-14 focus was on fossil fuels. Our 2014-16 focus is on water, especially as it relates to the use of and extraction of fossil fuels. We invite you to visit our revised, and revising, Advocacy page at www.presbyearthcare.org and catch our e-blasts, as well.

Most of all catch us at our Conference in September, at Montreat, North Carolina. It is there that all of the things we build, and all of the institutions we build upon come together.





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