

“Restoring Harmony with the Earth” Cameron Trimble in Piloting Faith 2024.12.18

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Restoring Harmony with the Earth

A Meditation by Rev. Cameron Trimble Dec. 18, 2024

The U.S. Constitution owes much of its structure to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy—the Iroquois Confederacy—whose Great Law of Peace modeled principles of democracy, unity, and shared responsibility. While the Founding Fathers drew inspiration from the Haudenosaunee, they ignored one of its most profound lessons: the sacred relationship between people and the earth.

For the Haudenosaunee, land ownership was an alien concept. The earth was not something to be divided, conquered, or exploited. It was regarded as sacred—a living entity to be respected and cared for. They believed that **how we treat the land is how we treat the people**. They were wholly against the commodification of nature, which has led to environmental destruction and climate crisis.

As climate reports come in from all over the world telling a terrifying story of how our beloved world is changing, the wisdom of the Haudenosaunee invites us to reimagine our relationship with the natural world. It asks us to move beyond seeing nature as a resource and to recognize it as a partner, a teacher, and a reflection of the divine. Pope Francis echoes this wisdom in *Laudato Si'*, writing, “*The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves.*” By restoring our reverence for the earth, we restore our own humanity.

This perspective isn’t just spiritual; it’s deeply practical. The Haudenosaunee teach that decisions should be made with the welfare of the seventh generation in mind. This long-term thinking stands in stark contrast to the short-sightedness of much modern policy. Recognizing the rights of rivers, forests, and wildlife to exist and thrive is a way to honor creation and ensure future generations' survival and flourishing.

The challenges before us—climate change, deforestation, species extinction—can feel overwhelming. But the wisdom of the Haudenosaunee reminds us that healing begins with humility and respect. When we live in harmony with the earth, we align ourselves with the sacred flow of creation. In doing so, we not only care for the planet but also nurture our own souls.

Let us listen to the rivers, the trees, and the mountains, and remember that in caring for them, we are caring for all life, including our own.

We are in this together, Cameron

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Reflection Questions “Restoring Harmony with the Earth”

- How does the idea that “how we treat the land is how we treat the people” challenge your current understanding of your relationship with the earth?
- What steps can you take to honor the rights of nature in your daily life?
- How might thinking seven generations ahead change the way you approach decisions about the environment?

A Prayer for the Earth

*Creator of All,
You made the earth and called it good,
Entrusting us to care for it with reverence and love.
Forgive us for the ways we have harmed Your creation,
And guide us to live in harmony with the land, the water, and all living things.
Teach us to see the earth as sacred,
To honor its rhythms, and to protect its future.
May our actions reflect Your love for all creation,
And may we walk gently on this holy ground.
Amen.*

Spiritual Practice: Listening to the Land

Today, take time to reconnect with the natural world in a mindful and intentional way. Begin by stepping outside into a place where nature is present—a park, a forest, a garden, or even your own backyard. Pause and take in your surroundings. Notice the details: the texture of the leaves, the sound of the wind, the smell of the earth after rain. Let yourself linger in this moment, observing without judgment or distraction.

As you spend time in nature, reflect on what the land might be saying to you. Do you notice signs of health and flourishing, or evidence of harm and neglect? Consider how this piece of the earth is connected to you and your community. What does it teach you about the balance between giving and receiving, nurturing and being nurtured? Allow this time to be an opportunity to listen deeply, to feel the sacredness of the land, and to honor its presence.

Finally, choose one way to act on what you’ve experienced. This might mean caring for a small part of creation, such as tending to a garden. It could mean reducing your waste, supporting local environmental initiatives, or advocating for policies that protect the rights of nature. Whatever you choose, let your action be a reflection of your reverence for the earth and your commitment to its care. As you engage with this practice, remember that

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caring for the land is not just an act of care—it is a sacred way of participating in the interconnected web of life that sustains us all.