

## ***Snapshot of a Movement on the Move: The Paris Climate Talks and Religious Environmentalism***

**By Fletcher Harper**

The twenty-four month period leading up to the Paris climate negotiations last December, also known as COP 21, represented, by almost any measure, a high water mark of the religious-environmental movement. Never before have religious groups around the world within such a concentrated period of time shown such a level of public support for environmental action. This essay represents an effort to chronicle some of this activity and demonstrate the substantial and multi-faceted growth of this movement, and then introduces the other articles and essays in this issue of the *Journal of Inter-religious Studies*, of which I (on behalf of GreenFaith) serve as guest editor. In doing so, it highlights some of the questions, developmental challenges, and new dimensions of a movement that has steadily emerged from the margins of religious life, to represent an increasingly strong center of gravity for interfaith organizing on a global scale.

### **Fossil Fuel Divestment**

During 2014-15, the fossil fuel divestment movement found its stride, with faith groups around the world playing a leading role, in part due to early divestment commitments by the Church of Sweden, the United Church of Christ (US), the New South Wales Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Religious Society of Friends in Britain, and others. During this time, a number of high-visibility religious divestment commitments were announced, further galvanizing this movement. The World Council of Churches; the University of Dayton (a Marianist Catholic institution); Union Theological Seminary; the Unitarian Universalist Association; the Church of England; the Episcopal Church; the Lutheran World Federation; the United Church of Canada; the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church; and over one hundred other faith-based institutions committed to divest from fossil fuel holdings, or from holdings in the coal or tar sands sectors of the fossil fuel industry. Several of these commitments received international media coverage. By the middle of 2016, 126 religious institutions with assets of over \$24 billion had pledged to divest.<sup>1</sup> (While the divestment movement has been most active in the Christian world, debate has begun in parts of the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities as well.)

### **The People's Climate March**

Faith communities demonstrated their mobilizing muscle at the People's Climate March, the September 2014 march that brought over 400,000 people into the streets of New York City to call for climate action from world leaders. Over twenty different denominations and faith traditions collaborated to organize a kaleidoscopically-diverse multi-faith presence at the march, with estimates that for at least 15,000 participants, faith was a primary

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.arabellaadvisors.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Measuring-the-Growth-of-the-Divestment-Movement.pdf>

motivation. Organized groups marched from the Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, Evangelical, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Unitarian Universalist, Sikh, Jain, Pagan, Humanist, Agnostic, Atheist, Indigenous, Baha'i, and Shinto communities. 10,000 of these people gathered for a three-hour, multi-faith prayer and invocation service on 58<sup>th</sup> Street between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues in Manhattan, featuring prayers, readings, and statements by religious and moral leaders, and music by cellist Michael Fitzpatrick, folk singer Peter Yarrow, and others. Auburn Theological Seminary, GreenFaith, Judson Memorial Church, and the World Council of Churches partnered to construct a school bus-sized replica of Noah's Ark, which was pulled the entire length of the march by a bio-diesel powered pickup truck. A sign on the side read, "We are all Noah now," repurposing the biblical flood narrative for the purposes of contemporary environmental protection.

### ***Laudato Si'***

Nine months after the march, on June 18, 2015, Pope Francis released his eagerly anticipated encyclical on the environment. Titled "*Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*," the encyclical immediately became the most widely-known religious statement ever on the environment, and received global media coverage. It combined lyrical prose, incisive criticism of an unchecked neoliberal economic model that treats both the environment and the poor as disposable, and an embrace of "integral ecology," a holistic understanding of the relationship between people and planet.

Fr. Thomas Reese, a respected Jesuit commentator, described this concept, central to Pope Francis' thinking, in an article in the *National Catholic Reporter*. Quoting from the encyclical itself, Reese wrote: "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live," writes the pope. "We are part of nature." As a result, if we want to know "why a given area is polluted," we must study "the workings of society, its economy, its behavior patterns, and the ways it grasps reality." And in considering solutions to the environmental crisis, we must "seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems."<sup>2</sup>

Many organizations, both Catholic and interfaith, worked to ensure that the encyclical's message resonated widely. First, to build momentum towards *Laudato Si'*'s release, in April 2015 the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences, the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and Religions for Peace held a day-long event at the Vatican entitled "Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity: The Moral Dimensions of Climate Change and Sustainable Development." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon gave the opening address at the event, and sixty world religious leaders and scientists took part.

Numerous Catholic groups then stepped forward to amplify the encyclical's message, and to interpret it in their own contexts, including the US-based Catholic Climate Covenant, CIDSE (an international alliance of Catholic development agencies), the Franciscan Action Network, and many others. The Global Catholic Climate Movement, a newly formed

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/integral-ecology-everything-connected>

grassroots, international network, organized a petition drive that delivered over 900,000 petition signatures in support of climate action, with Catholics from the typhoon-ravaged Philippines signing the petition in large numbers. Soon after the encyclical's release, a number of groups, led by the OurVoices campaign (a joint effort of GreenFaith and the UK-based Conservation Foundation) and FOCSIV (a coalition of Italian-based Catholic development and social justice groups), organized a multi-faith march into St. Peter's Square to thank the Pope for his leadership. Called "Una Terra, Una Famiglia Umana," (One Earth, One Human Family), the march attracted several thousand participants from Italian environmental groups and from diverse faiths, including 110 emerging faith leaders from thirty countries who were in Rome for the Emerging Leaders Multi-Faith Climate Convergence, the first-ever international, multi-faith climate gathering for Millennials.

### **The Summit of Conscience**

In July, religious and moral leaders from around the world gathered in Paris for the Summit of Conscience, an event hosted by the French Government in anticipation of the upcoming climate talks, and attended by Pres. Francois Hollande, high-level French government officials, climate experts, and religious and cultural leaders from around the world. The purpose of the event was to invite these leaders to ponder the deceptively simple question, "Why do I care about the environment?", an effort to reinject a human dimension into a climate negotiations process so often dominated by technical, financial, and political considerations. For such an event to take place in the halls of power of a country that highly prizes secularism represented a remarkable acknowledgement of the importance of faith. When asked why the summit was needed, the secretary general of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, Martin Palmer, who was central to the summit's success, replied, "What is needed is a change of ethos...And ethos is what faiths, the arts, the wonderfully diverse cultures of our planet do best. Many want faiths to be moral teachers, to give a list of ethical reasons why something should or should not be done. ... They (also) inspire through the ethos of everything we do – how we raise our children, share food and drink with strangers; celebrate as well as fast; repent but also rejoice; sing and dance as well as sit quietly reflecting."<sup>3</sup>

### **Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu Statements**

The summer of 2015 saw the release of three major statements from the Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu communities respectively. Each statement articulated the clear philosophical, theological, and moral foundation for addressing climate change from the perspective of its tradition. Each, after noting the number of years that had passed without meaningful international action on climate change, also urged world leaders to recognize the urgency of the Paris negotiations and to act boldly. The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change<sup>4</sup> was released at an Istanbul symposium in August 2015, organized by Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Climate Action Network International, and GreenFaith. It noted the disproportionate impact of

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=662>

<sup>4</sup> <http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-on-global-climate-change/>

climate change on hundreds of millions of Muslims in climate-vulnerable regions, and called for a 100% clean energy and/or zero emissions future and for corporations, finance, and the business sector to “assist in the divestment from the fossil fuel driven economy and the scaling up of renewable energy and other ecological alternatives.” Given the substantial dependence upon petro-dollars of many Muslim charitable, educational, and religious institutions, this was a remarkable and courageous statement.

The Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders<sup>5</sup> was signed by 300 highly respected Buddhist leaders and teachers, representing the main schools and traditions of Buddhism from 37 countries and including the world’s three most prestigious Buddhist leaders: Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. The statement, organized by twelve organizations<sup>6</sup> and facilitated by the Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective, marked the importance of mutual support among groups from different faiths by recognizing the importance of *Laudato Si’*, the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change, and the upcoming Hindu Declaration on Climate Change.

The Hindu Declaration on Climate Change,<sup>7</sup> released a week before the Paris negotiations began, was signed by over sixty Hindu leaders and organizations, including renowned scientist and activist Vandana Shiva and Hindu spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. It called for the world’s 900 million Hindus to use clean energy and to adopt or maintain a plant-based diet, and for international and national leaders to take action that is “scientifically credible and historically fair, based on deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through a rapid transition away from polluting technologies, especially away from fossil fuels.” It further noted that “(r)enewable energies are also the best hope for the billions of people without electricity or clean cooking facilities to live better lives and reduce poverty.”

In addition to these three statements, which represented an important new level of engagement on climate change by Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu leaders, the ACT Alliance (a global alliance of churches and related organizations focusing on development and humanitarian assistance) organized the Statement of Faith and Spiritual Leaders on the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21 in Paris in December 2015.<sup>8</sup> This statement was signed by 154 primarily Protestant leaders, joined by Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Buddhist and Hindu colleagues. This statement referenced the Statement from the Interfaith Summit in New York in September 2014, organized by the World Council of Churches and Religions for Peace.<sup>9</sup> Both statements made mention of the urgency of the Paris negotiations and of the vital importance of action to limit global

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<sup>5</sup> <https://gbccc.org/buddhist-climate-change-statement-to-world-leaders-2015/>

<sup>6</sup> Buddhist Climate Action Network, Buddhistdoor Global, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation USA, Dharmagiri, Eco Friendly Volunteers, GreenFaith, International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Inter-Religious Climate & Ecology Network, Plum Village, One Earth Sangha, Shambhala and Sokka Gakkai International

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.hinduclimatedeclaration2015.org/>; organized by the Bhumi Project, a joint project of the Oxford Center for Hindu Studies and GreenFaith, along with the Hindu America Foundation

<sup>8</sup> [http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/COP21\\_Statement\\_english2.pdf](http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/COP21_Statement_english2.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://interfaithclimate.org/the-statement>

temperature rise (to a level of 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels). Additionally, the Shalom Center, a Philadelphia-based center for Jewish activism, issued the [Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis](#) signed by over 425 rabbis who called for vigorous climate action. At the Paris negotiations themselves, ACT Alliance and CIDSE both carried out sophisticated and substantive religious advocacy, with a team of policy experts monitoring numerous aspects of the negotiations and commenting on them with a combination of technical expertise and moral focus.

While religious statements are often criticized as ineffectual, this collection of statements had a meaningful impact on public awareness of the climate crisis, as measured by the media coverage each statement received. 2015 was also the first time that so many high-level religious leaders globally publicly and together called for action on an environmental concern, another facet of the intensification of religious attention to the environment.

### **From *Clean Kumbh* Towards Interfaith Engagement in India**

India, a country with the world's second largest population and third largest economy as measured by purchasing power parity, is vital to the future of the world's environment. 2015 and 2016 has seen an important uptick in the level of Hindu and multi-faith environmental engagement. At the same time, the Indian government has restricted the operation of environmental groups such as Greenpeace and 350.org, making this religious-environmental emergence even more significant.

The Kumbh Mela is a mass Hindu festival during which Hindus bathe in a sacred river for the purpose of spiritual cleansing. It offers an opportunity to reach millions of Hindus who make a pilgrimage to the one city among four that hosts the Kumbh in any given year. The 2015 Kumbh took place in Nashik in July and August, with nine million attendees. The Bhumi Project coordinated the first ever Clean Kumbh Campaign, raising awareness about climate change and the promise of clean energy. The campaign included a Solar Lamp giveaway to share the message that with solar lamps, every child can study after dark, promoted by iconic Hindu gurus who showed support online and through radio messages. Bhumi conducted outreach via local newspaper, flyers, tuk-tuk (a three-wheeled motorized vehicle used as a taxi), and railway station advertising, in addition to radio messages and online, interactive maps of the Kumbh venue.

The campaign's message was viewed by a stunning 12 million people (numerous people were exposed to the message more than once), with more than 100,000 people showing their support by placing a "missed call" to a dedicated phone number.

Building on this success, Bhumi played the leading role in convening Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and Sikh groups from India and South Asia in early 2016 to plan an interfaith activity to show that the faiths were coming together to address climate change. Young leaders from each of these traditions organized a multi-faith event on June 12 in Delhi as part of the international Sacred Earth, Sacred Trust campaign that marked the six-month anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement. The Times of India, a leading national daily, ran a feature article on the interfaith Delhi event in its "Speaking Tree" section, conveying

pleasant surprise that members of different faiths could join together in this way.<sup>10</sup> Explorations are underway to organize a multi-faith South Asian convergence in India, similar to the Rome Convergence described above, in 2017.

## **Petitions**

Throughout 2015, a number of religious groups organized petition drives to demonstrate the breadth of support for climate action from people of faith at the grassroots level around the world. The results of these petitions were presented, in the form of 1.78 million signatures, to Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris the day before the Paris negotiations began. Less than two weeks later, a multi-faith delegation presented the signatures to French President Francois Hollande. In addition to being the largest faith-based petition effort in history on climate change, these petitions generated sizeable email lists for a number of leading religious-environmental groups, an important asset for future digital organizing.

## **Climate Pilgrimages**

A final manifestation of increased religious-environmental commitment was the collection of “climate pilgrimages” that took place primarily in Europe and Africa in the lead-up to COP21. From Scandinavia, Germany, Great Britain, and France, thousands of pilgrims walked into Paris, with many making the entire journey from their homes on foot. The Scandinavian pilgrimage began in Norway and proceeded through Sweden, Denmark, and Germany before entering France.<sup>11</sup> In Germany, Catholic and Protestant churches worked closely together to coordinate a pilgrimage beginning in Flensburg and proceeding over 600 miles to Paris.<sup>12</sup> In Africa, pilgrims conducted a combined walking and bicycling pilgrimage to Nairobi, collectively travelling thousands of miles from South Africa, Burundi, Uganda, and other countries in a colorful, impassioned display of concern. “Pilgrimage to COP21 is a pilgrimage of justice and peace, for people and for the earth,” said the ACT Alliance’s Isaiah Toroitich. As people of faith we hope to speak in one united voice in Paris demonstrating our solidarity with those affected by climate change.”

The People’s Pilgrimage, led by former Filipino climate diplomat Yeb Sano, represented another example of physical endurance in the service of moral witness. After pilgrimages in early- and mid-2015 in the Philippines, Vanuatu, and Australia, Sano and his multi-faith, multi-ethnic team of pilgrims travelled to India where they visited sites ravaged by cyclones and several Hindu sacred sites. Then on September 30, after receiving a blessing during a public papal audience in St. Peter’s Square, the pilgrims embarked on a 900-mile walk from Rome to Paris, a truly epic trek. As they headed to Paris, the terrorist attacks drastically changed the last weeks of the pilgrimage, with public group activities and gatherings banned in Paris. But it also now held a new meaning; here was a group that

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.speakingtree.in/article/green-faith>

<sup>11</sup> <http://culture-routes.net/news/st-olav-ways-pilgrimage-climate-justice-2015>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/hundreds-of-pilgrims-making-way-to-un-climate-change-conference>

contained people from nearly every continent and from many faiths, walking together, sharing a united message of hope. The pilgrims entered Paris one by one, the police having banned public gatherings.

This pilgrimage, and the others, ended with a final symbolic walk to the Place de la Republique, the site of the memorial to those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks, where both Parisians and pilgrims from across Europe left hundreds of pairs of shoes.

### **In This Issue**

In the wake of this remarkable outpouring of religious leadership, of which the aforementioned examples represent but a sample, this issue of the *Journal of Inter-Religious Studies* seeks to accomplish several things. First, it seeks to elevate the voices of religious-environmental leaders from different parts of the world. The articles here are written by authors from Brazil, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Kenya, Switzerland, Israel, India, and the United States, a reflection of a genuinely global movement. Second, it seeks to share the perspectives of religious-environmental practitioners, with leaders from the Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, and Jewish traditions, as well as a secular communications expert, reflecting about their actual work in this field.

Brazil is well-known internationally for its biodiversity; less well-known is that Brazil also enjoys enormous religious diversity, with Catholic, Protestant, and neo-Pentecostal groups alongside indigenous groups and a sizeable Afro-Brazilian population with its own distinct spiritual practices. Denise Pini Rosalem da Fonseca, Maria Rita Villela, and Alice Amorim Vogas trace the history of engagement with environmental concerns by Brazilian religious groups, noting the formative work done by the Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER) since the 1990's. They chronicle ISER's leadership before, during, and after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, with ISER's multi-faith, overnight vigil at the Earth Summit itself an inspiration for religious-environmental activism globally. They also note the recently increased influence of the so-called "Evangelical bench" on Brazilian government policy, including policies related to extractive industries, and they highlight the challenges for interfaith work in a context in which certain groups – in Brazil's case, a number of neo-Pentecostal groups – use language so intolerant of other faiths and spiritualities as to represent a human rights concern. Their analysis of the challenge of religious fundamentalism in relation to ecological concerns is one that finds application beyond Christianity and beyond Brazil.

George Marshall is a widely respected researcher in the field of communications on climate change. His essay seeks to identify ways of communicating with faith groups about climate change that emerge not primarily from theological scholarship but rather from actual conversations with followers of a range of religious traditions. The essay draws on separate focus group conversations with members of Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities in greater London (a region chosen because of the presence of large numbers of recent immigrants from around the world who comprised a substantial percentage of the focus groups), interviews with theologians and religious-environmental leaders, and a survey that received over 800 responses from dozens of countries in the global north and south. Marshall offers five narratives that his research indicates can

engage people of diverse faiths in climate change work in a religiously plural world. He also notes the significant research gap on effective climate communications with most faith traditions, and calls for further investment in this area.

Most Western religious leaders have not had the benefit of extensive engagement with Asian Buddhist communities, a primary focus of the article written by Somboom Chungprampree, also known among colleagues as Moo. While the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), which Moo coordinates, engages with Buddhists globally, his article focuses particularly on the background of INEB's work and its Southeast Asian Buddhist underpinnings. Moo takes us on a journey that describes the forest protection work of Thai Buddhist monks, the importance of meditative practice in supporting the transformation required for a sustainable culture, and the influence that Asian Buddhism can exert on governmental policy, evidenced by Bhutan's project to replace Gross Domestic Product with Gross National Happiness as a measure of wellbeing.

Gopal Patel and Mat McDermott, respectively the director of and a long-time writer for the Bhumi Project, raise important questions about the distinctions between Dharmic and Abrahamic framings of climate and environmental issues. Their essay first immerses us in a thoughtful summary of Hindu environmental thought, and then teaches us about the differences in both tone and content with which the religious-environmental movement must engage to become truly global and truly multi-faith. They lift up the importance of dietary choices from a Hindu perspective, seeking to broaden religious engagement around climate change beyond fossil fuels. They also emphasize the foreignness to many Hindus of the Abrahamic community's tendency to frame messages in terms of good and evil – a polarizing tendency not as common in Hindu thought.

As noted above, Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* became an instant classic in the pantheon of religious-environmental literature. In September 2015, GreenFaith hosted two webinars on the encyclical, providing Catholic and multi-faith leaders alike the opportunity to respond. We have excerpted remarks by the speakers on these webinars, who included two Catholic theologians, a scientist-advisor to the Catholic church in Argentina, a US-based Catholic activist, a rabbi and Jewish eco-theologian, a leading imam, a Hindu cleric who is also a broadcaster and Hindu Chaplain to Oxford University, a Protestant Latina eco-theologian, and a California-based Buddhist nun and teacher. Their remarks demonstrate both the convergence and distinctiveness of religious-environmental thought, and offer another example of the significance of the encyclical as an interfaith conversation-starter.

In a series of short personal statements, emerging faith leaders from the Millennial generation express their interest in climate change in a manner that is both personal and primary. Their starting place is a world – their generation's world – that speaks about climate change in the present rather than the future tense. These young leaders articulate the values of their traditions in relation to the morally disengaged aspects of global consumerist culture, and the often environmentally disengaged senior leadership within their own traditions. Climate change poses two fundamental challenges to this generation of faith leaders: Will we muster the humanity to respond before massive ecological



devastation becomes unavoidable? And will our religions respond with creative and moral energy sufficient to re-establish their often-missed cultural relevance?

Water is often a forgotten stepchild of the religious-environmental movement, due to a combination of climate urgency, the programmatic focus of existing religious-environmental groups, and environmental funder commitments. But as Susie Weldon points out, faith groups have long addressed water issues – particularly access to clean, drinking water as part of their longstanding commitment to reducing poverty. She shares examples of this work, with a particular focus on the intersection of sanitation and clean water access, and describes the emergence of Faith in Water, a newly-formed NGO emerging out of the Alliance for Religions and Conservation. In the coming decade, the intersection between these traditional religious commitments appears likely to grow dramatically around water-related activism, environmental concerns about the protection of drinking water from various forms of toxic contamination (both household and industrial), and efforts to prevent devastating levels of water supply depletion.

Jeremy Benstein’s review of Rabbi David Seidenberg’s book, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, represents not only a highly engaging review of the book itself, but also an insightful reflection on the theological tendencies within “traditional” Jewish environmental thought, and a critical engagement with its anthropocentric and rationalist tendencies. In praising Seidenberg’s work of creative theology, Benstein notes the importance of Seidenberg’s efforts to re-imagine traditional Jewish theological concepts such as “the divine image” found within humanity. He praises Seidenberg’s conclusion that it is not enough for Judaism (or for any tradition, I would add), merely to re-state ancient teachings to meet the magnitude of the environmental crisis. A more energetically inventive effort is required, as is a welcoming embrace of a level of theological experimentation.

In closing, as the recap of the past two years of religious-environmental activity and these essays show, the religious-environmental movement is leaving its infancy both theologically and programmatically, and is becoming a global force. It should be noted that there are any number of critically important perspectives that are not engaged actively in the essays in this volume – eco-feminism, indigenous perspectives, and environmental racism among the most prominent. These perspectives provide further evidence of the growth and vitality of this movement, which clearly represents an area of increasing interfaith activity around the world.

It is not an overstatement to say that, in the years to come, the creativity, vigor, and magnitude of religious responses to the environmental crisis will, as noted above, have an important impact on the state of the earth, the human family, and the wider community of life. These religious responses will also impact the future of organized religion, for it is difficult to envision the faith sector gaining the allegiance of future generations if it is not able to respond to the environmental crisis at a level commensurate with the challenges it presents. For all of us who have invested our lives in this intersectional movement—and for the planet as a whole and all its inhabitants—there is a lot at stake. Let’s hope, and pray, that together we get it right.

**Fletcher Harper** is an Episcopal priest and GreenFaith's Executive Director. Under his leadership, GreenFaith has developed innovative programs linking religious belief and practice to the environment. An award-winning spiritual writer and nationally-recognized preacher on the environment, he teaches and speaks at houses of worship from a range of denominations in New Jersey and nationwide about the moral, spiritual basis for environmental stewardship and justice. A graduate of Princeton University and Union Theological Seminary, he served as a parish priest for ten years and in leadership positions in the Episcopal Church before becoming GreenFaith's Executive Director.