

LOKA SYMPOSIUM AGENDA
FAITH IN ACTION FOR A FLOURISHING PLANET
May 28th to May 30th, 2019

May 28th Afternoon and Evening: Pre-Symposium Public Forum

1.00 PM: Arrivals and registration begins at Holy Wisdom Monastery

5.00 PM: Registration available at Tripp Commons, Memorial Union, UW-Madison

5.30 PM: Reception at Tripp Commons, Memorial Union, UW-Madison

7.00 PM: Welcome dinner for participants, donors, and friends at Memorial Union, UW-Madison

May 29th Morning: Symposium Begins, Holy Wisdom Monastery

7.00 - 8.00 AM: Breakfast, Arrivals, Late Registrations

8.00 – 8.50 AM: Contemplative Practices to Benefit the Environment led by faith leaders

May 29th Morning: Flourishing People, Flourishing Planet

Human flourishing is generally defined as a state of self-actualization and fulfillment for all people with an individual right to freedom, happiness, and dignity and within the context of holistic wellbeing of the surrounding family and community. From a religious perspective, human flourishing often takes on reference to a perfect ideal such as Jesus attending to the needs of others or Buddha gaining enlightenment to alleviate the suffering for sentient beings. There is an implicit understanding that human flourishing necessitates the wellbeing of the sum and not just the parts. Expanding on this concept, a flourishing planet requires more than the judicious management and wise use of natural resources, it implies that the entirety of the planet must be in a state of good health and for us to achieve that, nature and humanity would need to flourish in tandem, in harmony. What would that look like from a faith-driven and scientific lens? Is there convergence on what a flourishing planet should consist of, and the role of humankind as part of the flourishing?

Panel 1: Planet, Body, Spirit (9.00-10.30 AM)

Moderator: Jonathan Patz

Panelists: Father Josh Kureethadam, Dr. Diana Liverman, Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker

- Father Josh Kureethadam: What is the flourishing of the spirit and body, humankind and earth from a religious lens? What does it necessitate from an ethical and communal point of view? (20 mins)
- Diana Liverman: What does a flourishing planet look like and what are some of the risks we are facing, especially from climate change? What kind of action is required for humans and other species to thrive? (20 mins)
- Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker: Journey of the intersection between religion and ecology; its profound history and its potential future (20 mins)
- Panel discussion and Q&A session (30 mins)

Recess: 15 mins

Group session: 10.45 - 12.00 pm

- Break into 6 groups.
- 3 questions for the group to initiate discussion: Where is the greatest convergence among religions; whether in theology, scripture, approach, or practical application; towards a common vision and standard for human and planetary flourishing? What examples are the most compelling and why? What do they all have in common? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

12.00 – 1.00 PM: Lunch

1.00 - 1.50 PM: Nature and meditative walk led by Dr. Cal De Witt, Greg Armstrong, and Claire Bjork

(3 options: Lake and wetlands, Oak woodlands, Prairie and savannah)

May 29th Afternoon: The Role of Religious and Indigenous Leaders at a Time of Ecological and Climate Crisis

We begin by examining our sensory experience of being in nature earlier to recognize that the environment is not external and alien to us. Our bodies are part of nature, of the planet and as we flourish, so it does and as it flourishes, so do we. Whether we create gardens or build cities, humans have always worked with the earth in order for it to meet our needs. Do we, therefore, bear a unique responsibility to nurture, conserve and administer balance so the planet flourishes? Faith leaders and indigenous culture keepers have been present throughout the history of environmentalism, often channeling humankind to care for nature as part of their spiritual commitment and continue to do so today. This session will examine the history of religious environmentalism and explore where we go next.

Panel 2: Caretakers of People, Caretakers of the Earth (2.00 -3.30 PM)

Moderator: Roshi Joan Halifax

Panelists: First Nations Representative, Paul Robbins, Reverend Sally Bingham

- First Nations Representative: The sacred connection between people and our planet (20 mins)
- Dr. Paul Robbins: All creatures great and small; Our responsibility as caretakers to Earth's biodiversity and ecosystems (20 mins)
- Rev. Sally Bingham: Lessons learned from Interfaith Power and Light; successes and failures (20 mins)
- Panel discussion and Q&A session (30 mins)

Recess: 15 mins

Group discussion: 3.45 - 5.00 pm

- Break into 6 groups
- 3 questions for the group to initiate discussion: What faith-led environmental or climate action has been the most influential so far? What challenges do faith-led movements face the most? Where should faith and science led collaborations focus, and could these be part of Loka Initiative's goals? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

5:30 PM: Dinner

6.30 - 7.30 pm: Special Session on Restoring Balance

Ceremonies, practices, and readings for spiritual, community and planetary resilience led by women leaders from First Nations of the Americas

May 30th Morning: Symposium Begins

7.00 – 8.00 AM: Breakfast

8.00 – 8.50 AM: Contemplative Practices to Benefit the Environment led by faith leaders

May 30th Morning Panel: Finding Courage to Build Tomorrow

Communities of faith often engage in social activities, some of which are religious and some secular in nature. Through these collective practices, they establish or reinforce a shared view of what their faith consists of and the positive parameters of their identity. Can faith-led environmental activities

emphasize the interconnection between individuals within the group and reinforce positive relationships through environmental and climate action? Can this approach help address the psychological reasons for why people reject environmental and climate action on an individual level and lack of political will on a policy scale? Can it help environmental and climate advocates who experience despair and exhaustion?

Panel 3: Finding courage for tomorrow

Panelists: Huda Alkaff, Dr. Susan Clayton, Dr. Lou Leonard

Moderator: Jose Aguto

- Huda Alkaff: Courage to conviction: how do we mobilize people of faith?
- Dr. Susan Clayton: How can psychology help us think about building connections that build personal and social resilience as well as facilitating our environmental and climate work? (20 mins)
- Lou Leonard: What do we learn from faith communities and how can we apply that to climate and environmental movements? (20 mins)
- Panel discussion and Q&A (30 mins)

Recess: 15 mins

Group discussion: 10.45 - 12.00 pm

- Break into 6 groups
- 3 questions for the group to initiate discussion: What are the strengths and weaknesses of working individually or collectively? How do we link individual awakening and collective action to national and global change? How do we heal environmental and climate advocates who are struggling with despair and exhaustion? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

12.00 – 1.00 PM: Lunch

1.10 - 1.50 PM: Nature and meditative walk led by Dr. Cal De Witt, Greg Armstrong, and Claire Bjork

(3 options: Lake and wetlands, Oak woodlands, Prairie and savannah)

May 30th Afternoon Panel: Resilience Building; From Concept to Implementation

In psychological terms, resilience refers to the ability to adapt and bounce back from adversity, tragedy, trauma or stress. Similarly, climate resilience is the ability for human or ecological communities to bounce back from adversity and stress created by the impacts of global warming. The stronger the ecological integrity of an ecosystem, the more resilient they naturally are to disasters. Faith

communities are often naturally resilient. Religious participation entails a shift from solitary to shared engagement with a community of like-minded people, creating conditions for companionship, sharing of sorrow and grief, cultivating forgiveness and learning calming techniques such as meditation or prayer. How do we take this abundance and scale it up to build resilience of the institution, the encircling society, the surrounding environment and the planet?

Panel 4: Operationalizing Resilience Building (2.00 – 3.30 PM)

Panelists: Mingyur Rinpoche, Dr. Richard Davidson, TBD

Moderator: Dekila Chungyalpa

- Mingyur Rinpoche: What are concrete ways to build spiritual and faith community resilience and how does that inform resilience building within environmental and climate work? (20 mins)
- Dr. Richard Davidson: How are inner, community and planetary resilience related and what can we learn from this? (20 mins)
- TBD expert: Spiritual and ecological resilience as two sides of the same coin (20 mins)

Recess: 15 mins

Group discussion: 3.45 - 5.00 pm

- Break into 6 groups
- 1 question for the group to initiate discussion: How do we conceptualize and operationalize resilience building within ourselves, within our communities, within our movements? (45 mins)
- Presentation back to all: Main conclusions (30 mins)

5:30 PM: Dinner and End of Symposium; we invite reflections from all present.