I'VE JUST FINISHED reading *Climate: A New Story* by Charles Eisenstein and am so moved by the wisdom I found between the covers. Eisenstein critiques the climate movement, arguing that the reliance on numbers, such as 350, facts, and data will not bring about the changes that are needed to slow down the disasters that we face today. His reasoning will be familiar to you since we've been talking for decades about the interconnections of caring for people and all that lives on the planet.

The author makes the case that our obsession with fossil fuels is too narrow. He cites a study which concludes that if we continue current rates of deforestation the planet will warm by 1.5 degrees even if fossil fuels were eliminated overnight. Therefore shouldn't conservation and reforestation be much higher priorities? The protection of biodiversity must also be a priority. And much more!

These examples of interconnection inspire Eisenstein to lead us on a path from our current Story of Separation to a Story of Interbeing, a term borrowed from Thich Nhat Hanh. Per Eisenstein, “When we restore the internal ecosystem, the fullness of our capacity to feel and to love, only then will there be hope of restoring the outer...That is not to suggest we withdraw from outer activism in favor of inner cultivation. It is that love and empathy are the felt dimensions of the Story of Interbeing, and we cannot act effectively from that story, nor truly serve it, without...guidance.”

At heart, this is a spiritual book, not an environmental book, though its inspiration has come from concern about the degradation of the planet. He claims that we have forgotten all the “mysterious ways invisible to our numbers, to maintain the balance of our living planet.”

I remember when I first began working for Friends Committee on Unity with Nature (FCUN, now Quaker Earthcare Witness) how difficult it was to engage Friends on caring for Earth. So many Friends were swamped with the issues of war, poverty, racism, hunger, and so much more that they couldn’t imagine embracing “another” issue. FCUN members had a hard time convincing Friends...
that all the issues were interconnected. In fact I came to FCUN because of a quote in one of its pamphlets, “there will be no peace without a planet.” That was my wakeup call. We can’t be single focused. We have been working within the understanding of the Story of Interbeing all along, and now it is becoming more understood and embraced.

Are we in time?

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