Our alienation from nature cannot be healed by the kinds of technological developments and political and economic systems that led to our alienation in the first place. We need to identify the outdated spiritual beliefs and practices that may be barriers to our caring more deeply and speaking more effectively to the heart of our psychic and ecological self-destruction. By focusing on the spiritual dimension of the global ecological crisis we can learn once again to feel the deep cry from our heart and soul for new ways to see our planet and ourselves.

Scientists now know that Earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago from simple elements formed during the initial flaring forth of the universe, as well as from more complex elements forged in exploding stars. Earth’s beautiful, balanced ecosystems, each with a multitude of species, are the fruits of a very long co-evolutionary process. Humans are a part of a diversified unity that includes everything from hippos to mushrooms, river otters to bacteria, butterflies to orchids, and coral reefs to redwoods.

THIS new awareness is bringing about a hopeful spiritual awakening. It is leading us to accept with humility our role in this exciting ongoing cosmic story. In this New Story we find a home for the heart. We see that everything is integral to an emerging sacred whole. We see that the Divine permeates and transfigures all of Creation.

Traditional stories teach us about wise balance, restraint, and the high price of arrogance and alienation. Many ancient myths and images embody knowledge of the rhythms of the seasons and inherited wisdom regarding birth, death, and regeneration. Supported by these powerful spiritual traditions, we come to know with awe, reverence, and gratitude the unifying, creative depth of the natural world.

The New Story prepares us for further evolution in human consciousness, to become active participants in the creative Earth process. We embrace its mysteries as part of our healing. We find in it a larger context for our individual gifts and wisdom. We learn from the New Story that love is more powerful than exploitation, that community works better than domination, and that out of despair can come empowerment and
hope. The New Story gives deeper spiritual roots to our ethical leadings. Friends processes of discernment and seeking the Light become part of the spiritual journey home.

We may initially come into this deeper level of caring with the idea that we are “doing something” to heal Earth. As we grow into a restored sense of oneness, we become aware that we are also receiving something. This is our spiritual answer to the dismissive question, “So what?” When we come to care about the least of our fellow endangered Earthlings, including tropical tree frogs, we become part of what Thomas Berry called “the Great Work” that transforms us as it renews our hopes for the future.

Some spiritual practices that may help:

2. Study. Seek wisdom. Find and share new visions.
3. Find a community that understands and supports your calling to be a healer and peace maker. Learn to laugh and sing and work together. Take time to care for a plant, a kitten, or a child.
4. Listen carefully for the work that is uniquely your leading.
5. Know that there are many others on this path. Not all the work is yours. There is much energy for healing that we see and much that we do not. Trust it all.

Resources

Books

DVD series

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WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God’s Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring Earth’s ecological integrity.