



!HUMANS ARE TOXIC TO LIFE!

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April 20, 2010, the day the Gulf oil rig exploded, was the start of a national headache and heartache. Americans are feeling pain, sadness, anger and frustration about the horrific, environmental disaster that is still unfolding. Our empathy with the Gulf residents does not lessen their huge communal and personal burdens. Yet –for many of us --the ghastly images of dying oil-soaked pelicans, oxygen-starved dolphins, and yucky-looking marshlands, recede into the back of our minds as our daily lives continue basically untouched.

Are we learning anything yet? This catastrophic oil spill is just the latest evidence that human activity and human-centeredness threatens the well being of life here on Earth. We should not easily dismiss as “collateral damage” what the Earth is trying to teach us.

We still have a persistent, destructive perception, learned from misinterpretations of the Bible, that humans are the most important life to God and everything else was created to merely serve human needs. This has resulted in human greed, over-consumption and profit-driven economic systems that are causing the world-wide ecological crisis.

However, the term “dominion” in the Hebrew Scriptures is meant to represent royal, divine rule, i.e. as God relates to all of creation. Many Biblical stories tell us God’s rule is one of loving concern for all ---even for the lowly sparrow – and with justice. Humans are to share in God’s rule with loving concern and justice for all creation. How do we change our limiting view of God’s creation?

First, we need to learn an image of being in **kinship with the Earth**. A kinship image emphasizes the connectedness of humans with all of Earth’s precious expressions of life. We are all inter-related as companions in an Earth community of life. What harms one thing diminishes the well-being of everything else. This kinship attitude does not put a hierarchical value on any one form of life, but recognizes all life as being continually nurtured by the Creator Spirit. We are called to cooperate with the Spirit’s creative energy to allow the flourishing of the whole.

Secondly, foster this kinship attitude. Enjoy some time in nature. Feel yourself connected with God’s creation. Reflect on being a “planetary citizen”.

We, individually and collectively, need to recognize the feelings of disgust, heartache, and sadness as the cries of Earth calling us to listen to what “all of life” needs to sustain future generations. We cannot ignore what is happening to ecosystems. We cannot deny what is being told to us through our bodies and feelings. Now is the time to learn our lessons about being compassionate humans for all of God’s creative life!

Although most of us cannot give direct help to the Gulf, there is much we can do in ordinary ways. First, resolve to take small steps to conserve oil. Check out the Greenpeace web site for “Ten Simple Ways to Use Less Oil.” (www.Greenpeace.org/Gulfoilspill.) Secondly, advocate and vote for renewable energy initiatives. In addition, sign up with the DTE Energy’s GreenCurrents Program, strengthening Michigan’s energy independence. Thirdly, support whatever organizations seem to address the passion/concerns of your heart.

We absolutely cannot ignore, deny, or trivialize what the Gulf is trying to communicate to us. Can we change before it is too late?
