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Light illuminates a crater during the sunrise at Haleakala National Park on the Hawaiian island of Maui Oct. 9, 2018. (CNS/Navesh Chitrakar, Reuters)



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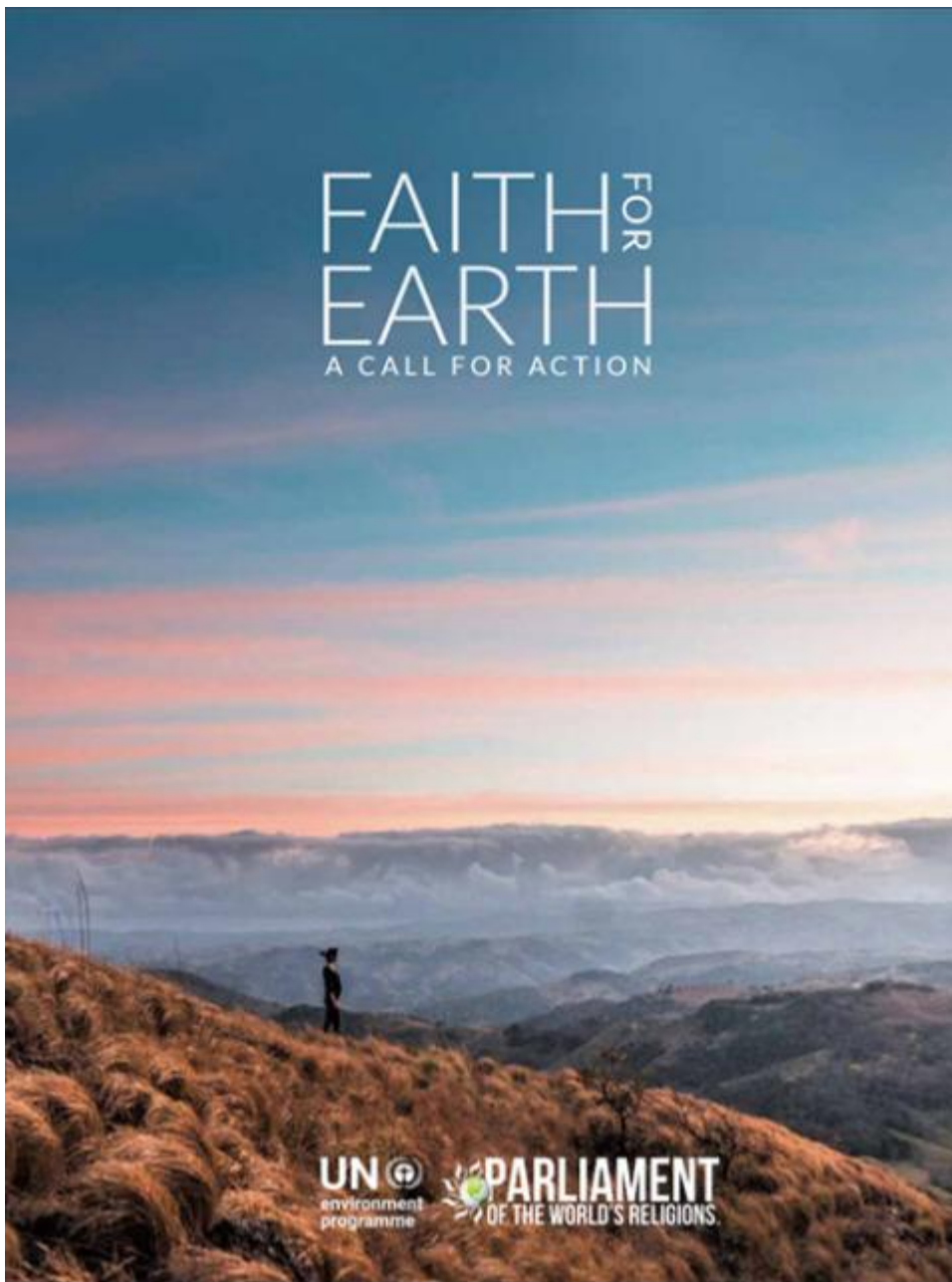
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The world is home to many religions, yet there is common ground in the belief that the Earth, itself a common home, must be respected and protected in the face of growing environmental threats.



That is the main focus of a new book, [Faith for Earth: A Call for Action](#), from the United Nations and the world's religious communities that spotlights the shared reverence and responsibility across faiths toward the environment, and their collective resolve to take actions to preserve it.

*Faith for Earth* was released Thursday by the U.N. Environment Programme and the Parliament of the World's Religions during the Faith for Nature Global Conference, held in Skálhol, Iceland. The 57-page book, available online and in print, describes how many religions view the natural world and their duty to safeguard it. Those faith-based perspectives are paired with scientific explanations of the multitude of crises threatening the planet's oceans, atmosphere, ecosystems and people.

A first version of the book was published in 2000 under the title *Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action*. In the 20 years since, "the planet has undergone profound and rapid changes," reads the preface, among them climate change, accelerating species extinction, collapsing ecosystems and "deepening human suffering."

"The decades ahead present us with a crucible of moral choices," David Hales, climate action chair for the Parliament of the World's Religions, writes in an opening message.

**Sv. Hildegarda**

**CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES**

Most High, all-powerful good Lord,  
 There are the powers, the gifts, and the favors, and all blessings,  
 To be bestowed. Most High, all-wise, all-true,  
 And so glorious to worship, to adore, that none,  
 Praised by You, are loved, with all This creation,  
 especially by Brother Sun,  
 Whom You have made through Yourself, the gift of light,  
 and by a beautiful and radiant with golden splendor,  
 and in the brightness of You, Most High One.

Praised by You, are loved through Sister Moon and the stars,  
 to become You, toward them, their and precious and beautiful.

Praised by You, are loved through Brother Wind,  
 and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,  
 through which You give sustenance to This creation.

Praised by You, are loved through Sister Water,  
 which is not useful, and fruitful, and precious and clean.

Praised by You, are loved through Brother Fire,  
 through which You light the night,  
 and by which You heat and purify, and refresh, and strengthen.

Praised by You, are loved through our Sister Mother Earth,  
 who nurtures and governs us, and who produces various fruits with  
 colored flowers and fruits.

— St. Hildegard, "Canticle of the Creatures"  
 as translated from Latin (November 28, 1997), p. 111.

**SALUTO IN'**

The encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*. On October 24, 2015, Pope Francis has been a long time in public attention and discussion of the world's faith. He has not only done it, but also presented on May 24, 2015 and also on July 24, 2015 the opening words of "The Canticle of the Creatures" of St. Hildegard. It is a prayer and a beautiful meditation, the one that every citizen, scientist, politician, educator, theologian, and spiritual leader should read and meditate on. It is a beautiful and powerful prayer for the world's faith and for the world's future. It is a prayer that every citizen, scientist, politician, educator, theologian, and spiritual leader should read and meditate on. It is a beautiful and powerful prayer for the world's faith and for the world's future.

**What kind of world do we want to live in?**

It is a world where we can live in peace and harmony with each other and with the world. It is a world where we can live in peace and harmony with each other and with the world. It is a world where we can live in peace and harmony with each other and with the world.

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"Scientific evidence documenting the crisis is undeniable and grows with every passing day. At the same time, there has been a surge of faith-based action and advocacy on behalf of the environment from religious groups everywhere. The response is coming from every corner of the world, reflecting both the diversity of the ways we define our relationship with nature and the essential unity of values at the core of all our hope," the book states.

It adds, "It is time, as never before, to call on our faith, our values, our religious teachings and traditions — on Faith for Earth. And it is time for action."

The book's faith section was authored by Kusumita P. Pedersen, professor emerita of religious studies at St. Francis College, in Brooklyn Heights, New York. It presents teachings on creation and the environment from a dozen faiths, including Christianity, Buddhism, Baha'i, Sikhism, Daoism and Islam, as well as a number of Indigenous traditions.

**MOTHER EARTH**  
Indigenous spirituality is one of the best of spiritualities in relation to the individual, personally responsible as for life, then another to human, through the natural passage — faith, practice, stewardship, death, and rebirth. We have no words to write as those shall to be born, and each one of us is the living word.

All over Africa, Earth is regarded as the female spirit, the Mother Earth. There is expected to care for her, honor, defend, and love her. Especially, we will use all the land without her prior permission. We ask for permission again before digging to bury the dead so that her child may return here for renewal. Some Yoruba even believe in the spirit of the Earth, and a farmer or craftsman would not do his work, he is asked to breathe life to water and to breathe a spirit to those who have water in spirit and passed onto the ground while calling the name of the God, Mother Earth, and the ancestors, and honoring their blessings upon all present. Farmers and woodworkers play an important part in the African faith. When in a desert a person uses her hands, she is doing a watering — work being all in the green world.

The one of African religion is in the presence between the human, Earth, the spirit world, water, and the environment. In African belief in the living spirit, we believe that Earth is fully alive in us. We are made by the spirit of Earth and are changed with taking care of it and having it in a larger world. Even that we breathe, it is full, our children will not have any Earth to inherit.

— John Debesse (Source: John Debesse)

**Uluru**  
Uluru is a large sandstone rock formation in the Northern Territory of Australia. It is one of the most iconic natural landmarks in the world.

**Indigenous Spirituality**  
Indigenous spirituality is a diverse and rich tradition that encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices. It often emphasizes a deep connection to the land, nature, and community.

**Environmental Stewardship**  
Environmental stewardship is the responsible and ethical use of the natural environment. It involves protecting and restoring the land, water, and air for the benefit of all living beings.

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The book quotes a number of prominent faith voices, including Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Mohandas Gandhi, along with St. Hildegard of Bingen, Passionist Fr. Thomas Berry and Rabbi Arthur Waskow, and cites passages from the Book of Genesis, the Hadith, Navajo chants and Jainism texts.

The prayers, hymns and texts featured in *Faith for Earth* show how different belief systems have often used similar language in describing the world.

"O Mother Earth! You are the world for us and we are your children," reads the Hindu hymn "In Praise of Mother Earth."

**THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB SAYS**  
He is the guru. When the father and the mother are joined,  
They and light are the world and the world is in them,  
The world is in them and they are in the world.  
—Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Granth Sahib, 1000th Anniversary Edition  
The Gurmukhi version of the Guru Granth Sahib is the central text of Sikhism. It is a collection of hymns and prayers written by the Gurus of the Sikh faith. The Gurmukhi version of the Guru Granth Sahib is the central text of Sikhism. It is a collection of hymns and prayers written by the Gurus of the Sikh faith.

**THE BISH RELIGION AND THE ENVIRONMENT**  
The Bish religion believes that the purpose of human beings is to achieve a state of harmony with all creation. At this time, a crisis in the environment is part of an ongoing approach to life and death. In all creation, the same spirit and love connect human beings to the rest of nature. Humans should connect themselves through love with love, compassion and justice. Becoming one with being is harmony with God implies that human beings are here to become one with all of creation. The emphasis in the Bish religion is on the harmony of the self and the universe. The Bish religion is a religion of love and harmony. It is a religion of love and harmony. It is a religion of love and harmony.

**ONE BILLION TREES**  
To celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the Bish religion has launched a global initiative to plant one billion trees. The initiative is a global effort to plant one billion trees. The initiative is a global effort to plant one billion trees. The initiative is a global effort to plant one billion trees.

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"Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs," St. Francis of Assisi wrote in his "Canticle of the Creatures."

"Air is the guru; Water the father; and Earth the great mother. Day and night are two male and female nurses in whose lap the entire world plays," reads a passage in the Guru Granth Sahib, the central Sikh scripture.

"Heaven is my father and Earth my mother and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst," wrote Neo-Confucian philosopher Chang Tsai in his 11th-century "Western Inscription."

At the end of the faith section, the book summarizes eight points of agreement across religions regarding humans' relationship to the environment. Among them:

- The natural world itself has value beyond serving human needs, and non-human creatures have moral significance;

- The need for gratitude for the natural world, upon which human survival relies;
- There are both legitimate and illegitimate uses of nature, with greed and destruction condemned and restraint and protection commended.

Along with teachings, *Faith for Earth* focuses on how many religious communities have responded to the call to care for the earth. One shared focus across faiths has been trees.



Pilgrims travel in boats as they accompany the statue of Our Lady of Nazareth during an annual river procession and pilgrimage along the Apeu River to a chapel in Macapazinho, Brazil, Aug. 3, 2014. (CNS/Reuters/Ney Marcondes)

Many Shinto shrines are found in forests, which are then viewed as sacred, leading in recent decades to the preservation of the area's ecosystems and raising environmental awareness. In November 2019, Sikhs celebrated the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak by planting 1 million trees. Catholic dioceses and groups in Africa have also emphasized tree plantings.

Since the early 1990s, some Buddhists have ordained trees, wrapping traditional orange cloths around them, to draw attention to deforestation, while those living in the Himalayan Mountains have networked to take steps to protect the local environment. Elsewhere in the Himalayas, the Chipko movement, especially prominent among Hindu women, began holding vigils in the early 1970s to stop logging in the region. And the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative today is a global effort to end tropical deforestation.

The book also highlights measures that religious communities have taken to live out stewardship in their own actions, such as the Sisters of Earth network of Catholic women religious and their commitment to eco-justice and sustainability.

Sikhs have also worked to "green" their houses of worship, known as gurdwaras. And earlier this year, 500 rabbis and Jewish leaders issued "Elijah's Covenant," a letter calling for action on climate change and support for refugees fleeing disasters.

The practice of a "Green Ramadan" has gained in popularity among Muslims, which includes conserving food at the traditional Iftar evening meal each night to give to people in need, adopting a more plant-based diet and using less disposable products and more reusable items. Last year, the Fiqh Council of North America, which provides guidance to Muslims on the continent, called for Muslim investment firms to develop fossil fuel-free portfolios that include investments in clean energy.

## Advertisement

The U.N. has produced guidelines to help houses of worship reduce energy use and become more sustainable. With buildings responsible for roughly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, the U.N. said green adaptations by the globe's estimated 100 million-plus houses of worship would be "a massive demonstration of commitment to sustainability."

Said Iyad Abumoghli, director of the U.N. Environment Programme's Faith for Earth Initiative, "Our challenge is not that we don't know what to do — it's how quickly we can do it. ... We're calling on everyone — countries, cities, the private sector, individuals, and faith-based organizations to become part of the flourishing global interfaith movement that is increasingly bringing people together to protect and sustain life on Earth."

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