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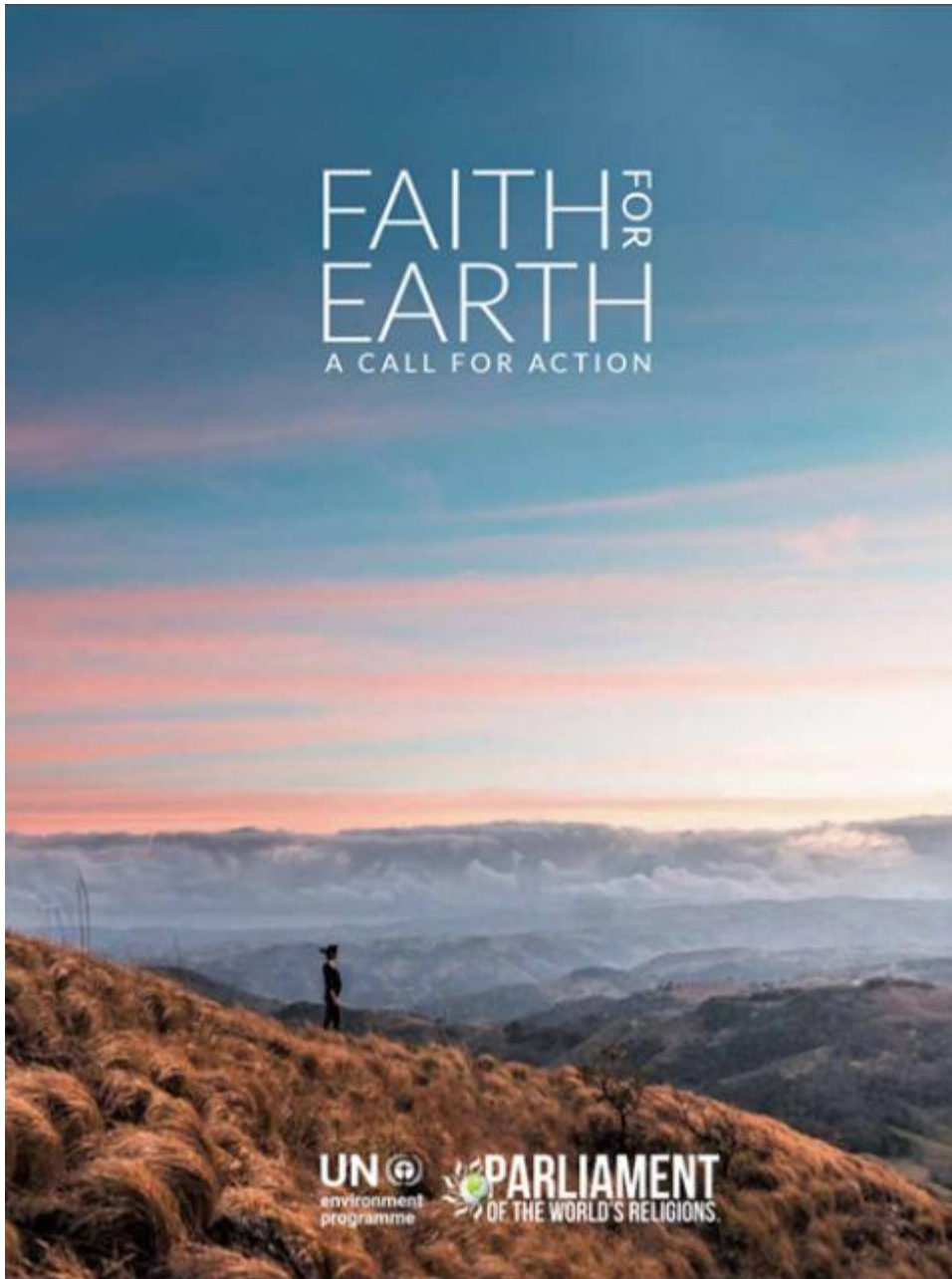
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The world is home to many religions, yet there is common ground in the belief that the Earth, itself a common home, must be respected and protected in the face of growing environmental threats.



"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 opportunities to understand the individual, personally responsible as for life, then wisdom to learn, through the natural passage — faith, practice, stewardship, death, and rebirth. We learn to create as those who do not know, and each one of us is the beginning.

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 permission. We ask for permission again before digging to bury the dead so that her child may remain here for good. Some have even known as the children of the Earth, and a woman's womb is said to be able to be added to another to create and to be reborn.

When every nation and continent is united to those who have water in spirit and ground into the ground who call the earth Mother Earth, and the elements, and breathing their breath upon all people. Earth and spirit play an important part to the African idea. When in a dream a person sees her hands, she is breathing water — not leaving all to the great earth.

The one of African religion is in the presence between the spirit, Earth, the spirit world, water, and the environment. In African belief to the African spirit, we believe that Earth is a gift to us. We are made by Earth and we are changed with taking care of it and having it in a larger world. We are not made, it is Earth, and Earth will not take any Earth to itself.

— John Deere (from "The Spirit of Earth")

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

Indigenous Spirituality
Indigenous spirituality is a term used to describe the spiritual beliefs and practices of indigenous peoples. It often involves a deep connection to the land and a sense of community.

Body Paint
Body paint is a traditional form of art used by many indigenous cultures. It is often made from natural materials and is used to decorate the body for ceremonial purposes.

Water
Water is a vital resource for all life. In many cultures, it is considered sacred and is treated with great respect.

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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 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.

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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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