

The theme for the 2008 lecture series poses and seeks to answer the question: what are the strengths and weaknesses from within religious traditions for addressing the environmental crisis and the human suffering that it causes?

Sub-themes are:

Dominant religious traditions have been limited in their response to the environmental crisis, world-wide.

Yet, religious traditions and faith groups hold great unrealized potential to educate and inspire the public to action.

The greater Burlington area, with its rich academic, scientific, and environmental advocacy organizations and resources, can model inspired citizen action based on core religious values.

Following each lecture, a skilled facilitator will ask the questions: "What did you hear? What actions will you/your congregation take in response?"

As a follow-up the proceedings may be collected into an edited volume or DVD.

**greening
our
religions**

**AN INTERFAITH RESPONSE
TO OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS**

A SERIES OF 5 LECTURES ➔

Ascension Lutheran Church
95 Allen Rd., South Burlington
(between Spear Street & Shelburne Road)

All begin at 7:00 p.m.

A SERIES OF 5 LECTURES

*How do faith traditions inform
your response to the environmental crisis?*

- APRIL 6:** Islam, Dr. Saleem Ali, UVM
APRIL 13: Christianity, The Rev. Nancy Wright,
Ascension Lutheran Church
APRIL 20: Native American, Dr. Kenneth Mello, UVM
APRIL 27: Judaism, Dr. Rebecca Gould, Middlebury College
MAY 4: Buddhism, Dr. Stephanie Kaza, UVM

Dr. Saleem H. Ali (April 6) is Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Natural Resources, and on the adjunct faculty of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies. For the 2007-2008 academic year, he is also serving as the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in Natural Resources at the University of Vermont. His research focuses on the causes and consequences of environmental conflicts and how ecological factors can promote peace. He is also on the visiting faculty for the United Nations mandated University for Peace (Costa Rica), where he teaches a course on Indigenous Environment and Development Conflicts. Much of his empirical research has focused on environmental conflicts in the mineral sector and he is the author of *Mining, the Environment and Indigenous Development Conflicts* (University of Arizona Press, 2003). His most recent edited volume is *Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution* (MIT Press, 2007).

Dr. Ali is also a member of the expert advisory group on environmental conflicts for the United Nations Environment Programme with a specific

interest in transboundary conservation zones. He has promoted environmental education in madrassahs (Islamic religious schools) and used techniques from environmental planning to study the rise of these institutions in his ethnic homeland – Pakistan, under a grant from the United States Institute of Peace.

The Rev. Nancy Wright (April 13) is pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, So. Burlington, where she is concerned to strengthen the local church and foster leadership toward justice, community ministry, and care for creation. She completed an M. Div. at Union Theological Seminary in New York and an M.A. in Environmental Conservation Education at New York University. Previously, she served as Program Associate at Earth Ministry, Seattle, which fostered care-for-creation efforts in over 100 regional churches, and as Associate in Environment at CODEL, Coordination in Development, which promoted sustainable development projects around the world. She coauthored *Ecological Healing: A Christian Vision* (Orbis, 1993) and has published on spirituality and the environment.

Dr. Kenneth Mello (April 20) has a joint appointment in the Department of Religion and the ALANA/U.S. Ethnic Studies department. He is of Passamaquoddy descent and specializes in the study of Native American religious traditions. His research focuses on contemporary Native American religious identity, particularly among native people in urban settings and small communities outside of the traditional "spotlight." His other research interests include sacred space, environmental philosophy, the role and function of myth and oral narratives in Native American religious life, puberty and initiation ceremonies, ethnic religious traditions in the United States, and religion in Diaspora. He completed a B.A. and an M.A. in Religion at Colgate University, an M.A. in American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona, and a Ph.D. in Native American Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Rebecca Kneale Gould (April 27) is Associate Professor of Religion and Environmental Studies at Middlebury College where she teaches courses on Religion and Nature, Environmental Ethics, Religion and Social Change in America, Simplicity in American Culture and American Religious History. Her book, *At Home in Nature: Modern Homesteading and Spiritual Practice in America*, was published by The University of California Press in 2005. *At Home in Nature* is an ethnographic and historical study of the spiritual dimensions of back-to-the-land experiments based on research she conducted while living and working at the homestead of Helen and Scott Nearing. She is currently engaged as co-writer and scholarly consultant for *Heaven on Earth: A Documentary Film Project on Spirit and Nature* (www.heavenonearthfilm.com). This project dovetails with an on-going research project begun in 2002: "Religion on the Ground: Environmentalism and Religious Institutions," which has received funding

from the Louisville Institute, the Lily Endowment and the Mellon Foundation.

Dr. Gould is a recent fellow in the Young Scholars Program of the Center for American Religion at IU-IUPUI. She writes and speaks on a variety of topics, primarily religious environmentalism but also, simplicity movements, time famine in American culture, New England Transcendentalism, American Judaism (especially "eco-Judaism"), religious pluralism and the concept of "slow religion." She is a Board Member of two national non-profit initiatives: The Simplicity Forum and Take Back Your Time and serves on the Board of Advisors for GreenFaith, the Society of Religion, Nature and Culture and The Good Life Center.

Dr. Stephanie Kaza (May 4) is Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont where she teaches Intro to Environmental Studies, Unlearning Consumerism, Religion and Ecology, Ecofeminism, and other ethics-related courses. She co-founded the Environmental Council at University of Vermont, a campus-wide consortium on sustainability, and advises graduate and undergraduate research on related topics. Dr. Kaza is the 2003 winner of the UVM Kroeps-Maurisch award for excellence in teaching. She has been an active participant in Buddhist-Christian dialogue and served recently as president of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies. Her works include *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume* (2005), *Dharma Rain: Sources for Buddhist Environmentalism* (2000, co-edited with Kenneth Kraft), and *The Attentive Heart: Conversations with Trees* (1993). Her newest book, *Mindfully Green: A Personal and Spiritual Guide to Whole Earth Thinking*, will be released in December 2008.

The grassroots Voices for the Lake project – brought to the community by ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center, at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, will be offering participants the opportunity to videotape their thoughts, ideas and comments on the environmental issues facing our area. These videos will be appearing on the ECHO YouTube channel for others to share in the discussion.