

Is nature just a provider of 'ecosystem services' that we should control and oversee as managers? Or is humanity only part of the 'integrity of nature'? Are humans the stewards of Creation or children of Mother Earth Bodhisattva? Should the earth be understood as Gaia, fighting back against the shame of environmental destruction in self-defense? Others say that they are in a mystical connection with their own piece of earth, which they have to defend against outsiders.

These are examples of religiously-based ideas about the relationship between humans and nature that we wish to investigate.

We will also analyze what actors are doing in the name of religion.

One example is the colonization of the United States of America 200 years ago by Europeans, who have tried to eradicate Native Americans in the name of a 'Divine Providence'. Today, Thai environmental monks defend forest-dwelling small-scale farmers (and themselves) from both capitalist-industrial forest destruction and environmentalists who view farmers as perils rather than protectors of the woods. Followers of various religions write and sign joint statements on the conservation of biodiversity and against climate change as a sign of the quest for global unity for the preservation of the ecological balance. Nevertheless, according to the Guardian (02.02.2018), an average of four environmentalists were murdered every week in 2017 worldwide. What role does religion play here as well?

During this one-day conference, experts from various disciplines will come together to examine and discuss the religious and spiritual aspects of peace and violence in contexts of the conservation of nature. How do peace or violence relate to which notions of religion and nature and for whom (people, but also plants, animals, insects ...) should peace be established, and against whom or what is violence practiced?

This conference will take place on Thursday, September 12, 2019, 9 am

-5 pm in the Melanchthon Academy in Cologne. The conference is part of the "Interreligious Nature Conservation Week in Cologne and Environs"

(8-15 September 2019). (A calendar of events from the year 2018 can be found on the website of the Abrahamic Forum at

<https://abrahamisches-forum.de/religioese-naturschutzwoche-2/>.) For up-to-date information, visit the Facebook page for the Interreligious Nature Conservation Week

(https://www.facebook.com/Naturschutzwoche/?epa=SEARCH_BOX). We will offer the possibility of climate compensation to offset the CO2 emissions of the meeting. We will also enjoy lunch together with "saved" vegetables from Foodsharing and visit the new communal garden of the Carthusian Church. At the end of the day, a workshop on non-violent communication will be offered.

Please send your contribution of 600 words with selected bibliography by June 30 to Dr. Carrie B. Dohe, Philipps University of Marburg, Department of Religious Studies, dohe@staff.uni-marburg.de.