



Climate Changed Podcast Discussion Guide

Season One, Episode One

Created by Tyler Mark Nelson

Guest: Rev. Mariama White-Hammond

Title: *How Do We Stop Doing Things that Make No Sense?*

Listening excerpt: 11:55–18:40

Welcoming Activity

Recall a place that is special to you, then think of the reasons why you find meaning in this place. Introduce yourself to the group by filling in the blanks of this prompt: “My name is _____ and a place that I consider meaningful is _____. One reason why it’s meaningful to me is _____.”

Introduction

To Climate Changed Podcast

The BTS Center's new podcast, *Climate Changed*, offers intimate interviews and conversations around some of the most pressing questions about faith, life, and climate change. Hosted by [Ben Yosua-Davis](#), Director of Applied Research, and [Nicole Diroff](#), Program Director, and produced by [Peterson Toscano](#), the podcast features acclaimed guests who are exploring what spiritual leadership looks and feels like in a climate-changed world.

To Episode

In a thoughtful, thought-provoking conversation with our hosts, Nicole Diroff and Ben Yosua-Davis, Rev. Mariama talks about the systems which have shaped us, the hold that certain ways of doing and being have on us, and what a different way of doing and being could mean for us and for our world. She engages the relevance of the Christian church in understanding the roots of climate change and offers ways of reorienting our understandings of the more-than-human world in order to reorient away from a disconnected, distracted consumer culture.

Discussion Questions

1. Rev. Mariama says that “[w]e have gotten confused about what things actually matter.” She continues: “Climate change is just an indication that we have chosen wrong again and again and again.” What are some examples of the wrong decisions that contributed to the present climate crisis? Can you think of any possible *right* decisions?
2. To describe the disruptive activity of humans around the globe, Rev. Mariama uses the metaphor of Earth as the mother of a household of children, each child a unique species. Our species has become like a misbehaving child who terrorizes others in the terrestrial house. Now our species is reckoning whether we can continue existing as a member of the household. What do you find useful about this metaphor for the harmful lifestyles of humans? What would you add or change about this metaphor to acknowledge that not all humans are equally responsible for these issues?

3. Respond to Rev. Mariama's vital question: "What does it mean for us to be at the heart of the questions people are asking and the crisis that we are in, so much so, that the empire actually might want to take us out, 'cause then we could be in good company with Jesus?"
4. Rev. Miriama describes how present generations' pursuit of an individualistic and consumeristic good life amounts to stealing from future generations, something that Nicole calls "intergenerational injustice" and Ben summarizes as pillaging the future for the sake of the present. Nonhuman animals and plants instinctually act in ways that benefit their offspring. Yet the lifestyles of many humans today are counterproductive to the flourishing of younger and future generations. How might the effects of your own life contribute to this stealing? How much does culture and contemporary economics influence or require you to choose this way?
5. Economy has been used to excuse the destruction of ecology, says Rev. Mariama. What are a couple ways that your own religious/spiritual tradition might confront the culture of consumerism and deified market worship that surrounds (and permeates) our lives and communities? Nicole and Ben give the example of baptism as a ritual that could threaten empire.

Closing Activity

Slowly read aloud this excerpt from Maya Ward's "Getting in on the Making."

We care for ourselves through tending our connections. Our love for this world, our kindredness with it all, and the actions that arise from love — these must weave a vessel that could nest a new culture. Through everyday acts of attentiveness, from aligning with the other as kin, change will come. Practices of kinship involves a conscious restorying of our irrevocable entanglements. All things are born from this system of earth and sun, a system entangled among endless stars, the dying of which gave birth to the elements of all our bodies. The root of the word kin means "to give birth." Kin is our intimacy with our things, our big and colorful family emerging as and from the eros force: we are this, noun and verb. It's a wild and sexy thing we've arisen from. All things are woven into it; threaded, knotted, bound. And within the weave we dance.

(Maya Ward, "Getting In On The Making" in *Kinship: Belonging In A World of Relations*, vol. 5, edited by Gavin Van Horn, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and John Hausdoerffer)

After the group absorbs these words, provide two or three minutes of silence for everyone to reflect upon the earthly entanglements in which they are woven and to give thanks for these relations.