



“It’s going to take a big toll because our natural survival skills have been weakened. But they’re not gone, and we are plugged into a powerful and resourceful living planet.”

—Joanna Macy

STUDY GUIDE GEEZ 54: CLIMATE JUSTICE

ABOUT GEEZ

Geez magazine is a quarterly, nonprofit, ad-free, print magazine about social justice, art, and activism for people at the fringes of faith in both Canada and the U.S.

Our aim is to nurture a community of faith-oriented folks that are concerned about the environment, peace, racial and gender justice, decolonization, and other social concerns. At best, we offer a prophetic and provocative voice to the institutional church and a pastoral presence to those laboring at the front lines of social change.

The work of Geez is storytelling. We believe that stories are crucial to the ongoing struggles for justice – that they are part of what sustains us, gives us rest, and offers hope. Stories come out of movement and can be gifted back to movement. Geez is committed to not just raging against oppression, but offering the hope, beauty, and power alive in local communities doing their work.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

Geez 54: Climate Justice acknowledges the truth: we are facing certain collapse. How will humanity respond? Will this be our demise? Or will we shift into a new life sustaining era?

We ground the issue in the understanding that climate change is inextricably intertwined with systems of colonialism, exploitation, and genocide. If we are to truly move towards a (re)generative way of living, we know that a full transformation will be necessary.

Joanna Macy, an elder in peace and ecological movements, shared her journey through collapse by leading retreats that explored Jem Bendell’s 4 R’s from “Deep Adaptation:” resilience, relinquishment, restoration, reconciliation. We offer that as a framework for this study guide.

806 **Part 6** – Elders and Children Lay their Hands Upon Us Now by Lydia Wylie-Kellermann

“**Geez Out Loud**” is a listening series that offers audio accompaniment by the author for select stories, geezmagazine.org/geez-out-loud.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide begs to be done in a circle of beloveds. Alone it is easy to get stuck in our anxiety and grief. With other good souls beside autumn’s wild flowers, the collective work of grief moves us towards creativity and resilience as we move into the next chapter of humanity.

Part 1: Resilience, what do we want to hold onto?

Part 2: Relinquishment, what do we want to let go of?

Part 3: Restoration, what do we want to restore from the past?

Part 4: Reconciliation, what do we need to make peace with?

Whether you are in conversation with folks in a classroom, at a dining room table, or on the internet, be mindful that this work is not just intellectual but work of the heart. Be gentle with one another along our different journeys.

In the classroom: Instructors may assign readings and work through the material in parts. Discussion questions can be moderated aloud or assigned as reflection questions.

In a book group: Form a circle of trusted friends and work through the material together. Read excerpts out loud, share reactions, allow the questions to steer the conversation when needed.

On social media: Either access a trusted forum or group or tag friends and organizations with whom you wish to spark discussion. Share the articles that are accessible online and pull out your favorite quotes from the print issue. Work through the questions with affirmations and challenges that create room for growth. Resist a social media culture of invisibility, arrogance, and attack.

In your journal: Use the study guide questions as prompts to dig deeper into the issue through focused reflections.

For copies of
Geez 54: Climate
Justice, visit
geezmagazine.org/store.

PART I RESILIENCE

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 24 – Principles of Environmental Justice

Page 35 – EcoFaith Recovery and the Practices for Awakening Leadership by Solveig Nilsen-Goodin

Page 43 – A New Afrikan Speaks on Climate by Will See (listen: geezmagazine.org)

Page 30 – “Grief Rituals,” 2018, cut paper illustration, 11x14 by Molly Costello



Page 31 – Zeitgeist of Grief by Lane Patriquin (listen: geezmagazine.org)

PART 2 RELINQUISHMENT

RECOMMENDED READING

Cover – “Sinking or Rising?” photograph by Daniel Wylie-Eggert



Page 12 – Faulty Indictment in a Man-Made Era by Ariel Kroon

Page 27 – War in the Anthropocene: A Story from the Mekong by Sarah and Jonathan Nahar

Page 21 – Graphic story by Katie Blanchard



DEFINITIONS

Resilience: ability to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and adapt to the changes in our climate

Just transition: set of principles and practices that equitably build economic and political power to shift from an extractive to a regenerative economy through reparations

Environmental justice: fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, national origin, or income when developing, implementing, and enforcing environmental laws, regulations, and policies

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In this time of transition from a killing society to a radiant, renewing society, what are the values and behaviours in our culture that we have that we want to hang onto, to use and keep? Brainstorm as long of a list as you can.
2. What is the relationship between resilience and grief? Is grief a practice that we have and can deepen as a crucial part of this work?
3. How are communities of colour, through environmental justice and just transition frameworks, leading the way in your communities?

ACTIVITY

1. Spend some time with your grief. Let it pour out. Write about it. Cry about it. Sing about it. Draw about it. Take it seriously.
2. Look at Nilsen-Goodin’s “Seven Practices for Awakening Leadership” (p. 36). Write down ways you are engaging with each practice. Write down actions you want to commit to moving forward.

DEFINITIONS

Relinquishment: people and communities letting go of certain assets, behaviours, and beliefs where retaining them could make matters worse

Anthropocene: the current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As we journey through collapse, what values and behaviours do we want to let go of that no longer serve us? Brainstorm a long list. How does it feel to imagine releasing these societal norms?
2. In a spirit of relinquishment, reflect upon the cover art. What is sinking away? What *should* sink away? Are the words Climate Justice sinking away past all hope? Or are they just dawning over the horizon?
3. Kroon writes, “The Anthropocene still assigns environmental guilt to every human living today, including women, the poor, the young, and the racially and sexually marginalized folk – people who have been historically and economically barred from partaking in the benefits yielded by violent colonial extractionist policies, and instead left to endure the slow violence of environmental degradation around them.” What identities of privilege and oppression do you hold? How do/might these identities affect your experiences of climate change?

ACTIVITY

1. Take that long list of values and behaviours you brainstormed that you want to relinquish and find a way to ritually let them go. Return the writing on paper to the earth. Build a fire and collectively read and burn them.
2. If anthropocene is the *current* geological age defined by the human influence of destruction, write a definition of what you could envision the next geological age to look like.

PART 3 RESTORATION

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 11 – “The Land Loves Us Back,” 2017, cut paper illustration, 16x20 by Molly Costello



Page 19 – Water: Our First Medicine by Randy Woodley

Page 48 – Fermenting Transformation by Lara Therrien Boulos

DEFINITIONS

Restoration: rediscovering attitudes and approaches to life that our colonial, fossil fuel-based civilization has eroded

Colonialism: the imperialist expansion of Europe into the rest of the world over the last four hundred years, resulting in systems of control that include settler occupation of the land, brutal subjugation of Indigenous peoples, and exploitation of resources

Decolonization: a multi-dimensional process including: liberation from oppressive colonial regimes, return of ancestral lands and reparations to Indigenous peoples, efforts towards Indigenous sovereignty, re-learning and re-framing of histories, reconnection and healing with the land. (Pegi Eyers)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who are your ancestors (both biological and spiritual)? What values and behaviours of theirs have you lost? What do you want to bring back?
2. When capitalism collapses, what skills do you want to know that embody the transition, bring us closer to the land, and help communities thrive?
3. Who are the traditional stewards of the land you are currently on? What needs to be restored that has been systemically and violently destroyed by colonialism? Can it be recovered?
4. Woodley writes Indigenous people should lead “because they have not been cradled in the bosom of Enlightenment-bound dualism [and] American mythology,” How do those of us nurtured by colonialism take responsibility and lift Indigenous voices?

ACTIVITY

1. Spend time with elders in your family or community. Ask them about the skills they learned or remember from their childhood. Listen to the stories. Perhaps receive a lesson.
2. After reflecting on Boulos’ piece, pick some embodied work to do with others. Garden. Preserve food. Knit. Sew. Make soap. Play music. Bake pies. Make bread from scratch.

PART 4 RECONCILIATION

RECOMMENDED READING

Page 8 – Elderword by Rose Berger

Page 40 – Watershed Eucharist by Laurel Dykstra (listen: geezmagazine.org)

Page 51 – An Ode to Coming Destruction by Dan MacKenzie

Page 45 – “Built for This,” 2017, cut paper illustration, 16x20 by Molly Costello



DEFINITIONS

Reconciliation: moving through a process to arrive at a state of hope and vision despite imminent societal collapse

Active hope: a practice – something we do rather than have – of taking in a clear view of reality, identifying what we hope for in terms of the direction, and taking steps to move ourselves or our situation in that direction

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What and with whom do we want to make peace with in this ending time?
2. Do you have a spiritual relationship with Eucharist? Following Dykstra’s lead, what would it look like to see Eucharist as an embodiment of reconciliation between land and people?
3. Who are our elders (human and non-human) who we need to spend some time with? What would it require for us to really listen to them?
4. How do we reconcile with the earth? How might we make reparations to the land for the violence that has been inflicted upon it?
5. What does Molly Costello’s artwork raise within you? Is there an artistic expression around climate change, grief, or justice that you could commit to?

ACTIVITY

1. Re-write Watershed Eucharist with your own watershed’s native plants, waterways, and animals.
2. Following Berger’s reflection, spend some time being particular with your own affections for a living being. Run your fingers upon it. Write a stream of consciousness poem.
3. Turn the back cover into a protest sign. Take it to a demonstration. Send us a picture.