



# Interfaith Power & Light

A Religious Response to Global Warming

## Noah

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We are all familiar with the story of Noah and the ark. Many of us with children have told the story or purchased toys and picture books of the ark and the animals – two of each. It is a cute story to spark our children's imagination and to teach right from wrong, what may happen to those who do wrong, of the power of God and portrays in a simple way what it is to have a relationship with our God. But it can be a powerful story for us in our day who struggle with an array of environmental issues not least of which is global climate change.

Did you ever wonder why Noah was asked to get two of every species? I tend to think if I were Noah I might respond to God something like this: God you created the world and all it holds. You're telling me your faithful servant to build an ark big enough to carry two of every species in it. Could you just lead them all to a mountain top and let me build a smaller ark for my family and I and enough provision to last till the flood subsides? I mean it would be a whole less work for me and you could do it in a blink of an eye. Or maybe you could just let them die in the flood and bring them back to life. Surely you could develop a better plan than I could. If I lived to be 900 I don't know if I could do all you are asking of me.

Be careful what you ask for in prayer you might get it – didn't Noah live to be 900? So what was with God's plan and all the work he asked of Noah. It seems obvious to me that God wanted Noah's help in saving His creation. God created male and female so we would live in community that we may know God in each other. God's creation is another community of animate and inanimate that we humans are a part of. We gain our sustenance from it and if we look closely we may come to know God from creation.

The dominion that God granted to Adam and Eve he passed to Noah and through them God passes that dominion to us. God has imbued all of creation including us with God's creative capacity such that it all continues to evolve. Over billions of years life evolves from primordial soup to plants and animals. A huge asteroid crashes into the earth 65 million years ago and in a flash life on earth evolves in a new way. Over a few million years humans evolve from swinging in trees to the industrial age. Over a few short centuries of the industrial age what has our dominion of creation wrought? Will we be likened in the future to a huge asteroid of mere chance or to God's faithful servant Noah helping to pass God's creation on to future generations?

Will a future Noah need to live to 900 to accomplish his task or will a few short years suffice? Or can we, all of us, be the Noah of the moment. Can each of us become faithful stewards of God's creation and do what we need to do to maintain the quality of God's creation? How high do the waters need to rise before we come to a consensus that this may be real? Perhaps global climate change is the result of

natural causes and not from rising CO2. Then perhaps it is like the random act of the asteroid. For the sake of our brothers and sisters around the globe especially those who have few resources we need to ask what is our duty toward them? Is there something we could do that will help make their lot better? What are we willing to risk in the notion that climate change is a nonreality? How do we pretend to be a community of nations when nearly every nation but our own strives to take the problem seriously? Indeed how do we pretend to be a community at all? Or more importantly how do we pretend to be followers of the One God creator of the universe, divine parent to every human and to the earth itself?