

SESSION

3

THE COMMON CREATION STORY
AS SACRED REVELATION**GATHER**

As you wait for this session to begin, sit with one other person and share your thoughts on the fol-

lowing topic: *What do you think about when you stare out into a starlit sky?*

OPEN**Scripture****Psalm 19:1–4**

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

Maori Chant

The Maori people of New Zealand were singing about creation long before Europeans came with the Bible:

I (Voice One)

From the conception the increase.
From the increase the swelling.
From the swelling the thought.
From the thought the remembrance.
From the remembrance the desire.

II (Voice Two)

The word became fruitful:
It dwelt with the feeble glimmering:
It brought forth night:
The great night, the long night,
The lowest night, the highest night,
The thick night to be felt,
The night to be touched, the night unseen.
The night following on,
The night ending in death.

There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

III (Voice Three)

From the nothing the begetting:
From the nothing the increase:
From the nothing the abundance:
The power of increasing, the living breath
It dwelt with the empty space,
It produced the firmament which is above us.

IV (Voice Four)

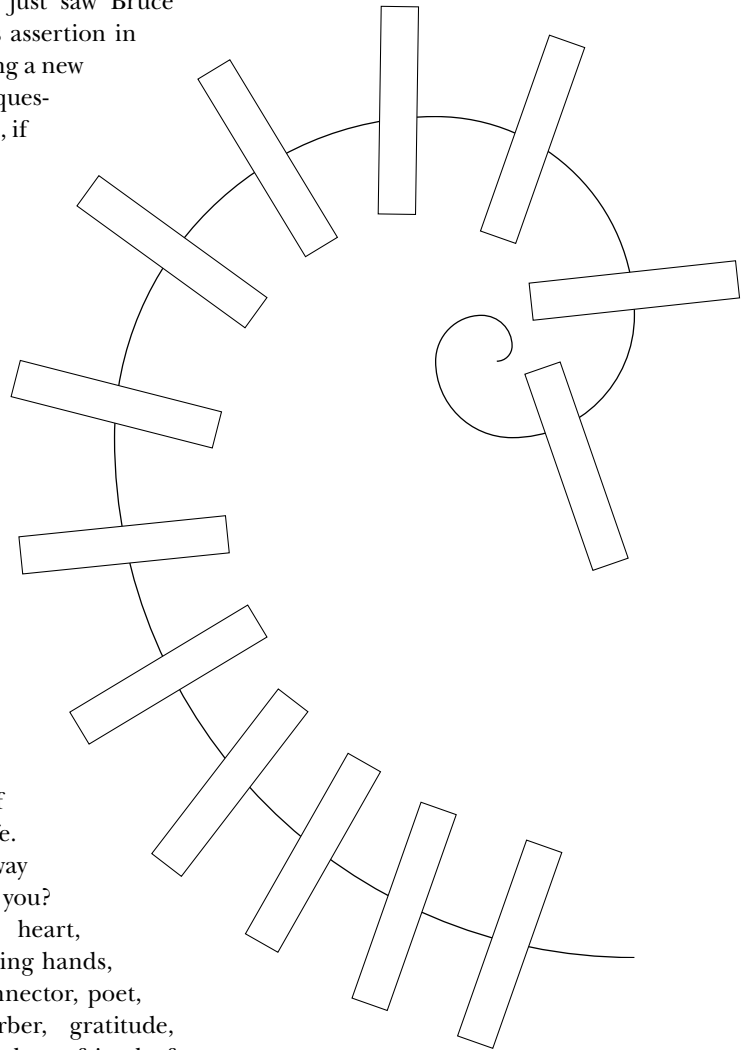
The atmosphere which floats above the earth.
The great firmament above us, the spread-out
space dwelt with the early dawn.
Then the moon sprang forth.
The atmosphere above dwelt with the glowing sky.
Then the sun sprang forth.
They were thrown up above as the chief eyes of heaven.
Then the sky became light.
The early dawn, the early day.
The midday. The blaze of day from the sky.

FROM *TE IKA A MAUI: NEW ZEALAND & ITS INHABITANTS* BY
RICHARD A. TAYLOR (WILLIAM MACINTOSH, LONDON, 1870)

WALKING THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH

By this point in the session you will have already walked the 13.7 billion-year story of evolution. In the DVD presentation you just saw Bruce Sanguin reminding us of God's assertion in Isaiah's time: "Behold! I am doing a new thing." Then Sanguin asks the question, "Where is it springing forth, if not through you?"

We are going to follow the evolutionary spiral again, but this time in a more personal way. This time the reflection will be about your own evolving life story, a journey that echoes the story of the universe. To the right, you will find a spiral pattern. Think of that spiral as the evolutionary path you just walked. On that spiral drawing you will see space for 13 words – one word for each of the 13 billion years of our evolutionary journey. Write one word or phrase in each of these spaces. The words will represent aspects of the creative energy of your life. What words represent the way that evolution flows through you? (Examples: music, listening heart, empathy, carpentry, piano, healing hands, organizer, go with the flow, connector, poet, explore, radical voice, disturber, gratitude, observer, gardener, gets things done, friend of birds, lover) When you have had time to write the 13 words in your booklet, you will silently walk the circle, pausing 13 times to reflect on each word in turn.



ANTICIPATE

On page 77 of the book, Sanguin offers us three examples of a writing model that we are going to use between now and the next session. Here's one of his examples: "A supernova explodes in some far-flung corner of the universe. Billions of years later, driving to work, your heart is broken open listening to k.d. lang's cover of Leonard Cohen's song *Hallelujah*."

Your task is to write a statement like the ones you find on page 77 in which a cosmic reality is juxtaposed with an intimate moment from your here and now 21st-century living. Please bring it to the next session.

In preparation for the next session, please read Chapter 4: "Evolution as Divine Unfolding."

CLOSE

Litany

Psalm 97 (selected verses)

ONE: God rules: there's something to shout over!

ALL: Mainlands and islands – celebrate!

ONE: Bright clouds and storm clouds circle 'round the Holy One;

ALL: Right and justice anchor God's reign.

ONE: Fire blazes out before God,

ALL: Flaming high up the craggy mountains.

ONE: God's lightnings light up the world;

ALL: Earth, wide-eyed, trembles in awe.

ONE: The mountains take one look at God

ALL: And melt, melt like wax before Earth's Lord.

ONE: The galaxies announce that everything will be set right,

ALL: And everyone will see it happen – glorious!

ONE: All who serve handcrafted gods will be sorry –

ALL: You, God, are High God of the cosmos,

ONE: Light-seeds are planted in the souls of God's people,

ALL: Joy-seeds are planted in good heart-soil.

ONE: So, God's people, shout praise to God,

ALL: Give thanks to our Holy God!

FROM *THE MESSAGE* BY EUGENE H. PETERSON, 1995, NAVPRESS PUBLISHING GROUP