



# Caring for the Earth: THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO

April 3, 2019

## AIR AND SKY'S BEGINNING

There is no day in our biblical account of creation on which air was created.

Scientists believe air was a byproduct of anaerobic creatures who, by creating oxygen through their own respiratory process, made themselves extinct and made way for successful biodiversity.

Compared to the tangible elements of soil and water, air is difficult to understand until we are without. We take it for granted, easily ignore its problems, and only "see" it when its effects are felt (wind or air currents).

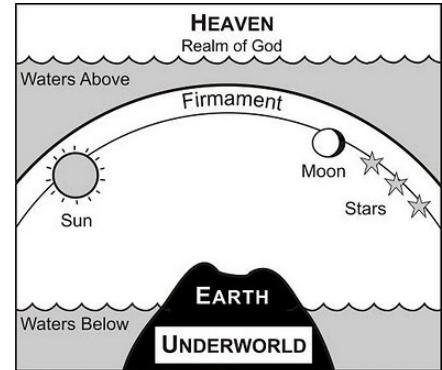
Air – oxygen – warmth – these are the primordial elements of life & without them there is no life.

## BIBLICAL COSMOLOGY

Grounded, by Diana Butler Bass

What does it really mean to say that God is in the heavens?

Heaven/Sky/Clouds/Dust/Air: "heavens and the earth," "end of the heavens," "out of the heavens," beginning of rain, God in the heavens, "birds of heaven," "heaven rejoices



## RUAH AND PNEUMA... WIND, BREATH, SPIRIT

What is the role of wind/breath/spirit in the passage? What is the source of it? What is your response to the passage? (How does it make you feel?): Genesis 1:1-2; 2:1-7 | Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 | Ezekiel 37:7-14 | John 19:28-30

## THE CREATIVE PROCESS

The process for creative planning is a useful tool for brainstorming individually or in a group. Imagine an hour glass: after goals (and sometimes limitations) are established, the process begins at the top with brainstorming many ideas, narrows in the selection to one idea and then expands on that idea at the bottom of the hour glass.

1. **GOALS.** Identify the topic or activity area and set goals to plan within. Goals give us guidelines or parameters for brainstorming & keep us all on the same page. Goals might include known budgets, overall "feel" of a program or plan (fun or lighthearted, earth-shattering, etc.), who to include, etc.
2. **BRAINSTORM.** The top of the hourglass. Encourage everyone to share all their ideas without judgement (avoid laughing, moaning, or saying "that's great" or "we can't do that"). Also encourage people to add on to other

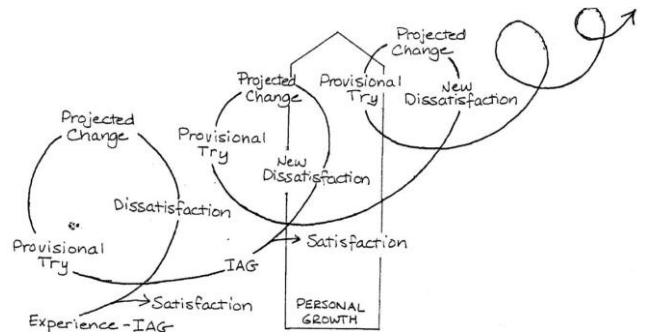
- ideas. Record all ideas where the group can see them. Remember: the wild and crazy ideas inspire more great ideas.
3. **SELECTION.** When the ideas stop flowing, use consensus or another crowd sourcing method to select the idea or ideas that are most interesting to the group at that time. Narrow the interest to one idea or group of related ideas. Remind the group that “we’re not saying ‘no’ to any ideas, we’re saying ‘that’s not the right idea for right now.’”
  4. **BUILD.** Now below the center of the hour glass, build on this one idea (or group of ideas).
    - a. Ask: how much of this do we really want to do? What comes first? What steps do we need to get to this idea/goal? How can we move from one phase to the next? How can we care for all people involved? How much time is needed? Who is going to do what part? What resources do we need? Where will all this happen?
    - b. Make the idea(s) broader, deeper, more involved, more wild, richer, exciting, or bigger, and possibly related to other previous ideas if relevant.
    - c. Remain positive!
  5. **TRY IT ON.** Take a critical look at the plan. Imagine living into the plan, looking for possible conflicts or problems. Find solutions to any possible conflicts or problems perceived.
  6. **DO IT!** Anytime a plan is implemented, it can be helpful to remember that it is a provisional try. A provisional try is one that is ... provisional! There is always room for evaluation, growth, improvement, change, and forgiveness. Remember to I-A-G the process and the plan along the way and after. See the models below!

### Learning from Experience

There are many models and theories to teach and understand learning from experience; this is just one!

There are three basic steps to Learning from Experience: Identify, Analyze, and Generalize.

- **IDENTIFY.** What is going on, what happened, how did you feel? Focus on the senses – what can you see, hear, or feel?
- **ANALYZE.** What caused what happened, what made it happen, or what resulted from it happening? Did the idea or process work? Where is there room for improvement?
- **GENERALIZE.** What can I learn from this experience that can be applied to this or other situations?



Once you have generalized the experience (often called I-A-G-ing an experience), you can apply that generalization or learning forward to other situations. If you were dissatisfied with the experience, you might try something different next time, called a PROJECTED CHANGE. The action you plan to take is called a PROVISIONAL TRY. After each provisional try, you can I-A-G the experience again and continue improving on the experience – continuing in this way (experience, dissatisfaction, projected change, and provisional try) is referred to as the Spiral Process of Learning.

## FINAL REFLECTION

Mary Oliver writes: “Instructions for living a life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”

Pay attention to earth and sky and spirit and breath and wind.

Begin identifying goals for environmental justice in your own home & life. Brainstorm ideas! Try some things out, evaluate, and try again.

## RESOURCES:

Butler Bass, Diana. *Grounded*. HarperCollins, 2015.