**Identifying Roadblocks to Environmental Action**

(adapted from Matthew Humphries essay, “A Pipeline Runs through Naboth’s Vineyard: From Abstraction in Cascadia” in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, Cascade Books 2016)

* Personalist roadblock: *We don’t have the right to advocate for large-scale change unless we are willing to undergo a complete and radical personal transformation first.* Common among conservative-leaning religious folk – the desire for congruity is commendable, but not sufficient in addressing systemic dimensions of climate catastrophe. In what ways might this “personalist” roadblock keep us/our communities from living into our collective-prophetic vocation?
* Dismissive/deferral roadblock: *It is someone else’s job to effect real social change – politicians, business owners, or some other “change maker.”* Why should any one of us stop eating meat or driving a car when meat consumption in Brazil and China is skyrocketing and India is adding thousands of cars to the roads daily?” The inverse of the previous approach, though similar in its divorcing of the personal/political, individual/systemic. In what ways might we be deferring responsibility?
* Resignation: *We are locked into the way the world is because we cannot imagine another way of life and/or because we don’t believe building an alternative is realistic. “*The tar sands *will* be extracted,” etc. This strengthens apathy about the possibility of change and betrays a lack of faith. What is at the root of our tendency towards resignation – theological assumptions, compassion fatigue, lack of vision/community? How do we maintain enthusiasm for the vision of eco-justice renewal in the long-term, and align our actions with the kind of world we want to see?

“All three of these assumptions blind us to our complacency and complicity, confirm our anxieties, and absolve us of our responsibility, while alienating us from the power of collective action.” How do we cultivate in ourselves what Joanna Macy calls “active hope” – that is, hope that doesn’t wait until the desired results are reasonably likely to start working, to start living out of *intention* rather than optimism or pessimism? Can we let this intention, and our conviction to live with integrity, be our guide, rather than our chances of success? Can we identify the roots, both within ourselves and collectively, of each of these roadblocks?

Wendell Berry: “The great obstacle is simply this: the conviction that we cannot change because we are dependent on what is wrong. But that is the addict’s excuse, and we know that it will not do.”