

## **Where are Your Feet?: A Movement in Coming to Know Your Place**

*(shared from Christmount Assembly, Black Mtn, NC)*

It is difficult to know where we are going, as a culture, as a world, as individuals, as a species if we do not first understand where we are. So many of us have sadly forgotten both our placed-ness and our creaturely-ness. We are perhaps not daily aware of this grief, but it shapes all our interactions with this wild and precious world of which we are a part. Reconnecting to the literal ground beneath our feet, and the cycles flowing in and around us can be a critical first step towards a deeper kind of knowing and respecting and tending.

- How many days until the moon is full?\*

- Where is your closest river? Of what watershed is it a part? What river does it flow into to get all the way to the ocean?

- Who picks up your trash? Where does it go? How far can you track it once it leaves your local waste management facility, or does it go straight into a landfill?

- Similarly, who picks up your recycling? Is it single stream or sorted? To what facility does it go from your home?

- What is the soil like where you live? Is it silty loam? Loamy sand? Sandy clay? Rocks and pebbles? Wet or dry?\*

- What geological processes have influenced the land where you live? Glaciers, volcanoes, earthquakes, rivers carving canyons?\*

- What animals share your place? Long-tailed weasel or white-tailed deer? Grey wolf or red fox or bobcat? Manatee or marmot or moose? What animals are extinct in your neck of the woods? Wolverine, grizzly bear, passenger pigeon, prairie dog?\*

- From where you are reading this, which direction is north? From what direction do the prevailing winds blow?\*

- What is the approximate elevation of your town/city/community?

- What is the average rainfall in your area per year? In what planting zone are you located? How long is the growing season?

- What are five agricultural plants in your region? Is it corn, soy, wheat, lettuce, squash, sweet potatoes? Or maybe oranges and lemons and grapes?\*

- Who are the indigenous communities who originally lived on this land? What is the language they speak? Have they been displaced? When was this land taken from them? Where are they now?

- What are three native tree species around you? If you can't name them, describe them. - What are the two or three most common birds you see in your place? What are their names? Do you know their calls? Do they live there year-round or do they migrate?

- What are your first wildflowers to typically bloom in spring? What trees are the first to change color in autumn (if you live in an area of deciduous trees with much colorful foliage...)

Questions marked with an asterisk are shared specifically from Steve Bouma-Prediger's *For the Beauty of the Earth*. All of these are meant to probe the question of whether our ecological perception of place goes deeper than a geopolitical knowledge of where we are. The other questions are ones that have been formed through conversations, readings and other collaborative efforts within this wider context and are now being shared through Christmount's programs and camps.