

Fodder available to make change

Eddy Hopkins • November 10, 2010

In a time of Kindles, Nooks and iPads, we need to ask a question: What are libraries for?

There is an old photo of a London library after the 1940 raid. It pictures three men standing like rock climbers on mounds of debris. The roof is caved except for a few beams, its ruins strewn on the ground between two impossibly intact walls of books.

The men are browsing the stacks.

Of course they are. When everything is falling apart, when nothing is what it used to be, what else can we do but turn to the library? There, in its sleepy stacks, are the seeds of a new world.

Editors Kathleen Dean Moore and Michael P. Nelson, along with the more than 80 contributors to "Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril," believe we are in the midst of a global crisis. America's heartland is eroding, coastal cities are threatened by rising sea levels and erratic climate threatens fragile, usually poor, villages.

The book brings together the testimony of theologians and religious leaders, naturalists, scientists, elected officials, business leaders, activists and writers, not in order to condemn humans, but to populate our imaginations about how to respond creatively and ethically to the challenge.

"We are called to do far more than change our light bulbs," said Moore, who will co-host a town hall event at 1:30 p.m. Sunday at First United Methodist Church in Fort Collins. The call is for new imaginations fueled by our "deepest values."

Environmental challenges are not readily solved by new legislation or different buying decisions, although these are important. The problem runs deeper. Humans must learn different practices, different ways of making homes, alternative forms of human community.

The Northern Colorado Faith Library, housed in the First United Methodist Church in Fort Collins, is no ordinary library. Where public libraries are broader

and bike libraries perhaps narrower, one could say that as a faith library, we specialize in possibilities.

Library materials may seem harmless, sitting idly on shelves. But what is more dangerous than a book? They are the seeds of overthrow.

The NCFL is excited to participate in the Sunday town hall event. We will go beyond diagnosing problems and together initiate the hard work of ensuring the sustainability of our community. The NCFL hopes to contribute to the imaginative fodder we need to get the ball rolling.

Eddy Hopkins is the resource center director for the Northern Colorado Faith Library.

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