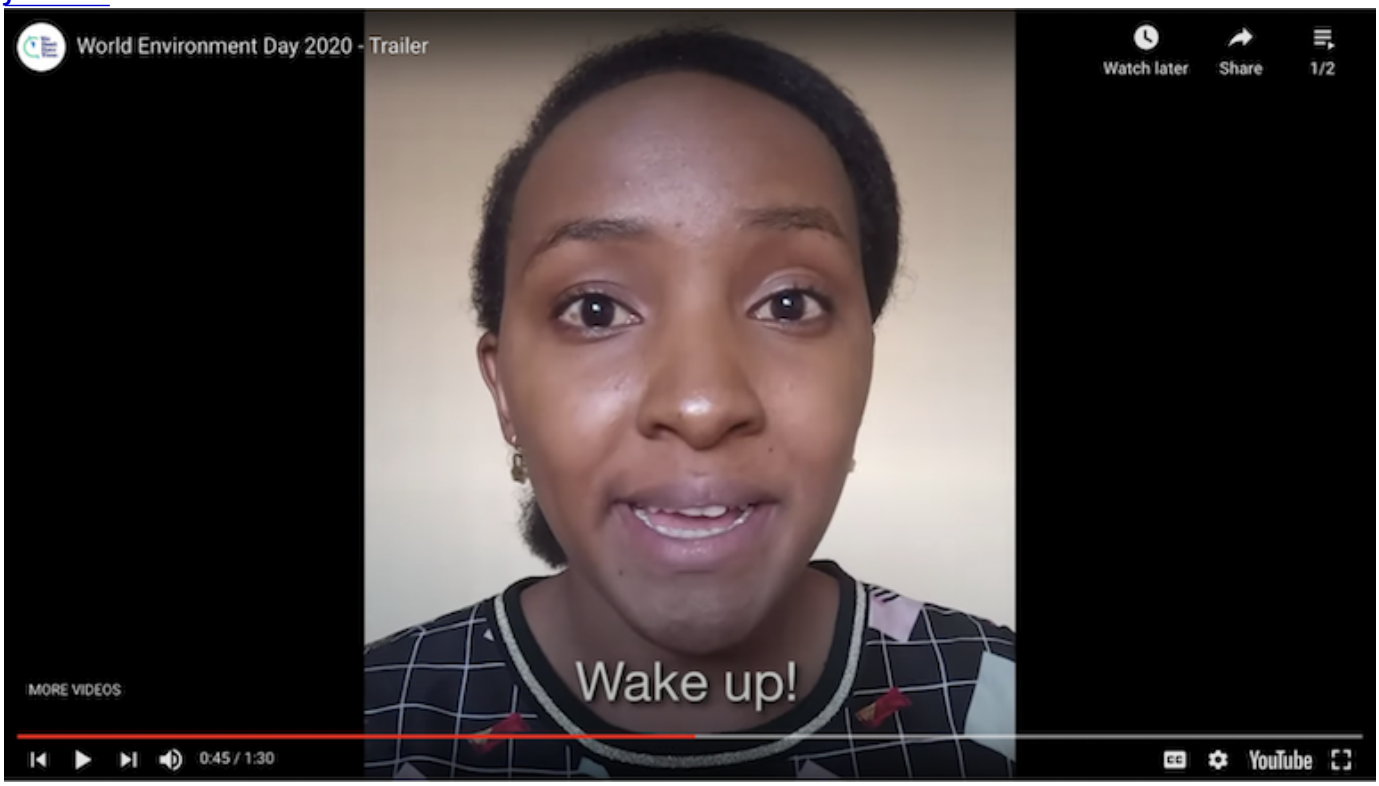
Justice



Screengrab from wedonthavetime.org, registration site for World Environment Day 2020



by Bill Mitchell

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June 4, 2020

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With the crises of police brutality, Covid-19 and climate change converging at an alarming rate, climate activists this week denounced the systemic racism that's killing people of color today and, as a result of global warming, threatening the lives of millions more in the years ahead.

Numerous studies have established that people of color have been disproportionately harmed by all three crises. The killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers on May 25, following the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery on Feb. 23 in Georgia and Breonna Taylor on March 13 in Kentucky, has prompted an unprecedented response around the world.

Mr. Floyd's death appears to have awakened more people to the reality of such racism, much as climate activists struggle to alert the world to the disaster that would accompany failure to act on that front.

In a video kicking off today's celebration of World Environment Day (see the screengrab above), various participants offered a two-word imperative for the people of the planet: "Wake up!" You can catch up with the day's events here.



Rev. Mariama White-Hammond (screengrab from webinar)

In a webinar on Thursday, Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, a Boston-based advocate for social and ecological justice, took part in a discussion pegged to the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment.

She said the relationship between racial and climate justice "really aligns with the spirit of *Laudato Si*'," adding: "What I think really deeply resonated with people is that the pope made a connection between the deep injustice we see in how we treat teach other and the deep injustice of how we treat all of the rest of the living and

present beings in our planet...

"We are just not living in right relationship. And that's the bottom line of all of it. It is only when you have extremely unhealthy relationships that one human could put their knee into the neck of another human and keep it there as their life literally flows away. And that other humans could sit there and watch that happen...

"If you're a society that produces people that do that, then it's really not hard to understand why we would be so short-sighted in the way we live with all the rest of the creatures on this planet."

The webinar, which also included NCR columnist Michael Sean Winters, was sponsored by the Woods Hole Research Center. Rev. White-Hammond's comments begin at approximately 16:30 and Winters at 21:56.

Here's what's new on EarthBeat this week:

- Patricia Gualinga, a defender of indigenous rights and a leader of the Kichwa indigenous community of Sarayaku, Ecuador, writes that *Laudato Si'* represented the first time that an international leader really listened to what Indigenous Peoples have been saying about the natural world. Her commentary is included in our feature series, *Laudato Si' at Five*. You'll find her essay in Spanish here.
- In the latest installment of our Digging into *Laudato Si'* series, Samantha Panchèvre explores the section of the encyclical addressing anthropocentrism and relates the pope's views to the current crisis of systemic racism.
- From Vatican City, Carol Glatz of Catholic News Service reports on Pope Francis' message for World Environment Day. Said the pope: "This is not a time to continue looking the other way, indifferent to the signs that our planet is being plundered and violated by greed for profit, very often in the name of progress."
- Dennis Sadowski of Catholic News Service reports on a panel discussion about *Laudato Si'* sponsored by Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life and Georgetown University.
- We have a new Small Earth Story from Gaston Lopez about becoming a better steward of water. If you have a story you'd like to share, please do so here.

Here's some of what's new in other climate coverage this week:

- Dino Grandoni of the Washington Post looks at comments from a variety of environmental groups about the George Floyd killing. He also examines how those organizations are addressing their own issues with race.
- Somini Sengupta of The New York Times interviews three leading African-American climate activists about the connections between racism and climate change.
- A team of reporters at Inside Climate News reports on the ways climate activists are embracing racial justice.
- Lest we forget what the Trump Administration is doing with environmental regulations, NPR provides an update on the latest White House moves to ease up on polluters, this time citing the pandemic as the reason why.

We hope you'll forward this week's newsletter to anyone you believe might want to subscribe. They can do so here.

As you know, neither EarthBeat nor NCR restricts access to coverage with a paywall. Instead, we depend on readers like you to sign up for voluntary memberships. This has been a good week on the membership front so far – we've welcomed 110 new members! If you'd like to join their ranks, please join NCR Forward for as little as five bucks a month.

Thanks for reading!

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