

Path to Restoration Summer Series

By Zach Martinez, Pastor of Sojourn Mennonite Church

Colorado may be known for its blue skies, but last fall, there were very few clear blue skies to found, at least not in my neck of the woods. From August through mid-November, a near constant haze hung in the air. It was a grim reminder of what was happening less than a hundred miles west of my home in Greeley: the two largest wildfires in Colorado history, the Cameron Peak and the East Troublesome fires, were burning simultaneously. Hundreds of thousands of acres were burned, homes and loved ones lost, and beloved natural areas closed, maybe forever.

These fires, of course, were not the only fires that burned last year. Across the country, urban centers also burned in the wake of the public lynching of George Floyd, as protestors filled the streets crying out for racial justice and basic human rights for BIPOC, a promise long withheld in this country.

Disconnected as they may seem initially, I've come to believe that they are perhaps symptoms of the same problem: centuries old broken relationships between people, the earth, and the Creator. As I reflected on these fires, I was reminded that God often speaks through fire. In one instance, on the slopes of Mount Horeb, God spoke to Moses through fire, saying, "I have heard the cries of my people." Might the fires that burned in Minneapolis and Detroit and DC or the fires the burned throughout the mountain west be indications that we too have stumbled onto holy ground? That perhaps God has something to say to us as well? If so, how might we respond?

These are some of the questions I set out to answer this summer along with Todd Wynward and Daniel "Ryno" Herrera of the Taos Initiative for Life Together (TiLT). As three men from different settler/colonial heritages seeking to re-place ourselves, we came together to confess our ancestral legacies of violence toward First Peoples and the earth, how we have benefited from and perpetuated this violence, and what toxic habits and mindsets we might need to change in ourselves to make right relationship possible, so that we might learn how to become a people of place once again.

The result of these conversations was an idea for a 10-week interactive series alternating between podcasts and live Zoom sessions. During this series we invite a conversation about living into right relationship with the places we call home, about listening to and honoring the original ways of being in a particular region and living in a way that make a path to restoration possible.

We've called our series The Path to Restoration. Beginning on May 31st, we will release a new podcast every other Monday. Following the release of each podcast we will host the live Zoom session to dive deeper into the questions raised in the podcast and of listeners who are looking to find the path to restoration in their own backyard. It is our hope that this would be an inwardly transformational time and that will lead to outwardly transformative ways of living in a particular place.

For more information on the podcast and live session dates visit: taostilt.square.site/. There you can also learn more about the mission of TiLT and donate to their ongoing work.

FIVE ORIGINAL PODCASTS. FIVE LIVE ZOOM FORUMS.

Join us on a TEN WEEK SUMMER SERIES:

THE PATH TO RESTORATION

To register go to: taostilt.square.site



On The Path to Restoration, long-distance trail runner Zach Martinez interviews Todd Wynward and Daniel “Ryno” Herrera of TiLT about ways we all can live into a new normal. Join others across NM and CO on a formative journey together, exploring practical ways to restore right relationships with Spirit, ourselves, others, and the Earth.

Every other Monday evening starting June 7,
the trio will host a live Zoom Forum, encouraging responses by participants to the themes introduced the previous week’s podcast.

Podcast 1: **Becoming a Person of Place**

Podcast 2: **Walk the Watershed Way**

Podcast 3: **Grow a Robust Local Food Web**

Podcast 4: **Hyperadobe Home Building & Repurposing Plastic**

Podcast 5: **After Devastation, Regeneration**

Questions? Contact toddwynward@gmail.com