

SO WE & OUR CHILDREN MAY LIVE

Following Jesus in **Confronting the Climate Crisis**

**SARAH AUGUSTINE
& SHERI HOSTETLER**

Study Guide by
Grant Showalter-Swanson



Harrisonburg, Virginia

FOREWORD AND PREFACE

1. What identities and experiences do the coauthors Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler¹ bring to this text? What are the benefits of coauthoring a book of such great importance?
2. Patty Krawec offers an intimate and vulnerable foreword to *So We and Our Children May Live*. Krawec intersects a personal story about conversations with her oldest son, a definition of the term *prophecy*, and a discussion of the Anishinaabe belief in a “time of the seventh fire” (p. 10) to present a framing challenge to readers of this book. What is that framing challenge? What are your reactions to and feelings about how she presents this challenge?
3. What are the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery and the *Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery* podcast that Sheri and Sarah mention in the preface? Take some time to explore the coalition website and spend some time listening to the podcast. What do you notice? How does the work of the coalition and the podcast connect with the expressed intention of this book?
4. How is *decolonization* defined in the preface (p. 14)? How do Sarah and Sheri connect the work of decolonization with Christianity? In what ways are Indigenous peoples already doing the work of decolonization? Sheri shares her journey of understanding the “why” of decolonization work—how do you understand her journey? How might you imagine yourself embarking on a similar journey?
5. On page 18, Sheri discusses the “three different but interrelated structural levels” necessary when envisioning new societal structures, which represent material reality, social reality, and symbolic reality. At what structural levels must decolonization work occur? What is at stake in this work?
6. *Vision*: Sarah invites readers “to co-imagine with us what we might create together” (p. 23). As a model of this invitation, Sarah offers four visions, and Sheri four response poems throughout the book. To be faithful to this invitation to vision, this study guide offers a co-imagining, or “vision” question, as well as an action, or “creation” question, for each chapter. For this first vision question, take a moment to reflectively engage with Sarah’s first vision (pp. 27–28) and Sheri’s first response poem (p. 29). How do you imagine Sarah’s vision with your senses? How does Sheri’s poem help clarify your sensory imagination of Sarah’s vision? Please share your imaginings, with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action*: Craft a creative response to your sensory imaginations of Sarah’s vision and Sheri’s response poem through any artistic or reflective medium that works best for you (drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, song, journaling, digital art, cooking, etc.). As with #6, share your creation with your friends, family, or study group.

Part I: Reality versus Reality

¹ More information about the authors can be found in the acknowledgments (pp. 272–75).

PART 1

Reality versus Reality

CHAPTER 1: **THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS THE SYMPTOM—NOT SOURCE—OF THE PROBLEM**

1. Why have the authors titled part 1 of this book “Reality versus Reality”? How does Sheri define “Reality versus reality” in the preface (p. 17)? How do you understand this difference between “realities” and its relevance for the first chapter, as well as the first part of the book more generally?
2. How does Sarah’s case study of the devastating consequences on Indigenous Peoples and land in the Guyana Shield exemplify “colonization and the assumption of perpetual growth and accumulation” (p. 38)? What are the consequences of colonization, growth, and accumulation?
3. What are the nine planetary boundaries that humans must stay within in order “to avoid catastrophic ecological change and potential tipping points” (p. 43)? How does this complicate our current approaches to ecological crisis? How does this understanding of planetary boundaries elaborate the title of this chapter?
4. What is the Great Acceleration (p. 41)? How does the Great Acceleration exemplify the intersections of colonization and climate change?
5. How does Sheri define a “system of death” (p. 44)? What is the Christian response to such systems, as presented in the section “Creation Holds the Creator’s Story” (pp. 45–48)? What is the consequence if we do not heed this warning? How do Indigenous Peoples understand the creator God through creation? How does this Indigenous cosmology challenge Western Christians to reorient their relationship with creation?
6. *Vision:* Read Deuteronomy 30:15–20. Jot down the words, phrases, images, and ideas that stick out to you. How does this help you understand Sarah’s challenge for us to choose life and live in Reality versus choosing systems of death—a limited reality (p. 48)? What does Christian faithfulness and obedience look like? Share your reflections with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action:* Have you ever experienced a vision like Sarah describes? Or maybe a vivid dream or epiphany that reoriented how you engage with the world? Take some time to retell that vision, dream, or epiphany in detail. Try to be attentive to the overarching theme, idea, or lesson that you gathered from the vision. If you have never had a vision, dream, or epiphany, try to get creative and craft a story or fable that points to Sarah’s challenge on page 48 for us to choose life and live in Reality. Share your vision with your friends, family, or study group.

CHAPTER 2: REALITY AND SYSTEMS OF LIFE

1. How does Sarah define the American Dream (p. 50)? How is the American Dream “an expression of the cultural norm of self-interest” (p. 51)? Sarah offers a counterexample to this cultural norm of self-interest that she learned from her elders. The counterexample demonstrates our embeddedness in a food web beyond our individual control (p. 52). What are the four understandings of Reality that Sarah observes within this food web (pp. 53–55)? How do these four understandings reveal “a closed system of mutual dependence” (p. 55)?
2. This chapter delineates between approaches of “mutual dependence” and “self-reliant individuals” (p. 55). What are the differences? What examples does Sarah offer? What are the consequences of these differences?
3. A key concept throughout Sheri and Sarah’s work is that of extraction. This chapter discusses “the logic of extraction” (p. 59). What is this logic of extraction? How is it constructed? What are its outcomes? What examples do Sarah and Sheri provide?
4. Sarah explores different Christian responses to the logic of extraction by analyzing the two biblical creation stories: Genesis 1:26–29 and Genesis 2:5–7 (pp. 62–63). What interpretations and conclusions are derived from each creation story? How does the story of Christ expand these interpretations and conclusions toward “a Reality of mutual dependence” that includes all of creation (p. 64)?
5. On page 66, Sheri writes that “we are literally *adam*, earth creatures, formed from the dust to which we return.” How does Sheri draw this conclusion from scripture? What are the implications for humanity’s relationship with the earth? What are the implications for our understandings of the “biblical vision of the ‘afterlife’” (p. 67)? How might humility (p. 69) help humanity better understand its role in relationship with the earth?
6. *Vision*: Sarah presents a two-step practice from her elders: first, observe Reality; then, give thanks (p. 51). After reading Sarah’s example of this practice, set aside some time to enact this practice in your own setting. Take note of your observations and reflections as you enact this practice of observing, giving thanks, and “learning to see Reality” (p. 51). Share your observations and reflections with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action*: As you continue the process of observing Reality, research extractive industries operating within your community, in the surrounding area, or on or near tribal lands closest to you. What are these industries? How are they affecting the flora, fauna, and human populations in the surrounding area? How might you and your friends, family, or study group speak out against these extractive industries (e.g., through financial disinvestment, contacting local politicians, lobbying, letter campaigns, phone calls)?

CHAPTER 3: SYSTEMS OF DEATH, OR WHAT IS TAKEN FOR REALITY

1. On page 74, Sheri describes how “centuries of extraction, consumption, and pollution” have led to ecological overshoot of “the earth’s carrying capacity, resulting in what some have called a polycrisis.” What crises have led to polycrisis? How does the image of Christ on the cross, or crucifixion, help us conceptualize this polycrisis theologically?
2. On page 77, the authors list four themes that characterize “the worldview of the dominant culture.” Why is it important for Sheri to clarify that she is “not trying to present a monolithic Western worldview [but instead to] describe key tendencies in the Western worldview” (p. 77)? What is the “shadow side of this cultural default mode” (p. 78), and what is the advantage of naming it?
3. The authors describe the first theme of the Western worldview as “dualistic and hierarchical” (p. 78). What is being divided in two (as *dualistic* suggests)? What is being named as superior within this division? What are the negative outcomes of dualism and hierarchy? Where are dualism and hierarchy present within Scripture, and where does Scripture contradict it?
4. The second theme of the Western worldview is reductionism (p. 81). How would you describe this concept? What role does the scientific method play in reductionism? How does reductionism construct reality versus a “more holistic system view of Reality,” as articulated by Indigenous theologian Randy Woodley (p. 82)? What type of God does reductionism depict? How does reductionism lead to extraction? How has reductionism and extraction affected “Indigenous Peoples and those from the Global South” (p. 85)?
5. “Abstraction is the extreme endpoint hierarchical dualism” and the third theme of the Western worldview (p. 87). How do Sheri and Sarah define abstraction? On page 87, Sheri states that “our economy is based on abstractions”—how does she explain this reality versus the economy of Reality? Consider Sheri’s discussion about abstraction and technology on pages 88–89. What are your thoughts about the relationship between technology and abstraction?
6. On page 89, Sarah introduces the fourth and final theme of the Western worldview: it is short-term and self-referential. To help explain this theme, Sarah articulates a difference between Indigenous and Western researchers. How do you understand this difference? How does collective, or “corporate,” responsibility (p. 92) counter the negative outcomes of Western self-referentiality? How does long-term visioning (p. 93) counter the negative outcomes of short-term Western thinking?
7. *Vision*: Sarah juxtaposes “a closed system of mutual dependence . . . found in many Indigenous cosmologies” with “our individualistic, extractive, dualistic, hierarchical, reductionistic, abstract, self-referential, and short-term worldview” (pp. 95–96). How does Ecclesiastes 5:8–22 help us understand the futility of the themes of the Western worldview and the life-sustaining Reality of mutual dependence? What images, examples, or further musings does this intersectional engagement with concepts of mutual dependence, themes of Western worldview, and lessons of Ecclesiastes stir in you? Share with your friends, family, or study group.
8. *Creation/Action*: How might we reimagine the themes of the Western worldview through the lens of mutual dependence and systems of life? Think through each of the themes and how they manifest in your own life and community, then reimagine how you could reorient them toward themes of mutual dependence and systems of life. Reimagine these themes through whatever medium works best for you: a list, a chart, haiku, photos, images, songs, and so on. Share your reimagined themes with your friends, family, or study group.

PART 2

Beyond Green Growth

CHAPTER 4: GREEN GROWTH IS UNJUST

1. What connections do you observe between Sarah's second vision and Sheri's response poem (pp. 97–100)? What ideas, concepts, or images do you observe from the vision and poem that might provide insight into the title of part 2, "Beyond Green Growth"? How do you interpret this title? And how is it relevant to chapter 4?
2. What is "green growth"? How is this consensus/common-sense viewpoint "poised to replicate centuries-old patterns of systemic sin" (p. 106)? How is Sheri's example of the struggle to protect Chi'chil B'itdagoteel emblematic of this continuation of systemic sin against the earth?
3. Starting on page 107, Sheri details "the story of how capitalism came to be." How do you understand this story? What are the characteristics, priorities, and goals of capitalism? What is not prioritized within capitalism? And what are the consequences?
4. On pages 111–18, Sheri describes four central practices of capitalism: enclosure, exploitation, imperialism, and colonization. What is the story of the practice of enclosure, of "turning the commons into private property" (p. 113)? And what were the consequences? How was exploitation "a direct result of enclosure" (p. 114), and what was its aftermath? How did enclosure and exploitation lead to the need for "someplace external—an 'outside'—where it [could] find cheap labor and natural resources" (p. 116), thus generating the drive for colonialism and imperialism? What are colonialism and imperialism within the framework of capitalism?
5. On page 118, the authors write that "green growth assumes business as usual." What does this mean? What examples of resistance does Sheri provide? And how does Sarah challenge the church to intentionally name and resist the temptations of capitalism and continuous economic growth through an analysis of Luke 4 (pp. 122–24)?
6. *Vision*: Sarah reveals "that the church may be in the wilderness now, enduring temptation," just as Jesus did in Luke 4 (p. 122). What are the named temptations that Jesus experienced? What are the named temptations that the church is experiencing? Where do you see yourself, your church, and your various communities within these temptations? Take some time to reflect, pray, and name those temptations. Share these named temptations with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action*: Sarah also names that "Jesus showed us with his life how to face temptation, how to turn away from what we think we need. . . . He walked away from all of those things in favor of freedom for the oppressed" (p. 124). Identify at least one of the temptations that you named in #6. Brainstorm an action plan for how you and your community can follow Jesus' model and turn away from that temptation and instead advocate for the oppressed. Embark on this brainstorming and action planning process in community with your friends, family, or study group.

CHAPTER 5: **GREEN GROWTH IS UNREALISTIC**

1. In the opening sections of this chapter, Sheri details how “our modern economy [came to be] bound to colossal quantities of materials and resources” (p. 132). How would you articulate this history to someone who has not read the book?
2. What are Vaclav Smil’s “four pillars of industrial civilization” (p. 130), and what are the consequences of our reliance upon them? How do these four pillars affect our food supply and even the green economy (p. 132)?
3. What does it mean to be “energy blind” (p. 133)? Why are the concepts of perpetual economic growth and decarbonization incompatible? Why do politicians propose green growth initiatives instead of initiatives that slow economic growth and consumption?
4. Sheri analyzes two green growth initiatives: carbon capture and alternative fuels. Why are they “exceedingly risky gambles” (p. 134)? Sheri points out that these initiatives address only carbon emissions and “not the other planetary thresholds we have crossed or the ones we are in danger of surpassing” (p. 139). Take a moment to review the nine planetary thresholds listed on page 43. Which of the nine thresholds do you think carbon emissions initiatives leave out? Which thresholds do you think would be made worse? How might refocusing on slowing economic growth and consumption address the planetary thresholds more holistically?
5. Sarah analyzes a poem from the Leslie Marmon Silko novel *Ceremony*, a speech by Suquamish chief Seattle, and Psalm 37 to articulate how communities can imagine and co-create systems of life in the face of systems of death. How do you understand the intersections between these three sources? How do you understand the role of imagination within Sarah’s challenge for us to “collectively imagine systems that comply with life” (p. 140)?
6. *Vision*: Sarah ends the chapter with a series of questions. Spend some time engaging with each question. Share your responses with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action*: How might you tangibly “imagine systems that comply with life” (p. 140) with your community? Keeping in mind the nine planetary thresholds (p. 43) and our cultural/political focus on carbon emissions, what steps and actions could your community take to address the planetary thresholds within your local context? Brainstorm and create an action plan with your friends, family, or study group.

CHAPTER 6: GREEN GROWTH IS LIMITED

1. Sheri describes our Reality at the beginning of the sixth chapter: “If there aren’t major changes in consumption, economic growth stands to peak and rapidly decline—possibly leading to collapse—by around 2040” (p. 147). What factors are leading to this collapse? What are your thoughts, feelings, and reactions to this presentation of our present reality?
2. This chapter circles back to the “nine planetary boundaries that govern the stability and resilience of the earth system” (p. 148). Given that we have already overshoot six of these boundaries, “scientists don’t know how much biodiversity loss ecosystems can tolerate before it triggers irreversible change” (p. 150). Why might it be important to face the possibility of irreversibility instead of immediately looking for outlets of hope and alternate scenarios?
3. What is decoupling (pp. 151–152), and why does Sheri think it is important to debunk it? Similarly, what is dematerialization (p. 154), and why is it important to debunk it? How does the Jevons paradox (p. 156) explain the increase of consumption amid increased efficiency? What does Sheri say we need to focus on instead of decoupling and dematerialization at the end of page 156?
4. On page 157, Sheri notes that “if we continue to consume energy and resources at our current rate, we will consume more in the next thirty-five to forty years than we have since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.” Why don’t we hear about this Reality from all sectors of our society? What factors does Sheri name that prevent humans, particularly from the Western world, from acknowledging and tending to this Reality?
5. On page 161, in conversation with Indigenous theologian Wati Longchar, Sarah discusses the need for a more reverent and familial relationship between humans and the land/the earth. How does Sarah theologically present this relationship between humans and the earth through the lens of mutual dependence? What does she say is the church’s role within this relationality? What does mercy and justice look like within mutual dependence between humans and the earth?
6. *Vision*: On pages 161–64, Sarah explores different understandings of God, particularly through the lens of the earth. How do those images expand, clarify, or challenge your own understandings of God? How might these images of God support the mercy and justice work to which the church is called?
7. *Creation/Action*: Sarah’s third vision and Sheri’s third response poem revolve around discernment and wisdom. Sheri chose Proverbs 1:20–21 to guide her response poem. Using this visionary and poetic response as an example, how might you creatively respond to the conclusions presented throughout Chapters 4–6? Are there visions, epiphanies, dreams, or stories that you might want to explore, write down, or manifest through a particular art form? Is there a scripture and response poem that you would like to explore? Spend some time crafting a creative response to these last few chapters. Share your creative response with your friends, family, or study group.

PART 3

Imagining a Decolonized Future

CHAPTER 7: DESCRIBING DECOLONIZATION

1. Decolonization is a central topic in the final section of the book. Looking back over the previous chapters, how have Sarah and Sheri defined decolonization? How does chapter 7 expand and clarify your understanding of the term?
2. To better describe decolonization, Sarah spends some time clarifying and expanding an understanding of colonialism (pp. 171–72). How does she define and explain colonialism at the start of this chapter? What examples does she provide?
3. Starting on page 174, Sarah provides “a framework for active decolonization” via seven central characteristics. Define all seven characteristics, describe the examples she provides, and explain the tangible ways these characteristics “seek repair” from colonial injustices (p. 174).
4. On page 184, Sarah names three examples of extraction. Why are Indigenous lands and territories often locations of extraction? What examples of Indigenous resistance does Sarah provide? And what does she say that “ordinary people” can do to resist (p. 184)?
5. Throughout the descriptions of the seven characteristics of active decolonization, Sarah provides examples, scriptural insights, and challenges to Christians and the church. What are they? And how might they relate to you, your church, and your various communities?
6. *Vision:* Sheri ends the chapter discussing the seventh characteristic of active decolonization: sacrifice. She highlights that decolonization work often brings not peace and comfort, but conflict and discomfort. What personal and scriptural examples does she offer? Take some time to reflect on this description of sacrifice and what it might mean in your own life. Discuss this description of sacrifice with your friends, family, or study group, and discern together what it might mean within the life of your community.
7. *Creation/Action:* Sheri invites us to question and challenge our perceptions and default acceptance of private property. What are your understandings of private property, as well as your own connections to land ownership or private property? What are your reactions to Sheri’s challenge to imagine “a world without private property” (p. 199)? Take some time to think and imagine a world without private property. What might that look like? How could previous discussions of the commons and Indigenous understandings of the land/earth as a relative help imagine that world? Who would be able to flourish within that world? Please craft a thoughtful response to these questions through any creative medium that works best for you. Share your response with your family, friends, or study group.

CHAPTER 8: DECOLONIZING ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

1. Through the example of water contaminated by mining practices in the Guyana Shield, Sarah demonstrates that all ecological solutions must be all-encompassing because of the complexity of our “closed system of mutual dependence” (p. 201). How do you understand this complexity? Trace the source and dispersed impacts of mining practices in the Guyana Shield to better understand this complexity. Feel free to create a web, table, flowchart, drawing, or some other visual method of tracing the complex impacts.
2. To seek solutions and change within this complex, closed system of mutual dependence, Sarah notes two primary mechanisms of change proposed by systems theory: “first-order change and second-order change” (p. 202). What is first-order change and second-order change, and how are they different? Which mechanism of change does Sarah advocate for changing the global economic system? Why? How does she apply this mechanism of change to the example of sustainability (p. 204)?
3. Sarah’s expressed goal is to seek systemic change within the global economic system of capitalism. Starting on page 206, she explores what capitalism is created to do and who it is meant to serve. What is the purpose of capitalism? What are the basic units of capitalism? Whom is it meant to serve? Whom and what does it exclude? What is capitalism not designed to do? With this understanding of capitalism in mind, how does Sarah demonstrate the fatal flaws of self-interest and individualism within capitalism when considering the true scale of capitalism’s communal and global impacts?
4. Sarah invites us to imagine a new economy “that maintains balance with the life-support systems of earth to create community well-being” (p. 214). What are the three assumptions within which this new economic system must be rooted? Starting with an Indigenous cosmology, what emergent properties does Sarah imagine within this new economic system?
5. Sheri offers a hopeful account of ten movements working toward an economic system that provide “well-being and planetary health” (p. 218). How do these different movements intersect with Sarah’s descriptions of a new economic system, the three assumptions of that system, and its imagined emergent properties? Take note of the connections that you see within all ten movements.
6. *Vision:* At the end of the chapter, Sheri explores the Greek word *metanoia* in relation to the decolonial work of imagining a new economic system (p. 221). How do you understand this concept, the ways that Sheri explains it through the New Testament context of the Roman Empire, and the connections she makes with the responsibilities and calls of the church today? Spend some time reflecting on these questions. Share your reflections with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action:* Take some time to research the ten movements that Sheri names on pages 219–221. Find websites, contacts, and other general information about the different programs, ideas, organizations, examples, and philosophies. Consider how you might be able to partner with or support one (or more) of these movements. Are any of these movements occurring near you? Do any of the movements have established pathways of support? Brainstorm ways that you might partner with or support these movements with your friends, family, or study group.

CHAPTER 9: **DECOLONIZING CULTURAL SYSTEMS**

1. On pages 223–224, Sarah shares a story from the Haida people of the Pacific Northwest. How does this story “illustrate the relationship between Native peoples and the community of life that surrounds them” (p. 224)? More broadly, how does this story provide “a window into a cosmology that explains a system of mutual dependence” (p. 224)? How does this system of mutual dependence run counter to the systems of dominant culture? Sarah also shares a story of a school principal and his relationship with soda. How does this story demonstrate the normalization of individualism and consumerism within the dominant culture of the United States? How does Sarah propose that we respond to this normalization and attempt to effect change?
2. After introducing the story of Nathan, the school principal, Sarah details the history of the “cheap food” movement in the United States since the 1970s. What is the “cheap food” movement, and what was it designed to accomplish? Whom does it benefit? Whom does it harm? What are the consequences of the cheap food movement? How did the COVID-19 pandemic exemplify this disparity?
3. How does Sheri define perpetual economic growth as “a central cultural myth” (p. 230)? What is neoliberalism, and how did it contribute to the formation of this cultural myth? What are the outcomes of this myth, and its subsequent growth-based policies, on the well-being of humanity? And all the earth? What are examples of public welfare investment improving public health? Given these examples, why is investment in public welfare not included in growth-based policies? What is the genuine progress indicator, or GPI (p. 235), and why does it provide better insights into the actual health of a society than gross domestic product, or GDP?
4. On pages 235–236, Sarah discusses dominant cultural narratives of consumption, comfort, and individualism and how they portray emotional eating and spending as an issue of personal will and choice. How do these narratives dismiss the overarching needs of individuals and preclude the possibility of those needs being met in community? How does Sarah describe collective Christian and Indigenous responses to these dominant narratives, and how do these responses seek to build a culture that meets “our real needs by supporting right relationship: connection to each other, the earth, and all of creation—true shalom” (p. 239)?
5. What is the “third public,” and how does Sarah propose that the church could serve as it (p. 242)? How does Sarah clarify what she means by “church”? How must the church, and religion more generally, “help us remember Reality” (p. 245)? Sheri states that “we have the most to learn from Indigenous Peoples, who have remembered Reality much better than we have” (p. 248). What does this coalition and solidarity work between Christians, religious folks generally, and Indigenous Peoples look like according to Sheri? And what does she argue that we can create together?
6. *Vision:* Sheri draws on the biblical story of Job as a Christian resource “that might help us remember Reality” (p. 245). Through the story of Job, “we get the sense this world could easily exist without us, even though we could never exist without it” (pp. 247–48). Sheri concludes that the story of Job overturns any ideas of human exceptionalism. Read Sheri’s summary of the story of Job (or consider the full biblical text) and trace the narrative movements that led Sheri to this conclusion. What is your reaction to this overturning of human exceptionalism? How does it make you feel? Have you ever contemplated a God who might delight in a “human-free world” (p. 248)? How does this decentering of humanity shift our understandings and relationship with God and all of creation? Take note of your thoughts, reflections, and ideas and share them with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action:* Sheri urges us to “turn to resources within our [Christian] tradition that help us re-member, like this passage from Job” (p. 248). Spend some time with your Bible. What Bible stories, passages, and other moments within Scripture could be resources for this re-membling process? Start creating a list. Be as comprehensive as possible. Then come together with your friends, family, or study group to create a collective list of resources that will help “create a true counterculture of holy remembering” (p. 248).

CHAPTER 10: CHOOSING HOPE AND HUMILITY

1. On page 249, Sarah names “two popular approaches to ecological restoration.” What is the main limitation of both approaches? What approach does Sarah propose instead? And who does Sarah believe is already approaching life systems and ecological restoration through this approach?
2. Who tends to be most resistant to creative change? Why? What barriers within the system of global economic growth prevent change? What must be done, and what mindsets must be shifted, to break down these barriers and work toward creative change? What tools and resources can help “imagine and build a system that serves us” (p. 256)?
3. On page 257, Sheri asks, “What keeps us from imagining a new world?” How does she respond to this question? What does she propose will help us imagine a new world? Why must this imagining process be done in solidarity and conversation with Indigenous Peoples?
4. Sheri intersects the story of Moses in Exodus 3 with Rachel Donald’s idea that “it is within the in-between-ness that possibility lies and change occurs” (p. 261). What do you think Sheri accomplishes by drawing together the concept of “in-betweenness” with the story of Moses in Exodus 3? And how does this lead to Sheri’s final question for us: “Will you, with me, step off the edge and trust that we will be raised up on God’s wings” (p. 262)? How do you respond to, or answer, this final question?
5. Sarah concludes the final chapter with truth claims from her own knowledge and experience. What are these claims? How do you understand them? How do they challenge or inspire you? And how do you react to Sarah’s final charge for us to “find the courage to acknowledge Reality” and “join together to imagine, create, and construct, with hope and humility, systems that pursue life” (p. 263)?
6. *Vision:* The book ends with a final vision and response poem. How do you interpret them? How do they provide a conclusion to the ideas, concepts, and challenges presented in this book? How do they open doors to more ideas, concepts, and challenges to be explored beyond it? What are the strengths of ending this book with creative visioning and imaginative poetry? How might this choice be a method of decolonization? Make note of your responses to these questions and share them with your friends, family, or study group.
7. *Creation/Action:* Spend some time imagining a “system that pursues life” using your five senses. What does the world look, taste, smell, sound, and feel like within this life-giving system? How does this system address Reality? What harm or injustice does this system overturn toward the flourishing of all people and creation? And who came together to co-create this system? Craft a creative response through any artistic or reflective medium that works best for you (drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, song, journaling, digital art, cooking, etc.). Share your creation with your friends, family, or study group. Then begin the work of imagining together how you might co-create these systems within your group, within your local context, and beyond.