

With New Eyes

Seeing the Environment as a Spiritual Issue

In the last analysis, the psychological roots of the crisis humanity is facing on a global scale seem to lie in the loss of the spiritual perspective. Since a harmonious experience of life requires, among other things, fulfillment of transcendental needs, a culture that has denied spirituality and has lost access to the transpersonal dimension of existence is doomed to failure in all other avenues of its activities.

— STANISLAV GROFF

Revisioning Life

Like many young men in their twenties, John Muir, who was later to become famous as a naturalist and conservationist, went through a period of profound turmoil and disorientation in which he struggled to find himself and his role in life. Pulled this way and that, he couldn't seem to discover who he was or was to become. Although he was "touched with melancholy and loneliness . . . and the pressure of time upon life," he was unable to settle upon a direction for his life and remained disoriented and mired in indecision.

It wasn't until an accident occurred to him in March 1867 that he was able to launch himself upon his career as a wilderness explorer. In a factory in which he manufactured agricultural implements of his own invention, a belt on one of the machines flew up and pierced his right eye on the edge of the cornea. He was blinded in that eye, and his left eye soon became blinded through nerve shock and sympathy. He was left in utter darkness. Unable to see, he tells us, "I would gladly have died. . . . My eyes closed forever on all God's beauty! . . . I am lost!"

After a careful examination, however, a specialist indicated that he would eventually see again, imperfectly in the right eye but normally in the left. What he needed to do was to remain for a month in a darkened room. He did that, all the while dreaming of wilderness such as Yosemite Valley in

the Sierras. Finally, on an April day a little over a month after the accident, the remaining bandages were removed from his eyes and the shades from the windows. Beyond all hope and happiness, he was able to see the world again! He was, in fact, intoxicated by that resurrection of his sight. It was as if he were seeing everything anew, with new eyes as it were, fresh from the hand of God. The experience transformed him. With the awareness that he could find no happiness apart from wild nature and "that I might be true to myself," he reoriented his life to exploring that nature and advocating its conservation. "This affliction has driven me to the sweet fields," he said. "God has to nearly kill us sometimes to teach us lessons."¹ It was from this time that his continuous wanderings began. As he put it, "I bade adieu to all my mechanical inventions, determined to devote the rest of my life to the study of the inventions of God."²

The British philosopher John Wisdom tells an interesting story about religious knowledge or belief in a classic essay titled "Gods." It is a story that might help us better understand Muir's experience. Two friends, one a theist and one an atheist, return to a long-neglected garden of theirs. Weeds have sprouted up since they left, but in between the weeds they find a few of the old plants still surprisingly vigorous. Having inspected the entire garden, the theist comes to the conclusion that an invisible gardener has been taking care of it, whereas his atheist friend concludes that there has been no invisible gardener. Both agree about all the facts: gardens need sunlight, water, fertile soil, and so on. In fact we can even imagine that the friends carry out a thorough study to ascertain all the facts that might influence and determine any possible garden, and they reach total agreement about them. Thus, Wisdom seems to be saying, their varying beliefs concerning the existence of an invisible gardener who tends the garden is simply not a factual or empirical hypothesis that can be demonstrated experimentally. It would seem, then, that both the theist's belief in an invisible gardener and his atheist friend's contradictory belief that there is no such gardener are more like ways of "seeing" the garden as a meaningful whole than like empirical hypotheses that are confirmed or disconfirmed by any possible facts concerning gardens.³

In this sense, spiritual understanding is more like suddenly seeing the famous gestalt figure meaningfully either as a vase or as two faces than like constructing an empirical hypothesis or a deductive syllogism. Religious faith and insight provide an overarching interpretive understanding of life as a *meaningful* whole, including our own role and destiny within it.⁴ John Muir's experience, then, was a religious revisioning, a revisioning that transformed not only how he saw nature, but also how he envisaged his role

within it as a naturalist and conservationist. As we have seen, he changed how he lived because of it.

Pushed by the stultifying and painful spiritual condition in which he had been living and transformed by the shock of his temporary blindness, Muir came to see nature with the amazed eyes of a child again and to understand his own role within it in a new way. In his early essay "Nature," Ralph Waldo Emerson had described such a transforming vision this way: "Few adults can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child."⁵ Muir's wonder at the extraordinary miracle of life, at the incredible epiphany it manifested, touched him to his core and enabled him to find his authentic orientation in life. In traditional religious terminology, he became spiritually reoriented because he discovered his own connection to a broader, sacred reality and community to which he belonged, a reality that permitted him to see how he might live more deeply and meaningfully than hitherto. He put it this way in his journals:

The man of science, the naturalist, too often loses sight of the essential oneness of all living beings in seeking to classify them in kingdoms, orders, families, genera, species, etc., taking note of the kind and arrangement of limbs, teeth, toes, scales, hair, feathers, etc., measured and set forth in meters, centimeters, and millimeters, while the eye of the Poet, the Seer, never closes on the kinship of all God's creatures, and his heart ever beats in sympathy with great and small alike as "earth-born companions and fellow mortals" equally dependent on Heaven's eternal love.⁶

His spiritual transformation, then, wasn't so much a shift in how he thought about things as a shift in how he looked at them, how he felt about them, and how he actually acted and behaved toward them. He found his way in life by finding his way home to nature.

All of us at various times have touched the spiritual and moral condition at a deep level of seriousness. Perhaps it happened during a divorce, the death of a parent, hitting bottom after a serious addiction, the loss of a job on which one depended financially or emotionally, the outbreak of war, or some other trauma that led to a disintegration of one's familiar and everyday way of seeing things.

Such spiritual reorientations as that of Muir, of course, are not limited to individuals alone. Historians and scholars of various kinds have long been aware that human cultures also occasionally undergo such transformations in how they envisage life as a meaningful whole and how they picture the purpose and role of humans within it. To find examples of such paradigm shifts in the fundamental worldview of our own culture we would have to

go back to the cultural revolution constituted by the replacement of fertility goddesses with male warrior gods after 2500 B.C.E.; the shift from polytheism to "radical monotheism" (to use H. Richard Niehbur's trenchant phrase) in early Jewish history; the change to Christianity in fourth- and fifth-century Rome; and the startling transformation of the by-then traditional European Christian culture into what we now call "modernity" or "the modern world" in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

In the face of the ecological difficulties avalanching down upon us, it may be that all of us, like Muir, will be forced to reevaluate how we "see" nature and change our behavior toward it. Many observers of our contemporary world, in fact, argue just that and that such a reflective reevaluation and reorientation of our lives will entail a digging down to the foundations of our ultimate faith in life. In other words, getting our ecological bearings may first entail getting our spiritual bearings in life by finding our way back to our home in nature.

A Bird's-eye View of Our Ecological Situation

It is probably safe to say that the present environmental state of the world constitutes the most serious threat to the biosphere since the origin of life on earth. It is also safe to say that the environmental crisis is not only a threat but also a situation that will not be easily overcome and that will haunt us for the foreseeable future. In the recent words of Pope John Paul II, "our problems are the world's problems and burdens for generations to come."

Indeed, the all too familiar phrase "ecological crisis" may be too feeble a way to put it. It is becoming increasingly clear to a number of observers that this is a crisis of the whole life system of the modern industrial world, one that affects both nature and the human culture it supports and sustains. Indeed, we seem to be living in a time in which we are witnessing not only breakdowns in the natural systems of the biosphere into which we have intruded with our economic and technological "progress" but also breakdowns in important parts of those economic, political, and cultural systems themselves. It seems increasingly clear that the familiar model of reality that hierarchically separates the human from the rest of life, or human cultures from nature, is both false and destructive of that wider nature.

In fact, contemporary science clearly shows that everything that has

emerged on earth has emerged from and within nature as a whole. From this point of view, the economic, social, moral, and spiritual decay that is often manifested in our present world is not something that lies "outside" nature but is a biocultural development "within" it. Such cultural decay, then, is just one more manifestation of ecological disturbances and difficulties introduced by the modern industrial world. With all its obvious benefits, that modern industrial society that has so devastated our natural environment seems increasingly to be devastating us as well.⁷ Putting the same thing another way, it would seem that to the degree that we have lost our sense of being rooted in a deeper and more encompassing natural order or reality, we have become spiritually, morally, and ecologically disoriented.

It would seem, then, that the avalanche of environmental issues we are currently witnessing around the globe calls for long-term consideration of how we are living and how that affects both the environment and ourselves rather than merely short-term technological "fixes." And yet such long-term consideration is difficult for all of us precisely because we are so caught up in the pursuit of short-term economic and political "success." As Harvard theologian Gordon Kaufman has put it in his most recent book, "The organization of human economic life into institutions geared to satisfying human needs and wants . . . , and of political life into nation-states, prevents us from directing our concerns and energies toward the larger world beyond our human-centered interests, and working for the common good of all creatures."⁸

Yes, But Is the Environment a Spiritual Issue?

Although certainly in part economic, demographic, and political in nature, the earth's ecological deterioration is at heart a matter of human attitudes toward the earth and life in general, attitudes that of course affect how we behave toward it. Thus, it would seem to constitute a spiritual crisis involving our moral and spiritual attitudes toward nature and, in fact, life as a whole. It may call for spiritual reflection on what we consider to be of ultimate importance in our lives and how we think we ought to live in the light of that and moral reflection on how we understand and relate to nature.

But why? Is nature and our behavior toward it in any way a spiritual question? And why is it that the environment, which previously had rarely been thought to be such a spiritual issue, has in fact suddenly become so for

so many today? I think there are basically four reasons for this remarkable shift.

First of all, there is increasing recognition that a spiritual attitude toward nature has contributed to the increasingly dangerous environmental destruction and collapse we now see all around us. Newton, of course, thought of nature as an intricate machine fashioned by a designer God but running on its own according to the laws of mechanics. Since then, due to the ensuing industrial revolution, we seem to have totally commodified nature. We conceive of it as mere stuff stripped of any intrinsic value before it is forcibly extracted from the "wild" (meaning uncontrolled) and brought into the human economy—a "natural resource," as we put it, ready to be transformed industrially into useful products to improve the human condition. Aldo Leopold put it this way in his *Sand County Almanac*: "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."⁹

Far from being a scientific or neutral hypothesis, this view of nature as a commodity put here simply for our use is itself an interpretive understanding, a way of seeing nature in much the same sense that John Wisdom's atheist (as well as the theist) brings a point of view to the garden beyond factual hypothesis. It is, then, a perspective on nature and life itself, a spiritual vision (if one can use that term for a point of view that denies the possibility of "spiritual" perspective at all), which of course is (or ought to be) quite different than, for example, a Jewish or Christian or Buddhist perspective. Many believe that a root cause of our violent destruction and transformation of nature lies in just such a modern perspective, which strips nature of any intrinsic value, not to mention epiphany. It hardly seems possible that without that modern way of seeing it we could have violated nature in quite the way we have and to the extent that we have. In this sense, then, the environment would seem to be unavoidably a spiritual issue.

But second, connected to (or perhaps embracing) this materialistic view of nature is a materialistic conception of "the good life." This is a thin vision of life as a whole that has flowered in the twentieth century, a vision suggesting that the central thrust and significance of our lives consists of the accumulation of capital or material goods. As the bumper sticker puts it, "Whoever has the most things when he dies, wins!" It is almost as if the accumulation of goods and the kind of intensive attention their production and consumption entails shields us from death, as indeed it does seem to do to a certain degree.

This is a closed and mean conception of life, which not only thinks of nature as put here simply for our enjoyment but anthropocentrically places human life at the center of everything (the entire universe!). Having accomplished that marvelous trick, it then makes morality radically relative to the wants and desires of a particular group or, of course, even each individual. Its conception of progress, of course, is the continuing expansion of economic demand and the industrial production to achieve it. This is what some of the authors in this book call "growthism." If, as Paul Tillich used to insist, religion means simply a group's "ultimate concern," then growthism would seem to be our religion and the gross national product our god. But all of that exacerbates the destructive and violent intrusion of human culture into nature.

It also leads to what Vaclav Havel has called "a demoralized culture" in which ethical ideals are simply reduced to the dreams of the consumer society or the lonely individuals who inhabit it. Finally, it brings about a culture of spiritual collapse in which there is no vision of a wider or deeper reality of which we are part than our own desires and dreams. That, of course, is precisely a spiritual emptiness or nihilism. Indeed, some commentators believe not only that this sense of spiritual emptiness is growing but that it is leading to more profound social fragmentation and violence, including, quite evidently, the destruction of the family. As Richard Eckersley put it recently, our materialistically oriented consumer society is increasingly failing

... to provide a sense of meaning, belonging, and purpose in our lives, as well as a framework of values. People need to have something to believe in and live for, to feel they are part of a community and a valued member of society, and to have a sense of spiritual fulfillment—that is, a sense of relatedness and connectedness to the world and the universe in which they exist.¹⁰

David Bollier has argued in a recent issue of *Tikkun* that we must come to grips with this ethical and spiritual emptiness: "The truth is, Americans in the late twentieth century need more than the First Amendment and its case law to bind them together. They need a new cultural covenant with each other that can begin frankly to address the spiritual void in modern secular society."¹¹

At any rate, it is this materialist vision of prosperity, progress, and the good life that seems so rampant in our culture and so destructive to the environment. It is surely unworthy of free men and women. But that religiously oriented and practicing free men and women have shown little interest in questioning such a collapsed spiritual point of view from the

perspective of their faith traditions—at least until recently—seems absolutely astounding! Can we seriously believe that God favors such materialism and growthism, especially insofar as they have brought about an unprecedented assault on creation itself? This is not an objection to free-market economies. But to connect such market economies to the (albeit myopic) spiritual vision that the end and purpose of life (the good life) is a surfeit of material accumulation and security hardly seems worthy of such faiths. Are our religious traditions really so threadbare and lacking in imagination, so timid, that they reduce their visions of the life of faith to that of the consumer society?

On the one hand, some deconstructionists have argued that the lack (and from their point of view the impossibility) of any deeper or more encompassing vision of life is precisely a problem that cannot be overcome. It may be, on the other hand, that the very material culture that has led to such painful nihilism and that has brought such horrendous devastation upon the environment will, for those very reasons, inevitably lead us beyond its myopic perspective. "Despite claims by social critics like Lyotard and Frederick Jameson that our society reflects the absence of any great integrating vision or collective project, the great collective project has, in fact, presented itself. It is that of saving the earth—at this point, nothing else really matters."¹²

The need for a serious ethical response to nature and the environmental situation in which we find ourselves is, I believe, a third reason that the environment is a spiritual issue. If we are to change our abysmal behavior toward the environment, we will need more than scientific analysis and social legislation: we need a moral perspective and code that can help to change that behavior. As Senator Gaylord Nelson put it at a recent interfaith conference in Virginia, "The harsh reality is that no war, no revolution, no peril in all of history measures up in importance to the threat of continued environmental deterioration. . . . The absence of a pervasive, guiding conservation ethic in our culture is the issue and the problem. It is a crippling if not, indeed, a fatal weakness."¹³

I find it interesting that until recently, "ethics" was a field in philosophy limited to human interaction. This was a reflection of our anthropocentric view that human beings lie outside or beyond nature. It is only humans who feel ethical obligation, and such obligation is directed only toward other human beings. In short, this view implied that we have no ethical obligations to individual plants and animals, never mind bioregions or nature as a whole because these entities have no "feelings" about how we treat them. I suppose this would be like a collection of trees agreeing—if

they could—that unless you have roots, bark, and leaves you're beneath any sympathy or consideration. Fortunately, this myopic limitation of moral responsibility to human beings is now being seriously questioned.

Our system of dealing with nature simply as a collection of commodities put here for our privileged use seems to have failed or at least is in the process of failing. Aldo Leopold suggested (and others have followed his lead) that the only way to overcome our destructive treatment of nature is to treat it ethically, that is, as a *community* to which we belong. "All ethics so far evolved," he writes, "rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts."¹⁴ In other words, the new ecological ethic must extend our moral obligations to the larger community of nature to which we belong and that ultimately constitutes a single, interdependent web of entities, just as John Muir argued.

But how are we to jump from the biological "is" to the ethical "ought," from theory to actual behavior, from information to wisdom, from understanding to passionate caring? Science, especially the science of ecology, tells us that nature is a single community; how, then, do we *actually* come to love and respect it? The answer, as many now argue, lies in going beyond its *utility for us* to a feeling-awareness of its *intrinsic value* in and of itself. As Arne Naess has put it, "The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes."¹⁵

But in order to do that, must we not, in fact, feel a reverence for this larger community to which we belong, must we not come to see it differently, in much the same way that Muir came to see it after the restoration of his sight, as God's holy creation? In other words, does not an effective ecological ethics, if it is to be more than an abstract set of principles, rest on a spiritual attitude toward the larger natural community to which we belong? Mustn't a serious and effective ecological ethics be grounded and founded upon a deeper and wider spiritual vision of life than seems available in the modern consumer societies (which interestingly enough have developed the very notion of utilitarian ethics)?

In a series of letters he wrote to his wife, Olga, in 1982 while imprisoned by the Czechoslovakian Communist government, Vaclav Havel (later president of the newly founded Czech Republic) indicated that people living within modern industrial societies, whether capitalist or communist, all too often envisaged no wider, more encompassing, or more significant reality beyond their own needs and desires. Such a worldview, he thought, constitutes a kind of "demoralization."

We live in an age in which there is a general turning away from Being: our civilization, founded on a grand upsurge of science and technology, those great intellectual guides on how to conquer the world at the cost of losing touch with Being, transforms man its proud creator into a slave of his consumer needs. . . . A person who has been seduced by the consumer value system, whose identity is dissolved in an amalgam of the accoutrements of mass civilization, and who has no roots in the wider order of Being, no sense of responsibility for any higher reality than his or her own personal survival, is a demoralized person and, by extension, a demoralized society.¹⁶

The result of this inability to envision ourselves as a part of a larger reality, whether divine or merely natural, has led, then, to a demoralized culture in which all too often we see ourselves as disembodied intellects who are "outside" or "above" nature and thus free to manipulate it for our own selfish ends. In short, it has led to a collapsed spiritual vision and moral stance in which, as we saw, nature is "beneath" us and not even thought to have "rights" or to call for moral obligations on our part. It is seen to be a mere "stuff" put here for our enjoyment, simply the backdrop for the drama of the progressive unfolding of human history. Vice President Gore, in his recent book, *Earth in the Balance*, puts it this way: "Believing ourselves to be separate from the earth means having no idea how to fit into the natural cycle of life and no understanding of the natural processes of change that affect us and that we in turn are affecting. It means that we attempt to chart the course of civilization by reference to ourselves alone. No wonder we are lost and confused."¹⁷

This lack of awareness and appreciation for any "wider order of Being," as Havel put it, this "demoralization," has its roots, as we saw, in the spiritual worldview (how we "see" nature and life as a whole) that lies at the heart of our modern industrial cultures. Spiritual fire must be fought with spiritual fire. Any ethics on which we might pin our hopes of changing human behavior toward the environment must rest, ultimately, on a spiritual vision that transforms us, as it did Muir, and permits us to experience it in a reverential way as intrinsically valuable. If we are to change our behavior toward nature, if we are to act ethically toward it, we must look at it and our place within it differently. As Havel put it on another occasion, "The challenge offered by the post-Communist world is merely the current form of a broader and more profound challenge to discover a new type of self-understanding for man. . . . we must discover a new relationship to our neighbors, and to the universe and its metaphysical order, which is the source of the moral order."¹⁸

In a recent Fourth of July speech in Philadelphia, Havel developed this theme further by grounding respect for others, including nature, in a more profound spiritual vision.

Politicians at international forums may reiterate a thousand times that the basis of the new world order must be universal respect for human rights, but it will mean nothing as long as this imperative does not derive from the respect of the miracle of being, the miracle of the universe, the miracle of nature, the miracle of our own existence. Only someone who submits to the authority of the universal order . . . can genuinely value himself and his neighbors, and thus honor their rights as well.¹⁹

So this is another reason that the environment is a spiritual issue: any ethical approach ultimately rests on a spiritual way of seeing it. It was Albert Schweitzer, of course, who based his ethics on his spiritual sense of reverence for all life. He gained that reverence, he tells us in his autobiography, through an actual spiritual experience he had while crossing a river through a herd of hippopotamuses in Africa: "I am life which wills to live, in the midst of life which wills to live."²⁰ That experience of a reverence for life led Schweitzer to his explicit ethics, an ethics that parallels that of Aldo Leopold insofar as it links ethics and the wider natural community to which we belong.

The great fault of all ethics hitherto has been that they believed themselves to have to deal only with the relations of man to man. In reality, however, the question is what is his attitude to the world and all life that comes within his reach. A man is ethical only when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help. Only the universal ethics of the feeling of responsibility in an ever-widening sphere for all that lives—only that ethic can be founded in thought. The ethic of the relation of man to man is not something apart by itself: it is only a particular relation which results from the universal one.²¹

Forth and finally, there is a hunger across the land for a genuine spiritual vision and life beyond the constricted and narrowing confines of the consumer society. And where might we find such an encompassing sense of life as a meaningful whole if not within the universe or creation as a whole? That is, we are inextricably tied to both the earth community and the larger universe from which it has evolved. Can what Havel calls a wider vision of reality be other than Being or Reality itself, that is, the whole fecund fifteen-billion-year unfolding of the universe? There is a widespread thirst for "reality," especially on the part of our young. What could possibly be more real than reality itself, whether it be called nature, God, life, or the originating mystery that shines through that nature?

The fourth reason for thinking that the environment is a spiritual issue, then, lies in the fact that environmental concerns may make possible a genuine religious reform and renewal, not in the sense of dogma but in the sense of experiencing with John Muir the epiphany that nature exhibits. It would seem that our time is calling us to awaken from our benumbed and bewitched state to a wonder at and reverence for the astonishing, miraculous, and mysterious creation of which we are a part. The whole world

seems to arise in a mysterious emptiness. Reality is a transcendent but astonishing and holy power-to-be, an ever-flowing river of grace, a jaw-dropping gift of infinite giftedness. The gulf between nothing and something is filled with wonder, gratitude, and love of everything!

In a report to its 1991 General Assembly in Canberra, the World Council of Churches expressed just this sense of the sacredness of nature in its own Christian imagery.

Instead of a king relating to his realm, we picture God as the creator who "bodies forth" all that is, who creates not as a potter or an artist does, but more as a mother. That is to say, the universe, including our earth and all its creatures and plants, "lives and moves and has its being" in God (cf. Acts 17:28), though God is beyond and more than the universe. Organic images seem most appropriate for expressing both the immanence of God in and to the entire creation as well as God's transcendence of it. In the light of the incarnation the whole universe appears to us as God's "body."²²

The Unfurnished Eye

Yes, the environment is a spiritual issue. For that reason, religious consciousness and perspective may be indispensable in ameliorating our present situation by helping us to integrate ourselves in a wider (and surely wiser) natural reality and by suggesting alternative conceptions of "progress" and the "good life." As the 1992 *State of the World* report of the Worldwatch Institute puts it, "With current notions of economic growth at the root of so much of the earth's ecological deterioration, [what is called for is] a rethinking of our basic values and visions of progress."²³

Unless and until we change our basic attitudes toward nature (and the relationship of God to nature) and our conceptions of what constitutes progress and the good life, it may be that further environmental devastation will be inevitable. What is called for, then, is a vision of how to live appropriately in the face of the truth of nature. We don't need to save the world; we need to love it. As Father Zosima puts it in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, "Love all of God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things."²⁴

And whether the extraordinary unfolding of life in its myriad forms is called God's creation, the Tao, the body of the Buddha, or just plain nature is not as important as perceiving it once again with a child's wide-eyed amazement. Rachel Carson certainly knew that.

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. . . . I should ask that . . . each child in the world [develop] a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantment of later years."²⁵

In Emily Dickinson's marvelous phrase, to perceive it with "an unfurnished eye" is to see it as the epiphany it truly is; it is to see and feel the sanctity of life in all its wondrous forms. As was the case with John Muir, that just may be the way for us to find our ecological way home.

Notes

1. Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1946), 104, 105.
2. William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), 155.
3. John Wisdom, "Gods," in *Religion from Tolstoy to Camus*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 391-406.
4. For more on this view of religious understanding, see Paul Brockelman, *The Inside Story: A Narrative Approach to Religious Understanding and Truth* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992).
5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *The Portable Emerson*, ed. Carl Bode (New York: Penguin Books USA, 1981), 10.
6. *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*, ed. Linnie Marsh Wolfe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1938), 434.
7. In a very interesting article, Robert Kaplan argues that ecological disruptions will constitute the fundamental issue for our foreign relations in the years ahead. See Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, 44 ff.
8. Gordon Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 313.
9. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), viii.
10. Richard Eckersley, "The West's Deepening Cultural Crisis," *Futurist*, November/December 1993, 10.
11. David Bollier, "Who 'Owns' the Life of the Spirit?" *Tikkun*, January/February, 1994, 89.
12. Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 26.
13. Senator Gaylord Nelson, keynote speech at the 1993 Interfaith Launching of Earth Week conference, quoted in *EcoLetter*, North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology (NACRE), Washington, DC, 1993, p. 4.
14. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 203.
15. See Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects," *Philosophical Inquiry* 8, no. 1-2 (1983): 10-31.
16. Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, trans. Paul Wilson (New York: Knopf, 1988), 365-66.
17. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992), 162-63.

18. Vaclav Havel, "The Post-Communist Nightmare," *New York Review of Books*, May 27, 1993, 10.
19. Vaclav Havel, "The New Measure of Man," *New York Times*, op-ed page, July 8, 1994.
20. Albert Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, trans. C. T. Campion (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1933), 186.
21. *Ibid.*, 188.
22. "Liberating Life: A Report to the World Council of Churches," in *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology*, ed. Charles Birch, William Eakin, and Jay B. McDaniel (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990), 279.
23. Sandra Postel, "Denial in the Decisive Decade," in *1992 State of the World*, ed. Lester R. Brown (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), 4.
24. Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 319.
25. Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 42-43.