

***The Green Bible.* Eds. Stephen B. Scharper and Hilary Cunningham. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993. ISBN 0-88344-854-8. Pp. xii+124.**

Compiled and edited by Stephen B. Scharper and Hilary Cunningham, *The Green Bible* presents a series of reflections on creation, the environment and the ecological crisis from a wide variety of perspectives. It is surprising to find such an eclectic collection of voices ranging from holy scriptures, U.N. reports, environmental activists, aboriginal leaders, government documents, papal encyclicals, poets, playwrights and religious leaders. Side by side sit the thoughts of eco-theologian Thomas Berry and the director of the U.N. Environmental Programme, of NASA scientists and the World Council of Churches, and of Jacques Cousteau, Mohandas Ghandi and U.S. Vice-President Al Gore. All voice an urgent concern for the state of the environment and humanity's ruinous and suicidal spoilage of our household (the authors note that the word "ecology" comes from the Greek word for "household"). That the work is both ecumenical and wide-ranging in its selection of authors carries the implicit message that, while the Judeo-Christian tradition has much wisdom to impart in the face of impending ecological catastrophe, it also has much to learn from activists, scientists, humanists and artists passionately involved in the ecological movement.

The reflections are brief, usually no more than a paragraph and sometimes only a sentence. However they are not random and the work is both coherent and singular in its direction. The book is divided into seven chapters, one for each day of creation. Each chapter begins with the appropriate selection from the creation story in the book of Genesis and a short explanation of its significance for the ecological crisis today. The theme of each chapter is neatly summarized in a "household rule," a simple statement which represents the necessary reorientation of our values. Scharper and Cunningham argue that we must convert from the modern understanding of humans as infinitely desirous, individualistic self-promoters, which is perpetuated by industrialization and the uninhibited market. In place of these values we must adopt those that reflect the communitarian perspective of a self-limiting stewardship of the earth and its creatures.

Throughout the work, Scharper and Cunningham interweave the themes of restoring our attitude to nature, creating a just social order and working towards peace. These three issues, which for the authors form a "seamless garment," are reflected in a passage taken from the World Council of Churches' 1990 statement on the environment, *Now Is the Time*: "In such a time, we believe, the Spirit of God is speaking to the churches with great urgency; and the Spirit's fundamental message is this: repent, seek justice, peace and the integrity of

creation!" (14-15) As Reverend Jesse Jackson points out, "Environmentalists can no longer afford to ignore the crucial determinants of race and class in the environmental crisis. Toxic waste is not being deposited in Beverly Hills or Chevy Chase. It is stowed away in the middle of the night in poor communities in places like Arkansas, Louisiana and South Carolina" (39-40). Voices from the Third World and aboriginal peoples reinforce the link between social justice, working for peace and ecological sanity.

The Green Bible hopes to convert its readers to a compassionate and just attitude to the world and its resources. It approaches the problem from the Judeo-Christian tradition because the authors agree with U.S. Vice-President Al Gore that the ecological crisis is an outer manifestation of an inner crisis which he describes as "spiritual" (69-70). The crisis is spiritual because it involves a redefinition of human identity in its depths, an experience which the Judeo-Christian tradition has labelled "conversion." This redefinition and reorientation of values, like the spirituality promoted by the authors, are hardly abstract. They quickly move beyond attitudes and interiority to revolutionize our social, political and economic organization. Obviously, this spirituality is not "other-worldly"; it is centred on this world, this household we call earth.

The Green Bible will be a useful resource for ministers, religious educators, environmentalists, academics (especially those working in the area of ethics and the environment), theologians and adult educators. It is a good book around which to organize discussion groups on the ecological crisis in both religious and academic settings. It includes a useful bibliography and suggestions for further action that newcomers to the ecological debate will find particularly helpful.

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A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature. Ed. David Lyle Jeffrey. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992. ISBN 0-8028-3634-8. Pp. xxxii+960.

"The Old and New Testaments," said William Blake, "are the Great Code of Art." This claim was echoed more recently by the late Northrop Frye. George Lindbeck, too, recognizes that "the basic substructure of the literary imagination of the West" is biblical. Lindbeck, however, has gone on to observe that the awareness of the biblical tradition has been so eroded that accents, themes, metaphors, cadences and stories familiar only a generation ago even to the most