

## RELIGIOUS MODELS AND ECOLOGICAL DECISION MAKING

*by Don E. Marietta, Jr.*

In 1967 Lynn White, jr., published "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" and started an intense discussion.<sup>1</sup> The paper was reprinted in several periodicals and in books on the environmental crisis, and the reaction was quite divided. Some ecologists, Ian McHarg for example, agreed completely with White's thesis that Judeo-Christian theology was largely responsible for the extreme anthropocentrism and disregard for the natural environment which made possible the heedless technological development now threatening the biosphere.<sup>2</sup> The biblical story of creation, in which man is set above nature, with plants and animals existing only for man's sake, supports an attitude toward the environment as something to be used however man desires. Aldo Leopold saw this as the main reason why ethics, which has gradually evolved to become more inclusive of human rights, has failed to develop an adequate land-use ethic.<sup>3</sup> Allan Shields, Thomas Merton, and others have described the expression of the traditional Christian view as it was manifested in the attitude of the Puritans in America toward the wilderness and in the practices which followed the Puritan attitude.<sup>4</sup> A recent paper by John Passmore traces the effect of the biblical attitude toward animals in indifference to animal suffering or in condemnation of animal abuse only because such conduct has a bad effect on people.<sup>5</sup>

Some religious spokesmen acknowledge that the predominant theological view has not favored environmental concern,<sup>6</sup> but others hold that White has misinterpreted the Judeo-Christian view. They argue that God's command to subdue the earth was balanced by a command to tend it, and that creationism makes the natural environment valuable because it is God's creation.<sup>7</sup> Biblical passages are

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cited, such as the laws in Exodus and Deuteronomy protecting trees and animals and laws regarding land use and ownership. Psalm 104 and the Benedicite reflect an awareness of nature, as do certain sayings of Jesus. Romans 8:19–23 (“... the whole creation has been groaning in travail until now . . .”) is cited to show that all of nature is to share in the salvation of mankind. Frankly, I think these biblical passages are not very important indicators. There are not many of them, and some are subject to scholarly interpretations which give little weight to the claim that the Bible teaches care of the environment. David Engel sums up the biblical evidence when he says that the Bible does not unambiguously support abuse of the environment.<sup>8</sup> More important than isolated commandments and references to the beauty of nature are interpretations of basic theistic concepts such as creation of the world, a stress on the finiteness of the world, and the responsibility of man for all things in his keeping. Several theologians are building ecologically oriented theologies on these themes, as we will see later when we examine the favorable and unfavorable aspects of Jewish-Christian thought from an ecological perspective.

#### DOES RELIGIOUS BELIEF MATTER?

We must deal with a logical matter. Does any particular attitude toward the environment, any definite behavior, logically follow from theological beliefs? Indeed, we may start with the question of whether anything at all follows from theological statements. We do not need to return to the radical empiricism of several decades ago to realize that there is a problem regarding the factual significance of talk about God, the creation, divine providence, and the world to come. Many religious apologists seem to think that they were rid of the troublesome problem of meaning in theological discourse when the verifiability criterion of meaning was attacked by analytic philosophers themselves and a changing approach to the philosophy of language allowed for different senses of meaning and gave “legitimacy” to language uses once relegated to the rank of nonsense. Especially in Ludwig Wittgenstein did they see their Moses who had led them out of the Egypt of empirical philosophy. In short, Wittgenstein had held that various “language games” (i.e., rule-governed uses of language in defining and communicating “activities” or “forms of life” and built-in views of reality or “pictures”) can be understood and judged only from within that way of life. He said that if a lion were to speak to us we would not understand him.<sup>9</sup> If a theologian speaks of a life after death, Wittgenstein would not disagree with him; he simply would not know how he is using words, would not understand his technique and his “picture.”<sup>10</sup> I believe religious apologists took un-

warranted comfort from Wittgenstein. They may have been freed from the verifiability criterion, but they were not relieved of the need for relating their "language game" to the life of the world. As Kai Nielsen showed, language games are not so discrete that they do not overlap with others.<sup>11</sup> The religionist lives in the same world that can be interpreted in the scientific and commonsense language games, and, as a Jewish or Christian spokesman of a salvationist religion, he has things to say about that world, its inhabitants, and their prospects and duties. He cannot avoid indicating what aspects of our common life he is talking about. What actual claims are being made? Does the religionist know something about the world which I do not know? When he says the same thing I would say about ecological action, does he have a reason which I should share? The area of ecology provides a good test case for the whole issue of the factual value of theological utterances. I will borrow a term made famous by William James and speak of the "cash value" of statements. The concept of cashing a statement suggests several things. Some theological statements may be rubber checks, returnable unhonored because of insufficient funds. This can be related to statements which can be meaningful in terms of life in the world only if there is adequate evidential support. Then there are checks so badly written that they cannot be cashed. This can be related to putative statements which are so unclear conceptually or even self-contradictory that it is impossible to assign them a meaning.

When theological utterances are subjected to this rather tolerant and inclusive test of factual significance, they seldom hold up very well, in part because no theological statement is allowed to be falsified but is reinterpreted and qualified in such a way as to keep it from saying anything which experience can count against.<sup>12</sup> This has led some theologians to treat Christianity as a language game which expresses attitudes, sentiments, concerns, and commitments but says nothing objective about reality. This hardly seems to be what most religionists are doing, however, for they certainly seem to be making claims about the world. I think the best approach to this matter is to treat theology as meaningful discourse but to realize that there are problems in understanding how it functions, the technique of the language game. The way which has made most sense to me is to view theology, the "picture" in the language game, as a conceptual model or set of models. The function of conceptual models in natural and social science language games is more easily described than their function in theology. Scientific models (Thomas Kuhn calls them paradigms), which are not themselves confirmable hypotheses, serve to unify a range of phenomena and to give the scientific issue "epistemological vividness," as Frederick Ferré calls it.<sup>13</sup> The heliocentric

view of the universe and the photon theory of light are well-known models which give theoretical unity to a mass of data. Viewing a social group as an organism and thinking of the human body as a machine are ways of making theory more graphic. In addition to making an area of study more unified and vivid, such models are heuristic. They suggest hypotheses and experiments. Models in religious thought share some features of scientific models, but they are even more remote from experiential confirmation. They do not suggest specific hypotheses and experiments. How then can we assess their cash value? My colleague, Tom Baxley, suggested in humor one day that religionists are saying that the world is a warm fuzzy rather than a cool prickly. Some utterances may be doing little more than expressing such vague and subjective attitudes. Other statements, however, seem to be expressing belief that the world is one way rather than another possible way. They seem to indicate less than precise but identifiable expectations and firm commitments to values which imply ethical duties.<sup>14</sup> It is the nature of theological utterances that they cannot be reduced to factual statements, that is, statements which are central to scientific language games; but theistic affirmations, for example, seem to be cashable in terms of the world being created and therefore dependent upon a power transcending it. Events in the world can be explained in terms of a transcendent source of power and the purposes of a transcendent reason. Theism says, at least, that man is not fully comprehended when seen as a creature only of the world. Other more humanistic religious models may deny these transcendent aspects of the world and view man as an integral part of the natural world, a world which is itself the ultimate value.

Talk of God, creation, and Providence or of man in nature reveals the perspective, the gestalt, in terms of which the religionist sees his life world. The religionist's "conceptual environment," in terms of which he adopts goals and makes decisions, can be read in a sympathetic examination of what he says theologically.<sup>15</sup> If this is so, religion will have an important impact on ecological thinking and action.

We have been assuming all along that ideas are important sources of conduct. Perhaps we are wasting our time, insofar as the environmental crisis is concerned, in talking about religious beliefs. Ti-Fu Taun rejects the basic thesis of White's paper. Citing examples of lack of concern for nature in ancient Greece and Rome and in China, he argues that aesthetic and religious ideals seldom have played an important role among the forces that govern the world.<sup>16</sup> William W. Moncrief blames the environmental crisis on economic and social factors, such as democracy, technology, urbanization, and capitalistic

expansionism. Richard T. Wright places more weight on human failings, such as carelessness, ignorance, and greed. Of course, it would be a mistake to look for just one root of the environmental crisis.<sup>17</sup> I do not believe White did this, even though he is sometimes criticized as though he did. At most White says that the Judeo-Christian tradition was a necessary condition, and Wright and Moncrief realize that beliefs play some role in personal and social actions which affect the environment. The disagreement is over the relative importance of intellectual factors and where the ameliorative emphasis should be placed. Even if intellectual factors are emphasized, it would be extreme to place the whole blame for the crisis on Judaism and Christianity. Justly it has been pointed out that these religions were not the sole shapers of the Western mind. Important aspects of the anthropocentric attitude can be seen in classical philosophy (especially Aristotle and the Stoics) and can be traced in the mainstream of modern philosophy.<sup>18</sup>

The question remains, What effect do religious beliefs have on actions which affect the environment? I do not intend to attempt the sort of factual investigation for which sociologists of religion are best equipped. I am not familiar with studies specifically of the statistical correlation between religious belief and environmental action, akin to studies of religious attitudes and political activism, voting patterns, sexual behavior, etc.<sup>19</sup> Such studies will be useful to the philosopher, but his task is a different one. He deals with a conceptual problem, a matter of philosophical anthropology. The issue may be seen as the contemporary version of the old question of the reason or the passions as the ground of conduct. Are intellectual beliefs the motive force behind morally significant actions, or do nonintellectual forces move us? In a truly philosophical fashion I will take both sides of this classical question and betray both of them.

At first look it would seem that intellectual beliefs play only a modest role in shaping behavior. I have been impressed by two observations. First, very few people make a sustained effort to rationalize their conduct. Appeals to law, custom, or personal taste exhaust their reasons. Second, I am often impressed by the utter irrelevance of the reasons people give for their behavior. Sometimes there is no logical connection whatever between the putative reason and the conduct. Sometimes the reason cited is the most trivial of factors in the situation. The so-called reason has every appearance of an epiphenomenon. Of course, it is part of the wisdom of the ages that the most coolly rational of us is able to deceive himself, from time to time, as to the true reason for acting in a certain way. Hume appears to have the last word when he says that the reason should be the slave of the passions.

We feel ourselves on firmer ground when we disregard the wispy reasons people talk of and seek a causal relationship between behavior and social forces.

What explanation of the environment crisis wholly in terms of social and economic influences fails to account for, however, is why these particular social institutions arose and were accepted. There was a favorable judgment made upon them, at least by influential people.

What was the basis of this judgment? Was it not surely compatibility with the intellectual beliefs which are most salient, most central, in the world view of the most influential people? It seems that intellect does play a part in directing conduct, at least in shaping the institutions which in turn cause us to act in certain ways. If beliefs can influence conduct at this point, why may not ideas be effective in other ways? I think it is surely the case that beliefs do influence conduct, not only peripherally but centrally and importantly.

While I defend the view that intellectual beliefs do affect conduct significantly, I do not think that the most frequent and most important function of ideas is what it has usually been thought to be, that is, as the premises in a process of reasoning. The grounds of conduct seem most often to be beneath the level of conscious reasoning. To understand the function of beliefs we can turn to contemporary studies in the phenomenology of perception. One of the basic discoveries of phenomenology is that all perception imparts meaning to what is perceived. The mind is not a blank and passive slate being written upon by the world. Consciousness is selective and active. It constitutes the meaning of phenomena. It may be said that consciousness places an interpretation on every phenomenon if it is understood that this is not a deliberate judgment. Consciousness is not simply forced to see things, after which it "makes up its mind" about them. Anything perceived as a "thing" or "event" is perceived with the meaning and value already a constitutive part of it. I credit this approach to phenomenology only because this discipline has carried this type of analysis further than other methods of philosophy and science. The basic point I wish to make is supported by the linguistic theory of Wittgenstein, by Gestalt psychological theory, and by numerous scientific studies of perception. Where do beliefs come in? Beliefs influence the meaning and value which consciousness will place on a thing. This bestowal of meaning and value precedes any deliberate reasoning. Does a person see an engineering practice as a threat to the environment? This may depend on his beliefs, which make him notice the practice as significant in the first place. It is not always the case that some people make one decision and others another decision

about the same problem. They may simply not perceive the same problem, and some people may see no problem at all.

It is mainly, therefore, because of the effect of beliefs on perception that the question of religious and secular models is an important consideration for ecologists. The beliefs that are most salient will shape a person's conduct even though he is not aware of the influence and does not deliberately reason about it. S. Dillon Ripley and Helmut K. Buchner write, "Man's conceptual environment, not science, will determine the future of humanity."<sup>20</sup> There is no need to make an extreme claim that beliefs are the only important concern. Certainly, a person's knowledge about the world, his science, affects his perceptions in addition to guiding his later reasoning and calculating regarding means to achieve his ends. The effect of social institutions and biological and economic needs must not be minimized, but religious or secular belief models are effective at the most basic level of perception and merit careful attention.

#### CRITIQUE OF ALTERNATIVE MODELS

How can we judge between alternative models of reality? There is no escaping the use of subjective judgment in assessing various models, but a judgment need not be wholly idiosyncratic, and I want to identify as much common ground as possible between responsible, thinking people. The broad basis for judgment which all ecologists share is the survival of the biosphere, and most ecologists would include in that the survival of humanity. There are other bases on which a model can be judged, such as theological adequacy, political implications, aesthetic considerations, etc., but I assume that all of us share the basic concern for survival, even though we have other interests as well.<sup>21</sup>

An effective model, that is, a model which will facilitate the making of correct decisions regarding personal and social ecological action, must meet certain criteria. I suggest these as a minimum:

1. The model must be believable. It must be "connectable" with the world of our experience.<sup>22</sup> It must not partition our intellects by conflicting with current scientific knowledge. It must not strain our credulity by requiring us to believe blindly in myths and ideologies which have social value but are not commended to us on sound intellectual grounds.

2. The model must have an adequate "picture" of reality so as to elicit the desired perceptions of the world. It must affect our perceptions so that problems are seen as problems, dangers seen as dangers, values appreciated, and evils recognized. This means that the model

must incorporate the interdependence of man and nature or, perhaps better, the inclusion of man in nature. The picture must include the finiteness of nature and the limitation of natural resources, and it must see this finiteness of nature in terms of the future.

3. The model must provide motivation for people to act for the future good of humanity and for the stable health of the biosphere. The model must tend to reduce merely formalistic adherence to its picture. Statistical studies of the connection between religious belief and social and political attitudes show that religion has a significant effect on the activities of only those for whom religion is a salient part of life, and even then the effect is seen mainly in relation to church-related matters.<sup>23</sup> This suggests to me that most church members do not have a strong model with a clear picture which is "connectable" with their experience.

4. The model must help persons adjust creatively to changes necessary for the preservation of the environment. It seems obvious to most ecologists that survival will require new life-styles which stress cultural values rather than the consumption of goods. New economic measures will involve greater sharing and cooperation between nations, perhaps with a no-growth policy and a resulting lower living standard for people in the present industrial nations. Some futurists stress the need for sexual, racial, and economic equality. This new world ahead could be a nightmare for people not prepared for it, especially for those whose model of reality cannot accommodate the changes. An effective model should help a person change deliberately and creatively.

Other criteria for judging a model could be added, but these will be sufficient for a hard look at several alternative world views. When it comes to assessing actual models in terms of their effect upon ecological attitudes, we run into difficulty. The various perspectives which have been articulated in recent times do not fall neatly into a taxonomy. In attempting a commentary on them it will be difficult to avoid simplistic, obvious, and overgeneralized comments. I am not so sanguine as to think I will escape these dangers entirely; but, since we cannot now examine each person's views separately, we will have to learn what we can by drawing the picture with very broad strokes.

Let us consider a secularistic approach as a model, realizing all the while that we are greatly simplifying the matter by putting all secularists in the same roster. There do seem to be some observations we can make which will apply to all or most models which limit reality to the subject matter of experimentally founded natural and social sciences. The naturalism of Henry Nelson Wieman or Julian Huxley or



the humanism of the two Humanist Manifestos would not be included as secularistic models. I would treat them as nontheistic religious approaches. I would also exclude the atheism of Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty from the observations to be made about secularism for reasons too complicated to explain here.

A completely secular model has some immediately obvious advantages. Such an approach does not require faith in anything intangible. It does not threaten to go counter to scientific knowledge. Precisely because it is a reductionistic approach, it enables one to have a consistent and easily acceptable world view. For our purposes, however, it does have shortcomings. Most important, it gives no grounds for valuing a balanced ecological system which can survive for centuries. The natural environment is simply a collection of objects and processes viewed from a deliberately value-free perspective. There is no motivation, from the model itself, for long-term commitment. This is not to say that secularists are not concerned about the long-range effects of our actions upon the biosphere. Many of them are quite concerned, but this is because of personal character and personality traits such as kindness, sympathy, humility, a sense of justice, and aesthetic sensibilities. Such traits are not required by a secularist model and, in fact, may often be the residue from previous religious training or influence.

Another weakness of the secularist model is that it tends to be scientific and encourages, on the part of the less knowledgeable, an unrealistic trust in technology to solve all problems.

I may be dismissing this approach too lightly. Enlightened self-interest may be adequate to motivate the secularist to support sound environmental practices even at cost to himself and his generation, but the weight of careful opinion seems to be rather solidly opposed to this possibility, nor is it more impressed with the possibility that a natural sentiment toward benevolence is sufficient to motivate the behavior we seek.<sup>24</sup>

A variety of religious models are Judeo-Christian, but they vary in their use of traditional Jewish and Christian concepts. Many ecologists relate their concern for the environment to a model which is centered in or primarily derived from the mainstream of Christian theology. Such an approach has several factors which commend it to the environmentalist. What comes to mind first is its value for motivation, but this is hard to assess. Certainly, a Jew or Christian may have a sound attitude toward the environment, even though his ecological commitment was not derived directly from his religion, and his religious attitudes can reinforce his commitment to the environment. An example of this may be seen in two papers by J. Frank Cassell, who

holds that the role of the Christian is to be faithful to the "God of nature and to practice stewardship."<sup>25</sup> Cassell does not explain very clearly how this concern is derived from Christianity. Is there something in Judeo-Christian belief which fosters environmental commitment on the part of a theist who is not already concerned because of other influences?

There are several theological concepts on which a religious approach to ecology has been based. The concept of man's stewardship of everything over which he has control may be so basic to theism that it provides ample reason for ecological action. The theologians Hans Schwarz and Carl E. Braaten both argue that the eschatological interest of Christianity supports ethical commitment to long-range ecological responsibility.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary sacramental theology stresses the importance of the world and worldly things as vehicles of divine grace.

Other theists argue for a model less central to traditional Jewish or Christian thought. Frederick Elder supports what he calls an inclusionist approach to Christian theology, that is, one which sees man as an integral part of nature, with all life having value, a point of view which he finds in scripture, in Calvin, and in several outstanding modern theologians, although he grants that this has not been the dominant position historically or in the present.<sup>27</sup> Joseph Sittler, Engel, and Daniel F. Martensen advocate theological positions specifically designed to be ecological.<sup>28</sup> White suggests an alternative Christian view, of which Saint Francis is the paradigm. René Dubos favors a "theology of the earth" and suggests as the patron saint of ecologists Saint Benedict, whose monks worked and prayed and improved the land, practicing a "creative intervention" in nature.<sup>29</sup> John Bennet, Robert Mellert, John Ruskin Clark, and others present a pantheistic (neo-Whiteheadian) approach to man and nature.<sup>30</sup> These several theological models of reality and man's place in it emphasize somewhat different aspects of Christian thought and vary in their distance from a central Christian position, but each of these positions seems to be essentially dependent upon the Christian tradition. Some other theologies for ecology are only vaguely related to Christian doctrines. Perhaps they should be viewed as humanistic schemes within the context of a Christian culture.<sup>31</sup>

One weakness which I see is that these versions of Christian theology are options which a Christian can reject comfortably and which many do reject. Placing the stress on other aspects of Christian belief leads to a form of the theistic model which militates against environmental ethics. The linear concept of time, with a separation of nature and history, frequently results in an eschatology which does not sup-

port long-range ecological concern. It can minimize any worldly concern, and in its apocalyptic form it can look forward with equanimity to the destruction of the world. A stress on transcendence in theism can emphasize a salvation totally not of this world or foster a naive belief that God will solve all real problems. Christian apologists may insist that these are one-sided perversions of the faith which are corrected by fuller understanding of Christian theology. Unfortunately, they are contradicted by others with what seem to be valid credentials. On the other hand, if the Christian ecologist does not claim to have the one authentic theistic model but to have simply one model which he commends to us, he sacrifices some of the authority of his position. In any case, it is still necessary for a person to believe that the recommended doctrines are true, thus straining the credulity of many people. I would say, therefore, that a theistic model is less than ideal for the purpose of supporting ecological action. For many Jewish and Christian believers, however, the theistic model may be quite effective; therefore, traditional religious belief may be an important source of environmental concern within the Jewish and Christian communities.

Religious models which are nontheistic or which radically reinterpret the notion of deity may overcome the liabilities of a theistic model and at the same time preserve the cultural strength of religion in motivating and directing a responsible concern for the environment.

There are a number of quite varied examples of this kind of theology. Some remain close to a traditional Christian framework, using much of the traditional language. An early expression may be found in the work of Edward Scribner Ames. At present a strong example of this approach is seen in Ralph Wendell Burhoe's vision of a synthesis of theology and science.<sup>32</sup> It is not my purpose here to expound or criticize specific religious models but rather to consider how they would fit into the intellectual life of a concerned environmentalist. If Burhoe's program succeeds, the religious aspect does not call for an exercise in credulity but will be demanded by the same rationality which makes scientific knowledge acceptable. Success for Burhoe's theology will be in demonstrating that the scientific knowledge on which he builds is central to a scientific understanding of man in the world and that theological motifs are adequate, even superior, vehicles for expression of this scientific understanding.

John C. Godbey also advocates a scientific theology which comes to grips with the best knowledge available not for apologetic purposes but for theological accountability. He sees such a scientific-theological synthesis as having continuities with theologians such as Origen and

Aquinas. This continuity is not in the material content since Godbey holds that scientific theology must have no fixed content. It is a continuity in the manner of doing theology which integrates theology and current knowledge.<sup>33</sup>

When models of reality such as Burhoe and Godbey envision are examined in regard to their effectiveness in fostering environmental responsibility, they seem to be quite adequate. They have the power to motivate, they are credible in that they do not require belief in beings outside the world of our experience, they present an adequate "picture" of reality in that man is not separated from nature, they do not encourage merely formal acceptance of the "picture" since the picture itself is inclusive of all aspects of life, and they should encourage creative adjustment to social change. One thing about such scientific theologies which appeals to me is that they do not have the ad hoc quality of a refurbished Christianity spruced up to look good ecologically. A weakness of scientific theology is that its *Summa Theologica* has not been written. As long as it remains primarily a vision and a program, its model will be somewhat cloudy and difficult to assess.

One question regarding religious models seems to me to be quite debatable. Is it more advantageous to have a model which is closely related to the traditional religions and is expressed in traditional language, or is religious humanism the better alternative? My thinking tends to shift on this matter, and I do not feel firmly fixed in either position, but I do think the "burden of proof" lies with those who use the traditional language. There is an advantage in religious humanism, expressed in nontheistic terms, in that it does not limit its appeal to any particular tradition or to any at all. I have in mind earlier approaches, such as Julian Huxley and John Herman Randall, Jr. Recent expressions of such humanism in books by Michael Novak and Victor Ferkiss and a paper by Howard P. Kainz can relate to a wide variety of humanistic attitudes.<sup>34</sup> It is difficult to tell exactly what model is being used in some humanistic writings, but I think they are effective in fostering ecological attitudes in spite of their general vagueness. I prefer a lively bird in the bush to a sick bird in the hand. My subjective judgment is that we will be better guided ecologically by a vague but vital model than by a distinct and well-established model with obvious inadequacies.

There is one aspect of the preferred models which I believe to be most effective in stimulating ecological responsibility and which needs further analysis. In one way or another the effective models incorporate the belief that man is a part of nature. Especially in a nontheistic

context this aspect of the model raises some important issues. It is important to see what is actually involved in the notion of the unity of man and nature. I think several aspects of unity are most clearly spelled out in Abraham H. Maslow's description of what he calls "peak experiences," experiences which give the most profound awareness of the wholeness of all being.<sup>35</sup> In peak experiences there is the "seeing" of the universe as "an integrated and unified whole." This perspective on reality is "objective," that is, more detached from human concerns and from ego concerns than is ordinary experience. It is a more receptive, more humble form of cognition. This way of seeing reality tends to be "non-evaluating, non-comparing, or non-judging." The world is always seen as beautiful, good, desirable, and worthwhile. The "dichotomies, polarities, and conflicts of life" tend to be transcended or resolved. The aftereffects of peak experiences on persons make them more nonstriving, nonwishing, and less selfish.

Thomas McGinn points out a problem with the view that man is simply a part of nature. He sees this problem in Claude Lévi-Strauss's philosophical conclusion of his book *Tristes Tropiques*, denying the value of human intelligence and purpose in the universe which "began without the human race and will end without it."<sup>36</sup> McGinn argues that this implies an ethic which is both nonhumanistic and antihumanistic. Though man needs nature, nature does not need man, and man may be detrimental to nature. Since, however, nature does rely on man for value, it is pointless to ascribe value to nature and not to man, who alone is conscious of value, for whom alone there is any value.<sup>37</sup> McGinn does not address his comments to Maslow's work, but, when Maslow interprets peak experiences as detached not only from ego concerns but from human concerns and sees the resulting attitude as being nonevaluating and transcending all dichotomies and conflicts, the approach is similar to the Buddhism which appealed to Lévi-Strauss. This attitude may have some consequences which are inimical to environmental concern. A theoretical factor is that talk about the value of the world is not very meaningful. What is value divorced from consciousness of value? What is value apart from judging and valuing? When the distinctness of humanity and of human consciousness is minimized, all possibility of value or meaning is gone. A practical effect of devaluing humanity, along with comparative judgments of values and recognition of differences and conflicts, is that there is no motivation for positive ecological action. The nonstriving, nonwishing person may not be a great polluter or source of entropy, but neither will he recognize any reason to relate creatively to the environment which needs help in recovering from the damage man has already done.

## ZYGON

The religious model, theistic or immanentistic, must be humanistic, recognizing the importance of human consciousness and human creativity.<sup>38</sup> While man is an integral part of nature, in him nature has produced something which is more than the biological processes which are the foundation of his being. Man alone not only participates in the processes of nature but is able to contemplate them. Man not only lives life, he tells its story. Only in the mind of man does nature know herself. While the other plants and animals are completely what they are, actively being nature, man lives in terms of histories which are past and futures which may never be, as well as futures he will make to be. An effective conceptual picture must have a complete view of the human animal. The picture must recognize that he is an animal. This does not degrade man but helps keep in sight our basic, foundational being. We are living bodies, and our only way of being in the world is as bodies. Nonetheless, we are not the same as other species. An adequate model of reality will make us conscious of our species and conscious of the significance of the fact that we are able to act deliberately and creatively within the processes of nature. We are a species among other species, but any model which discourages consciousness of and loyalty to our species is bound to fail. The other species seem blindly and instinctively to live for their species. Man alone, it seems, must learn to do this voluntarily, and he needs a model which will help him do this, not one which will obscure the necessity of it. Even at the risk of being misunderstood I will say that men have not yet achieved an adequate anthropocentrism.

The complete and effective model will recognize that man is a living body and as such is one with the rest of nature. This side of the model will temper the other side of it, which recognizes the distinctive role of man in nature. The anthropocentrism of this model will not encourage man to abuse the world because the concept of man will include the world as mankind's common body.

Such a picture of reality is of itself a religious vision which elicits religious sentiment and religious commitment. In the poetic and artistic and mythological expression of this religion of the whole person in the whole society of man in the whole natural world, each culture undoubtedly will use symbols from its traditional religions and borrow symbols from its world neighbors. Without claiming prophetic powers, I believe that, unless we run out of time, the antihumanistic and ecologically damaging aspects of the old religions will atrophy and the aspects which favor man and the world will be realized in a new intellectual synthesis, on the basis of which mankind will create new societies of human, animal, and plant species in a common world.

NOTES

1. Lynn White, jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-7.
2. Ian McHarg, "Values, Process, and Form," in *The Ecological Conscience*, ed. Robert Disch (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 21-36 (from McHarg's *The Fitness of Man's Environment* [1968]).
3. Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," in *The Subversive Science*, ed. Paul Shephard and Daniel McKinley (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969), pp. 402-15 (from Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1949]).
4. Allan Shields, "Wilderness, Its Meaning and Value," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 11 (1973): 240-53; also, Thomas Merton, "The Wild Places," *Center Magazine* (July 1968), pp. 40-44; reprinted in Disch.
5. John Passmore, "The Treatment of Animals," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975): 195-218.
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14. Don E. Marietta, "Is Talk of God Talk of Anything?" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 4 (1973): 187-95.
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16. Ti-Fu Tuan, "On Treatment of the Environment in Ideal and Actuality," *American Scientist* 58 (1970): 222-49.
17. Lewis W. Moncrief, "The Cultural Roots of Our Environmental Crisis," *Science* 170 (1970): 508-12; reprinted in Barbour (n. 7 above); Richard T. Wright, "Responsibility for the Ecological Crises," *BioScience* 20, no. 13 (1970): 851-53; Barbour (n. 7 above) cites four historical roots of the crisis: attitudes "influenced by religion and cultural assumptions," economic institutions, technological development, and growth in population and living standards.
18. Thomas McGinn, "Ecology and Ethics," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1974): 151; see also Passmore (n. 5 above), esp. pp. 200-204.
19. Howard M. Bahr, Lois Franz Bartel, and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Orthodoxy, Activism, and the Salience of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 10 (Summer 1971): 69-75; see also David R. Gibbs, Samuel A. Mueller, and James R. Wood, "Doctrinal Orthodoxy, Salience, and the Consequential Dimension," *ibid.* 12 (March 1973): 32-52; Tuan and Wright (nn. 16 and 17 above) do not consider the various degrees of salience when they argue that religious values do not affect conduct.
20. Ripley and Buechner (n. 15 above).
21. E.g., Elise Boulding identifies and evaluates four models in respect to their combining transcendence and immanence in "Religion, Futurism, and Models of Social Change," *Humanist* 33 (November-December 1973): 35-39.

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22. John C. Godbey, "Further Remarks on the Need for a Scientific Theology," *Zygon* 5 (1970): 196-97.
23. See n. 19 above.
24. Ralph Wendell Burhoe, "The Human Prospect and the 'Lord of History,'" *Zygon* 10 (1975), esp. pp. 307-18, gives an extended explanation of the need for religious beliefs as a basis for altruism. See also McGinn, pp. 158 ff.; Leopold (n. 3 above), pp. 406-8.
25. J. Frank Cassel, "The Christian's Role in the Problems of Contemporary Human Ecology" and "Ecology, God and Me," in *Environmental Ethics*, ed. Donald R. Scoby (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 154-66, 225-27.
26. Hanz Schwarz, "The Eschatological Dimension of Ecology," *Zygon* 9 (1974): 323-38; Carl E. Braaten, "Caring for the Future: Where Ethics and Ecology Meet," *ibid.*, pp. 311-22.
27. See n. 6 above.
28. Joseph Sittler, "Ecological Commitment as Theological Responsibility," *Zygon* 5 (1970): 172-81; Engel (n. 8 above), esp. pp. 223-27; and Daniel F. Martensen, "Concerning the Ecological Matrix of Theology," *ibid.*, pp. 353-69.
29. René Dubos, *A God Within* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), esp. chap. 2 (reprinted in Barbour [n. 7 above]).
30. Robert Mellert, "Models and Metanoia," *Proceedings of the Catholic Philosophical Association* 47 (1973): 142-52; John Bennet, "Nature—God's Body: A Whiteheadian Perspective," *Philosophy Today* 18 (1974): 248-54; and John Ruskin Clark, "The Great Living System: The World as the Body of God," *Zygon* 9 (1974): 57-93.
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32. Ralph Wendell Burhoe, "Potentials for Religion from the Sciences," *Zygon* 5 (1970): 110-29, "The Concepts of God and Soul in a Scientific View of Human Purpose," *ibid.* 8 (1973): 412-42, "Human Prospect" (n. 24 above), esp. pp. 318-33, and other papers cited in the notes following his articles.
33. Godbey (n. 22 above), pp. 194-215.
34. Michael Novak, *A Theology for Radical Politics* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), esp. chap. 6. Victor Ferkiss seems to belong to this group. Even though he is a Christian, he advocates a culture "based on . . . naturalism, holism, and immanentism." See his "Ecological Humanism and Planetary Society," *Humanist* 34 (May-June 1974): 24-27 (a chapter from his *The Future of Technological Civilization* [New York: George Braziller, 1974]). Howard P. Kainz, "Philosophy and Ecology," *New Scholasticism* 47 (1973): 516-19.
35. Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), pp. xxi, 4, 18, 30-33, 59-67.
36. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), pp. 397-98.
37. McGinn (n. 18 above), pp. 156-57.
38. Kainz holds that ecology is a third stage of human consciousness which restores the unity between man and nature, with man as conscious self effectively relating to nature.