

Earthspirit: A Handbook for Nurturing an Ecological Christianity

By Rev. Michael Dowd

Reviewed by The Rev. Peter Moore Kochlacs

Is it time for a new sacred story, a story of the universe that all of humanity can hold in common, a story that the religions of the world can embrace as a helpful and useful metaphor along with each of their own creation stories?

Michael Dowd, in Earthspirit: A Handbook for Nurturing an Ecological Christianity, believes that this is true. In the February and May 1994 issues we share this new cosmology of the sacred story in two articles written by Rev. Dowd. This is a cosmology that takes as its premise that all of creation from the moment of first cause, the "Big Bang," is interrelated and interdependent and is a part of God's creation/salvation story.

Dowd writes, "Humans have no existence outside of the ecological cycles of Earth, which in turn has no existence outside of the solar system. The solar system has no existence outside the Milky Way galaxy. The

Milky Way has no existence outside of the universe. And the universe has no existence outside of God!" We are sacred to God and to each other and so is creation.

Earthspirit is a very readable, short book (128 pages) that can be used for personal meditation or for group study. Each chapter ends with a set of discussion questions. Chapter 1 introduces the New Cosmology, Chapter 2 takes a fresh look at Biblical Theology, Chapter 3 compares traditional theology to the New Story, Chapters 4 and 5 discusses the new Christian, and Chapter 6 lists resources. The "Introduction" to Earthspirit opens with a very wonderful story about a monk who had an opportunity to ask Jesus about the "when" of Jesus' second coming. I'll leave that tale for your discovery and reflection upon reading the book.

In closing, I offer this quote from Prince Sultan bin Sulman-

al-Saud, astronaut. "The first day we all pointed to our own countries. The third or fourth day we pointed to our own continents. The fifth day we were aware of only one earth." This is the visual power of the new Sacred Story. A new cosmology where we discover or rediscover that we are all - the whole world, the world universe - a part of God's sacred circle. We learn or relearn that all of the species, the rocks, air, and water have each other in common. And that through seeing this oneness, this graciousness, we gain the new vision so necessary to save the planet and our grandchildren from violence and ecological destruction.

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Earthspirit can be ordered from 23rd Publications, P.O. Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355 (800 321 0411) (paper 128 p.p. \$7.95)