

Ecotheology is a form of [constructive theology](#) that focuses on the interrelationships of [religion](#) and [nature](#), particularly in the [light of environmental concerns](#). Ecotheology generally starts from the [premise](#) that a relationship exists between human religious/spiritual [worldviews](#) and the [degradation of nature](#). It explores the interaction between [ecological values](#), such as [sustainability](#), and the human domination of nature. The movement has produced numerous religious-environmental projects around the world.

The burgeoning awareness of environmental crisis has led to widespread religious reflection on the human relationship with the earth. Such reflection has strong precedents in most religious traditions in the realms of [ethics](#) and [cosmology](#), and can be seen as a subset or corollary to the theology of nature. Christian ecotheology draws on the writings of such authors as Jesuit [priest](#) and [paleontologist](#) [Pierre Teilhard de Chardin](#), [process theologian](#) [Alfred North Whitehead](#), and is well-represented in [Protestantism](#) by John B. Cobb, Jr. and [Jürgen Moltmann](#) and [ecofeminist](#) theologians [Rosemary Radford Ruether](#), [Catherine Keller](#) and [Sallie McFague](#).

[Creation theology](#)

is another important expression of ecotheology that has been developed and popularized by [Matthew Fox](#)

, the former

[Catholic](#)

priest.

[Abraham Joshua Heschel](#)

and

[Martin Buber](#)

, both

[Jewish](#)

theologians, have also left their mark on Christian ecotheology, and provide significant inspiration for Jewish ecotheology.

[Hindu](#) ecotheology includes writers such as [Vandana Shiva](#) . [Seyyed Hossein Nasr](#) , a liberal [Muslim](#)

theologian, was one of the earlier voices calling for a re-evaluation of the Western relationship to nature.

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Precedents in religious thought

[Christianity](#) has often been viewed as the source of negative values towards the environment (see below), but there are many voices within the [Christian tradition](#) whose vision embraces the well-being of the earth and all creatures. While St.

[Francis of Assisi](#)

is one of the more obvious influences on Christian ecotheology, there are many theologians and teachers whose work has profound implications for Christian thinkers. Many of these are less well-known in the West because their primary influence has been on the

[Orthodox Church](#)

rather than the Roman Catholic Church.

The significance of indigenous traditions for the development of ecotheology can also not be understated.

Background

The relationship of theology to the modern ecological crisis became an intense issue of debate in Western [academia](#) in 1967, following the publication of the article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis, " by Lynn White, Jr., Professor of History at the University of California at Los Angeles. In this work, White puts forward a theory that the Christian model of human dominion over nature has led to environmental devastation.

In 1973, theologian [Jack Rogers](#) published an article in which he surveyed the published studies of approximately twelve theologians which had appeared since White's article. They reflect the search for "an appropriate theological model" which adequately assesses the biblical data regarding any relationship of God, humans, and nature.

Further exploration

[Elisabet Sahtouris](#) is a [biologist](#) who promotes a vision she believes will result in the [sustainable](#) health and well-being of humanity within the larger [living systems](#) of Earth and the cosmos. She is a lecturer in Gaia Theory and a co-worker with [James Lovelock](#) and [Lynn Margulis](#).

[Annie Dillard](#) , [Pulitzer Prize](#) -winning American author, also combined observations on nature and philosophical explorations in several ecotheological writings, including [Pilgrim at Tinker Creek](#).

Valerie Brown is a science and [environmental journalist](#) based in [Portland, Oregon](#) , whose work has appeared in

Environmental Health Perspectives, 21stC

, and other publications. She writes regularly about ecotheology.

[Terry Tempest Williams](#) is a [Mormon](#) writer who sensitively and imaginatively explores ecotheology in her very personal writing.

The majority of the content of *Indians of the Americas*, by former Bureau of Indian Affairs head [John Collier](#), concerns the link between ecological sustainability and religion among Native North and South Americans.

See also

- [Stewardship \(theology\)](#)
- [Kaitiaki](#)
- [Faith in Place](#)
- [Human ecology](#)
- [Spiritual ecology](#)
- [Religion and ecology](#)
- [Hima \(environmental protection\)](#)
- [Christianity and environmentalism](#)

References

- Rogers, J. (1973). "Ecological Theology: The Search for an Appropriate Theological Model." Reprinted from *Septuagesimo Anno: Theologische Opstellen Aangeboden Aan Prof. Dr. G. C. Berkower*. The Netherlands: J.H. Kok.
- White, L. Jr. (1971). "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." Reprinted in A.E. Lugo & S.C. Snedaker (Eds.) *Readings on Ecological Systems: Their Function and Relation to Man*. New York: MSS Educational Publishing.
- "Why Care for Earth's Environment?" (in the series "The Bible's Viewpoint") is a two-page article in the December 2007 issue of [Awake!](#) magazine. This represents the Bible's viewpoint according to the viewpoint of [Jehovah's Witnesses](#).

External links

- [MarvelBelieveCare.org](#) provides free online educational materials about the Bible and

caring for God's creation

- [ARC - Alliance of Religions and Conservation \(Bath UK\)](#)
- [CCC - Catholic Conservation Center \(Wading River NY US\)](#)
- [CofDE - Church of Deep Ecology \(Minneapolis MN USA\)](#)
- [COEJL - Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life \(NYC US\)](#)
- [CRLE - Center for Respect of Life and Environment \(Washington DC US\)](#)
- [EEN - Evangelical Environmental Network \(Suwanee Ga US\)](#)
- [EJP - Environmental Justice Program \(USCCB \(U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops\)](#)

[SDWP, Washington DC US\)](#)

- [The Forum on Religion and Ecology \(Harvard University, Cambridge Ma US\)](#)
- [ISSRNC - International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture \(Dept. of Religion, Univ. of Florida, Gainesville FL US\)](#)
- [NCC - Eco-Justice Program \(Natl Council of Churches of Christ, Washington DC US\)](#)
- [NRPE - National Religious Partnership for the Environment \(Amherst Ma US\)](#)
- [Web of Creation \(Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago IL US\)](#)
- [Christians' Ecological Responsibility](#)
- [The Ecotheology of Annie Dillard](#) [Annie Dillard](#) -
- [The rise of ecotheology](#)
- [Ecotheology: The Journal of Religion, Nature and the Environment](#)
- [Category List --- Religion-Online.org "Ecology/Environment"](#)