

Chapter 1 : 15 Current Environmental Problems That Our World is Facing - Conserve Energy Future

An ecological crisis occurs when changes to the environment of a species or population destabilizes its continued survival. A few possible causes include.

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Chapter 2 : Lynn Townsend White Jr. - Wikipedia

Crimes against nature. In , Lynn White, an historian from the University of California, published an article in *Science* magazine entitled 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis'.¹ In his article, White maintained that because modern science and technology are products of Western culture, and because Western culture has at its roots Christian attitudes and principles, and.

Biography[edit] White began his career as medieval historian focusing on the history of Latin monasticism in Sicily during the Norman Period but realized the coming conflict in Europe would interfere with his access to source materials. He wrote that the utilization of animals in antiquity was inefficient because the ancients were limited by the technologies of their period, specifically the lack of horseshoes and a bad harness design. White pointed to new methods of crop rotation and plowing and tied them to the rise of manor-based collective farming and the shift in European prosperity and power from the Mediterranean to the North. White also touched on the stirrup, the lateen sail, the wheel barrow, the spinning wheel, the hand crank, water-driven mills and wind mills. White contended in the first section of the book that the stirrup made shock combat possible, and therefore had a crucial role in shaping the feudal system. The most notable was the compound crank. Hilton wrote the most scathing of the early reviews, beginning with: The technical determinism of Professor Lynn White Jr. The historical roots of present-day ecologic crisis[edit] In , White conjectured that the Christian influences in the Middle Ages were at the root of ecological crisis in the 20th century. He suggests that at this point the hypotheses of science were married to the possibilities of technology and our ability to destroy and exploit the environment was vastly increased. Nevertheless, he also suggests that the mentality of the Industrial Revolution, that the earth was a resource for human consumption, was much older than the actuality of machinery, and has its roots in medieval Christianity and attitudes towards nature. He suggests that "what people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. He posited that these beliefs have led to an indifference towards nature which continues to impact in an industrial, "post-Christian" world. This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. It also galvanized interest in the relationship between history, nature and the evolution of ideas, thus stimulating new fields of study like environmental history and ecotheology. Equally, however, many saw his argument as a direct attack on Christianity and other commentators think his analysis of the impact of the Bible, and especially Genesis is misguided. Others, such as Lewis W. Later responses to his article include criticism not just of the central argument but also of the validity of his suggestion "I propose Francis as a patron saint for ecologists. White argued, "Since, until recent centuries, technology was chiefly the concern of groups which wrote little, the role which technological development plays in human affairs has been neglected," and declared, "If historians are to attempt to write the history of mankind, and not simply the history of mankind as it was viewed by the small and specialized segments of our race which have had the habit of scribbling, they must take a fresh view of the records, ask new questions of them, and use all the resources of archaeology, iconography, and etymology to find answers when no answers can be discovered in contemporary writings.

Chapter 3 : Ecological crisis - Wikipedia

Kevin MacKay. Kevin MacKay is a Canadian social science professor, labour activist, director of a non-profit sustainable development organization, and author of Radical Transformation: Oligarchy, Collapse, and the Crisis of Civilization, published by Between the Lines Books.

Unit 1 The Earth System and its Components 1. Yet, while all of these problems have physical environmental manifestations, their causes - and their potential solutions - are invariably bound up with human attitudes, beliefs, values, needs, desires, expectations, and behaviours. Main features of the environmental crisis At this point, a very brief overview of the environmental crisis may be helpful. It is important to emphasise that a wide range of views about the nature and severity of the current environmental crisis exists, and some of the issues are highly controversial. Nevertheless, there is broad agreement that the environmental crisis encompasses the following main issues. It occurs largely as a result of the combustion of fossil fuels, emissions from agriculture and pastoralism, and land-use changes that accompany the destruction, clearance and burning of forests. Climate change already has observable ecological and social effects, and its projected impacts could potentially result in profound changes in global mean surface temperature, sea level, ocean circulation, precipitation patterns, climatic zones, species distributions and ecosystem function. Many air pollutants are responsible for the degradation of air quality, but some key pollutants include particulate matter such as soot, tropospheric ozone, oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulphur, lead and various aromatic compounds such as benzene. Many air pollutants may cause or aggravate respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses; some are known carcinogens; and some can cause damage to vegetation and, in turn, produce a range of ecological effects. A major source of water pollution is the terrestrial run-off to inshore waters that occurs in many coastal locations; such run-off may contain significantly elevated levels of nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural land and from human settlements. Many other human activities lead to water pollution, including mining and industrial processes, which may create toxic effluent. Oil spills, accumulation of plastics and the bioaccumulation of persistent organic chemicals are some of the other causes of serious degradation of the marine environment. Scarcity of fresh water: For instance, the over-abstraction of water from rivers results in water shortages and problems of salinisation downstream. Irrigation practices may also be responsible for the depletion of local water sources and the salinisation of irrigated land. Vast differences in water security exist at the global scale, reflecting both demand for fresh water and the scale of public and private investment in water supplies, treatment and distribution. Land contamination may cause profound ecological effects and it presents severe constraints to development, since contaminated land must typically be rehabilitated before it is safe to use for agriculture, construction or recreation. Deforestation occurs for a variety of reasons, but the majority of deforestation now occurs when tropical forests are cleared for agriculture and pastoralism; other reasons include the destruction of trees for charcoal production and the selective logging of forests for timber. Soil erosion and degradation: Whilst analyses of the problems of soil erosion and degradation have become more sophisticated, recently, it is clear that these problems continue to have important consequences for agricultural and pastoral productivity as well as for the functioning of natural ecosystems. Land use change and habitat loss: The impact of land use change on forest and grassland environments is depicted in 1. Threats to biodiversity are not confined to terrestrial ecosystems; serious concerns have been raised about the future of marine and coastal wildlife species as a result of the pollution, over-exploitation and acidification of ocean and seas. They encompass a range of economic, social, political and technological issues. Achieving the first one billion of human population took most of human history, whilst the most recent increase of one billion was achieved in little more than a decade. However, recent declines in the rate of growth of population have occurred in many parts of the world, and in some countries populations are now declining. The total human population was around 5. Significant differences exist in cultural attitudes to the issues of human population size and the rate of population growth. Urbanisation is often associated with a range of social and environmental problems including overcrowding, congestion, pollution, public health issues, shortages of water for drinking, and inadequate sanitation. Urbanisation is also related to another issue: However, the

average values conceal enormous differences in the distribution and quality of food, and the lack of food security remains a profound challenge in many parts of the world. Debates about food production raise important environmental issues such as the use of genetically modified GM and genetically engineered GE seeds and produce. Large differences occur in the responses of human societies to diseases, reflecting vast inequalities in health care spending and in funding for pharmaceutical and medical research. Peak oil and energy security: Some estimates suggest that peak oil will occur - or has already occurred - early in the 21st century, with the implication that alternative energy sources will need to be developed in sufficient time to serve as a substitute for oil. For instance, the use of depleted uranium munitions causes significant land contamination, whilst the effects of the displacement of large numbers of people from zones of conflict can exert pressures on adjacent ecosystems. Displacement of people does not occur only in response to violence; globally, the effects of climate change are projected to result in the displacement of as many as million environmental refugees. Natural disasters Whilst not necessarily part of the environmental crisis, human populations are also faced with ongoing threats due to the occurrence of natural disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, floods, tsunamis and wildfires. Yet whilst these hazards may be natural in origin, it is important to acknowledge that human vulnerability to natural disasters is generally increasing, not least because human populations and settlements are growing in many marginal and dangerous areas, such as floodplains. Hence unsustainable practices - such as the construction of settlements on floodplains, or the intensive cultivation of marginal hill slope lands - may greatly increase the impacts of natural disasters on human societies and economies. The causes of the environmental crisis The causes of the environmental crisis have been the subject of considerable debate. However, in general, its main causes are now acknowledged to be: List the main issues that comprise the environmental crisis. As far as possible, categorise those issues according to a spatial scale; b time scale; and c the prospects for finding effective technological or policy solutions.

Chapter 4 : The Ecological Crisis, Socialism, and a New Society | New Compass

The Challenge of the Environmental Crisis. Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School Religions of the World and Ecology Series.

There is no denying that. However, as our environment changes, so does the need to become increasingly aware of the problems that surround it. With a massive influx of natural disasters, warming and cooling periods, different types of weather patterns and much more, people need to be aware of what types of environmental problems our planet is facing. Global warming has become an undisputed fact about our current livelihoods; our planet is warming up and we are definitely part of the problem. All across the world, people are facing a wealth of new and challenging environmental problems every day. Some of them are small and only affect a few ecosystems, but others are drastically changing the landscape of what we already know. Our planet is poised at the brink of a severe environmental crisis. Current environmental problems make us vulnerable to disasters and tragedies, now and in the future. We are in a state of planetary emergency, with environmental problems piling up high around us. Unless we address the various issues prudently and seriously we are surely doomed for disaster. Current environmental problems require urgent attention. Pollution of air, water and soil require millions of years to recoup. Industry and motor vehicle exhaust are the number one pollutants. Heavy metals, nitrates and plastic are toxins responsible for pollution. While water pollution is caused by oil spill, acid rain, urban runoff; air pollution is caused by various gases and toxins released by industries and factories and combustion of fossil fuels; soil pollution is majorly caused by industrial waste that deprives soil from essential nutrients. Climate changes like global warming is the result of human practices like emission of Greenhouse gases. The population of the planet is reaching unsustainable levels as it faces shortage of resources like water, fuel and food. Population explosion in less developed and developing countries is straining the already scarce resources. Intensive agriculture practiced to produce food damages the environment through use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides and insecticides. Overpopulation is one of the crucial current environmental problem. Natural resource depletion is another crucial current environmental problems. Fossil fuel consumption results in emission of Greenhouse gases, which is responsible for global warming and climate change. Globally, people are taking efforts to shift to renewable sources of energy like solar, wind, biogas and geothermal energy. The cost of installing the infrastructure and maintaining these sources has plummeted in the recent years. The over consumption of resources and creation of plastics are creating a global crisis of waste disposal. Developed countries are notorious for producing an excessive amount of waste or garbage and dumping their waste in the oceans and, less developed countries. Nuclear waste disposal has tremendous health hazards associated with it. Plastic, fast food, packaging and cheap electronic wastes threaten the well being of humans. Waste disposal is one of urgent current environmental problem. Climate change is yet another environmental problem that has surfaced in last couple of decades. It occurs due to rise in global warming which occurs due to increase in temperature of atmosphere by burning of fossil fuels and release of harmful gases by industries. Climate change has various harmful effects but not limited to melting of polar ice, change in seasons, occurrence of new diseases, frequent occurrence of floods and change in overall weather scenario. Human activity is leading to the extinction of species and habitats and and loss of bio-diversity. Eco systems, which took millions of years to perfect, are in danger when any species population is decimating. Balance of natural processes like pollination is crucial to the survival of the eco-system and human activity threatens the same. Another example is the destruction of coral reefs in the various oceans, which support the rich marine life. Our forests are natural sinks of carbon dioxide and produce fresh oxygen as well as helps in regulating temperature and rainfall. Deforestation simply means clearing of green cover and make that land available for residential, industrial or commercial purpose. It is a direct impact of excessive production of CO₂. The main impact is on shellfish and plankton in the same way as human osteoporosis. Once these toxic gases reach the upper atmosphere, they cause a hole in the ozone layer, the biggest of which is above the Antarctic. Ozone layer is valuable because it prevents harmful UV radiation from reaching the earth. This is one of the most important current environmental problem. Acid rain

occurs due to the presence of certain pollutants in the atmosphere. Clean drinking water is becoming a rare commodity. Water is becoming an economic and political issue as the human population fights for this resource. One of the options suggested is using the process of desalinization. Industrial development is filling our rivers seas and oceans with toxic pollutants which are a major threat to human health. Urban sprawl refers to migration of population from high density urban areas to low density rural areas which results in spreading of city over more and more rural land. Urban sprawl results in land degradation, increased traffic, environmental issues and health issues. The ever growing demand of land displaces natural environment consisting of flora and fauna instead of being replaced. The current environmental problems pose a lot of risk to health of humans, and animals. Dirty water is the biggest health risk of the world and poses threat to the quality of life and public health. Run-off to rivers carries along toxins, chemicals and disease carrying organisms. Pollutants cause respiratory disease like Asthma and cardiac-vascular problems. High temperatures encourage the spread of infectious diseases like Dengue. Genetic modification of food using biotechnology is called genetic engineering. Genetic modification of food results in increased toxins and diseases as genes from an allergic plant can transfer to target plant. Genetically modified crops can cause serious environmental problems as an engineered gene may prove toxic to wildlife. Another drawback is that increased use of toxins to make insect resistant plant can cause resultant organisms to become resistant to antibiotics. The need for change in our daily lives and the movements of our government is growing. If humans continue moving forward in such a harmful way towards the future, then there will be no future to consider. By raising awareness in your local community and within your families about these issues, you can help contribute to a more environmentally conscious and friendly place for you to live.

Chapter 5 : The Ecological Crisis: A Moral Problem | Pullen Memorial Baptist Church

The Ecological Crisis and its Consequences for Socialists by Phil Ward, December A subject such as this must of necessity discuss some "technical" questions first, Unless the enormity of the ecological crisis that faces us is understood in its broad outline, it will be impossible to isolate the central questions and formulate an.

Recent research has affirmed that the glaciers are melting faster than anticipated¹, and that acidification, with its catastrophic effect on ocean ecosystems, is also proceeding faster than feared². Soil is being destroyed. At stake is nothing less than a viable future on this planet. Oligarchy, Collapse, and the Crisis of Civilization, I argue that industrial civilization is being driven toward collapse by five key forces — related to terminal dysfunction within its ecological, economic, socio-cultural, and political sub-systems: Actions by individuals, institutions, and systems of governance are therefore disconnected from their effect on the natural world and on other peoples. Our civilization is critically degrading the biosphere, burning through non-renewable energy sources, and shifting the entire climatic balance. This form of government serves to lock in patterns of conflict, oppression, and ecological destruction. How Societies Choose to Fail or to Succeed, geographer Jared Diamond argued that many past civilizations have collapsed due to their inability to make correct decisions in the face of existential threats. The result is collapse — ecological devastation, political upheaval, and mass population die-off. The tendency for societies to collapse under excessive energy demands is an important insight. However, what Tainter and Diamond failed to appreciate is how oligarchy is an even more fundamental cause of civilization collapse. This explains a seeming paradox in which past civilizations have collapsed despite possessing the cultural and technological know-how needed to resolve their crises. However, when the political systems of Western democracies are scrutinized, clear and pervasive signs of oligarchy emerge. A study by American political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page revealed that the great majority of political decisions made in the United States reflect the interests of elites. Harper accelerated Tar Sands production, leading to the clear-cutting of thousands of acres of boreal forest, the diversion of millions of gallons of freshwater, and the creation of miles of toxic tailings ponds, filled with water contaminated by the bitumen extraction process. To create a sustainable future, we must first learn the lessons of the past, and what archaeological research shows is that throughout history, civilizations that have been captive to the interests of an oligarchic elite have all collapsed. As long as a self-interested elite controls decision-making in modern states, we will be far too late to avoid the effects of steadily contracting ecological limits. In addition, we will be unable to avert the downward spiral of economic crisis, conflict, and warfare that will result as oligarchs scramble to maintain their wealth and power in the face of dwindling resources and mounting crisis. This means that advocates for ecological sustainability must move far beyond individual actions, lobbying, or reform of existing political and economic institutions. If we are to have a chance, we must ensure that governments make decisions based on the public good, not on private profit. It will require movements for environmental sustainability, social justice, and economic fairness to come together, and to realize their common interest in dismantling the system of oligarchy and building a democratic, eco-socialist society. Such changes may seem like a tall order, but hope can be found in the deepening struggle being waged to protect our fragile ecosystems. First Nations groups are leading this charge and beginning to win some important victories. The inspiring Water Protectors of Standing Rock were able to disrupt the Dakota Access Pipeline in the face of intense government oppression.

Chapter 6 : The Environmental Crisis - Everything Connects

The Environmental Crisis is really a crisis of consciousness. Most people know the natural world is facing great challenges and degradation, but few know the true extents of the changes and deprivation the environment faces and its extended effects on human welfare and all other life on Earth.

While the particular causes and solutions of this crisis are being debated by scientists, economists, and policymakers, the facts of widespread destruction are causing alarm in many quarters. Indeed, from some perspectives the future of human life itself appears threatened. This is aggravated by population explosion, industrial growth, technological manipulation, and military proliferation heretofore unknown by the human community. From many accounts the basic elements which sustain life-sufficient water, clean air, and arable land are at risk. The challenges are formidable and well documented. The solutions, however, are more elusive and complex. Clearly, this crisis has economic, political, and social dimensions which require more detailed analysis than we can provide here. Suffice it to say, however, as did the Global Report: By formulating adequate plans for dealing with these large-scale problems, we will be laying the foundation for peace and prosperity in the future; by ignoring them, drifting passively while attending to what may seem more urgent, personal priorities, we are courting disaster. It is also a moral and spiritual crisis which, in order to be addressed, will require broader philosophical and religious understandings of ourselves as creatures of nature, embedded in life cycles and dependent on ecosystems. Religions, thus, need to be re-examined in light of the current environmental crisis. This is because religions help to shape our attitudes toward nature in both conscious and unconscious ways. Religions provide basic interpretive stories of who we are, what nature is, where we have come from, and where we are going. This comprises a worldview of a society. Religions also suggest how we should treat other humans and how we should relate to nature. These values make up the ethical orientation of a society. Religions thus generate worldviews and ethics which underlie fundamental attitudes and values of different cultures and societies. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion. Our feeling of alienation in the modern period has extended beyond the human community and its patterns of material exchanges to our interaction with nature itself. Especially in technologically sophisticated urban societies, we have become removed from the recognition of our dependence on nature. We no longer know who we are as earthlings; we no longer see the earth as sacred. Thomas Berry suggests that we have become autistic in our interactions with the natural world. In other words, we are unable to value the life and beauty of nature because we are locked in our own egocentric perspectives and shortsighted needs. He suggests that we need a new cosmology, cultural coding, and motivating energy to overcome this deprivation. Indeed, he speaks of evolution as a new story of the universe, namely, as a vast cosmological perspective that will resituate human meaning and direction in the context of four and a half billion years of earth history. It is here that the religions of the world may have a role to play in cooperation with other individuals, institutions, and initiatives that have been engaged with environmental issues for a considerable period of time. Despite their lateness in addressing the crisis, religions are beginning to respond in remarkably creative ways. They are not only rethinking their theologies but are also reorienting their sustainable practices and long-term environmental commitments. In so doing, the very nature of religion and of ethics is being challenged and changed. This is true because the reexamination of other worldviews created by religious beliefs and practices may be critical to our recovery of sufficiently comprehensive cosmologies, broad conceptual frameworks, and effective environmental ethics for the twenty-first century. While in the past none of the religions of the world have had to face an environmental crisis such as we are now confronting, they remain key instruments in shaping attitudes toward nature. The unintended consequences of the modern industrial drive for unlimited economic growth and resource development have led us to an impasse regarding the survival of many life-forms and appropriate management of varied ecosystems. The religious traditions may indeed be critical in helping to reimagine the viable conditions and long-range strategies for fostering mutually enhancing human-earth relations. Coordinated by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, the conferences involved some scholars, graduate students, religious leaders, and

environmental activists over a period of three years. The collaborative nature of the project is intentional. Such collaboration maximizes the opportunity for dialogical reflection on this issue of enormous complexity and accentuates the diversity of local manifestations of ecologically sustainable alternatives. This series is intended to serve as initial exploration of the emerging field of religion and ecology while pointing toward areas for further research. We are not unaware of the difficulties of engaging in such a task, yet we have been encouraged by the enthusiastic response to the conferences within the academic community, by the larger interest they have generated beyond academia, and by the probing examinations gathered in the volumes. We trust that this series and these volumes will be useful not only for scholars of religion but also for those shaping seminary education and institutional religious practices, as well as for those involved in environmental public policy. While, clearly, there are major methodological issues involved in utilizing traditional philosophical and religious ideas for contemporary concerns, there are also compelling reasons to support such efforts, however modest they may be. Indeed, despite their limitations, historically they have provided comprehensive cosmologies for interpretive direction, moral foundations for social cohesion, spiritual guidance for cultural expression, and ritual celebrations for meaningful life. In our search for more comprehensive ecological worldviews and more effective environmental ethics, it is inevitable that we will draw from the symbolic and conceptual resources of the religious traditions of the world. The effort to do this is not without precedent or problems, some of which will be signaled below. With this volume and with this series we hope the field of reflection and discussion regarding religion and ecology will begin to broaden, deepen, and complexify.

Qualifications and Goals

The Problems and Promise of Religions

These volumes, then, are built on the premise that the religions of the world may be instrumental in addressing the moral dilemmas created by the environmental crisis. At the same time we recognize the limitations of such efforts on the part of religions. We also acknowledge that the complexity of the problem requires interlocking approaches from such fields as science, economics, politics, health, and public policy. As the human community struggles to formulate different attitudes toward nature and to articulate broader conceptions of ethics embracing species and ecosystems, religions may thus be a necessary, though only contributing, part of this multidisciplinary approach. It is becoming increasingly evident that abundant scientific knowledge of the crisis is available and numerous political and economic statements have been formulated that reflect this concern. Yet we seem to lack the political, economic, and scientific leadership to make necessary changes. Moreover, what is still lacking is the religious commitment, moral imagination, and ethical engagement to transform the environmental crisis from an issue on paper to one of effective policy, from rhetoric in print to realism in action. Have issues of personal salvation superseded all others? Have divine-human relations been primary? Have anthropocentric ethics been all-consuming? Has the material world of nature been devalued by religion? Does the search for otherworldly rewards override commitment to this world? Did the religions simply surrender their natural theologies and concerns with exploring purpose in nature to positivistic scientific cosmologies? The reasons may not be readily apparent, but clearly they require further exploration and explanation. In discussing the involvement of religions in this issue, it is also appropriate to acknowledge the dark side of religion in both its institutional expressions and dogmatic forms. In addition to their oversight with regard to the environment, religions have been the source of enormous manipulation of power in fostering wars, in ignoring racial and social injustice, and in promoting unequal gender relations, to name only a few abuses. The problems are too vast and complex for unqualified optimism. Yet there is a growing consensus that religions may now have a significant role to play, just as in the past they have sustained individuals and cultures in the face of internal and external threats. A final caveat is the inevitable gap that arises between theories and practices in religions. As has been noted, even societies with religious traditions which appear sympathetic to the environment have in the past often misused resources. This disjunction of theory and practice is present within all philosophies and religions and is frequently the source of disillusionment, skepticism, and cynicism. A more realistic observation might be made, however, that this disjunction should not automatically invalidate the complex worldviews and rich cosmologies embedded in traditional religions. Rather, it is our task to explore these conceptual resources so as to broaden and expand our own perspectives in challenging and fruitful ways. In summary, we recognize that religions have elements

which are both prophetic and transformative as well as conservative and constraining. These elements are continually in tension, a condition which creates the great variety of thought and interpretation within religious traditions. To recognize these various tensions and limits, however, is not to lessen the urgency of the overall goals of this project. Rather, it is to circumscribe our efforts with healthy skepticism, cautious optimism, and modest ambitions. It is to suggest that this is a beginning in a new field of study which will affect both religion and ecology. On the one hand, this process of reflection will inevitably change how religions conceive of their own roles, missions, and identities, for such reflections demand a new sense of the sacred as not divorced from the earth itself. On the other hand, environmental studies can recognize that religions have helped to shape attitudes toward nature. Thus, as religions themselves evolve they may be indispensable in fostering a more expansive appreciation for the complexity and beauty of the natural world. At the same time as religions foster awe and reverence for nature, they may provide the transforming energies for ethical practices to protect endangered ecosystems, threatened species, and diminishing resources.

Methodological Concerns It is important to acknowledge that there are, inevitably, challenging methodological issues involved in such a project as we are undertaking in this emerging field of religion and ecology. With regard to time, it is necessary to recognize the vast historical complexity of each religious tradition, which cannot be easily condensed in these conferences or volumes. With respect to place, we need to signal the diverse cultural contexts in which these religions have developed. With regard to space, we recognize the varied frameworks of institutions and traditions in which these religions unfold. Finally, with respect to positionality, we acknowledge our own historical situatedness at the end of the twentieth century with distinctive contemporary concerns. Not only is each religious tradition historically complex and culturally diverse, but its beliefs, scriptures, and institutions have themselves been subject to vast commentaries and revisions over time. Thus, we recognize the radical diversity that exists within and among religious traditions which cannot be encompassed in any single volume. We acknowledge also that distortions may arise as we examine earlier historical traditions in light of contemporary issues. Nonetheless, environmental ethics philosopher J. Moreover, we cannot simply expect to borrow or adopt ideas and place them from one tradition directly into another. Even efforts to formulate global environmental ethics need to be sensitive to cultural particularity and diversity. We do not aim at creating a simple bricolage or bland fusion of perspectives. To do so will help to reveal certain commonalities among traditions, as well as limitations within traditions, as they begin to converge around this challenge presented by the environmental crisis. We need to identify our concerns, then, as embedded in the constraints of our own perspectival limits at the same time as we seek common ground. In describing various attitudes toward nature historically, we are aiming at critical understanding of the complexity, contexts, and frameworks in which these religions articulate such views. In addition, we are striving for empathetic appreciation for the traditions without idealizing their ecological potential or ignoring their environmental oversights. Finally, we are aiming at the creative revisioning of mutually enhancing human-earth relations. This revisioning may be assisted by highlighting the multi-perspectival attitudes toward nature which these traditions disclose. The prismatic effect of examining such attitudes and relationships may provide some necessary clarification and symbolic resources for reimagining our own situation and shared concerns at the end of the twentieth century. It will also be sharpened by identifying the multilayered symbol systems in world religions which have traditionally oriented humans in establishing relational resonances between the microcosm of the self and the macrocosm of the social and natural orders. In short, religious traditions may help to supply both creative resources of symbols, rituals, and texts as well as inspiring visions for reimagining ourselves as part of, not apart from, the natural world.

Aims The methodological issues outlined above were implied in the overall goals of the conferences, which were described as follows: To identify and evaluate the distinctive ecological attitudes, values, and practices of diverse religious traditions, making clear their links to intellectual, political, and other resources associated with these distinctive traditions.

Chapter 7 : The Environmental Crisis | The Anarchist Library

The world is facing a very serious environmental crisis. Key environmental problems include air pollution, the destruction of the ozone layer, vast quantities of toxic waste, massive levels of soil erosion, the possible exhaustion of key natural resources such as oil and coal, and the extinction of.

A Moral Problem June 21, [http:](http://) The piece asked the question: Has the Left finally come out with a method that will destroy the power of the Church to cause further damage to an already weakened Church, having been busy for years preparing for this moment? Not to be left out of the spotlight, politicians have been making the rounds this week with their own opinions. One presidential candidate told reporters earlier this week that the pope should butt out of policy conversations. It also includes considering the interest of the poorest and those who suffer most from discrimination. Climate and development policy cannot be separated. If the church is going to focus on what we are really good at or what we are supposed to be really good at , theology and morality, then we CANNOT, and we must not, close our eyes and shut our ears and turn off our minds when it comes to the ecological crisis facing our nation and world. The ecological crisis we are facing is a theological issue with great moral implications. One of the most profound moral issues underlying the ecological problem is the lack of respect for life and human dignity. Often, the interests of production prevail over concern for the dignity of workers, while economic interests take priority over the good of individuals and even entire peoplesâ€”delicate ecological balances are upset by the uncontrolled destruction of animal and plant life or by a reckless exploitation of natural resources. The same forces that hurt widows and orphans, minorities and women, children and the elderly also hurt the songbirds and trout, the ferns and old-growth forests: Until we can acknowledge that the spirit of Mother Teresa who cared for the poor and the sick is the same spirit of Saint Francis who cared for the sparrows and the salamanders, we keep alive the sacred-secular rift in our thinking that destroys our bodies, our souls, and our environment. As some politicians would have us do, we cannot separate the moral character or the theological underpinning of our faith from this ecological crisis we are in. To do so is to try and pick apart the stains of a single piece of thread by which we are all connected. The ecological crisis is a moral and theological problem. Because the Church, in large part, is responsible for the narrative, the theology that has led to the crisis: We must proclaim a faith that teaches the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living things. Our advocacy for justice for the poor must be linked with ecological justice. Indeed, at the heart of a new theology is a reconciliation of spirit and matter. It is not only our souls that God longs for, but our very cells. In both cases, it is our delusion of separation, from God and from each other, that leads us into the collusion of corporate sin. The actions of Dylann Roof, and of other white separatists, are extreme examples of racism that we can all decry as abominable. But they are also extensions of racist cultures and systems that we all participate in. The sin of Dylann Roof is clear, but in a country where black deaths at the hands of the police make headlines every week, in a country where mass incarceration of black males is an epidemic, in a country where racism is alive and thriving, we all participate in the corporate sin. And our theology has contributed to this ideology â€” our traditional theology that separates believers from non-believers or more often, right believers from wrong believers. Our theology that has institutionalized a European white church as the kingdom. It is beyond the scope of this sermon to address this fully, but I posit that a theology of wholeness, a theology that embraces the fullness and the interconnectedness of creation is critical as we strive to find ways to heal the wounds of race in this country. More and more I am learning that when, as people of faith, we discuss these complex and complicated issues what we need most are handles to hold on toâ€” something practical to practice day by day. Love Creation as you love God. Take only what you need. Respect all life, every living thing and preserve the dignity of life. Care for your body as you care for your soul. Care for the earth as you care for your body and soul. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love the trees and the rivers for they are your neighbors. Acknowledge the sacredness of the food you eat, the water you drink, and the air you breathe. Eat one less meal every three days. Do justice, love kindness, and walk lightly on this earth.

The Ecological Crisis is a Political Crisis September 25, *Living in the Future's Past* September 21, *11th Annual aeqai Fall Benefit and Art Auction* September 18,

The world is facing a very serious environmental crisis. Key environmental problems include air pollution, the destruction of the ozone layer, vast quantities of toxic waste, massive levels of soil erosion, the possible exhaustion of key natural resources such as oil and coal, and the extinction of plants and animals on a scale not seen since the death of the dinosaurs 60 million years ago. We think that this crisis is likely to have catastrophic effects in the future. Even today, the negative effects of the crisis are evident in the form of growing deserts, increased rates of cancer, and the loss of plant species which could hold out cures for diseases for diseases such as AIDS etc. What caused the crisis? We disagree with those environmentalists who blame the crisis on modern machine production. Many dangerous, environmentally destructive technologies and substances for example, coal power stations, non-degradable plastics which do not rot in the ground can be replaced with safer and sustainable industrial technologies for example, solar technology, starch-based plastics. We think that modern forms of production have many potential advantages over small-scale craft production. Such as greatly increasing the number of essential products like bricks produced, and freeing people from unpleasant toil. Most goods consumed in the world are consumed by the middle class and ruling class. Instead, the real blame for the environmental crisis must be laid at the door of capitalism and the State. These structures create massive levels of inequality which are responsible for much ecological devastation. The accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of the few is associated with excessive and unjustifiable high levels of consumption by the ruling elite. The poverty caused by the system also creates environmental problems. For example, by forcing the poor to cut down trees for firewood, exhaust the tiny bits of farm land that they own in a desperate attempt to provide food, pollute rivers because they lack proper plumbing facilities etc. Capitalists also build many goods to break as soon as possible forcing people to buy replacements , thus resulting in unnecessary waste. Many goods that are produced are deliberately destroyed in order to keep prices up, such as the million tons of grain stockpiled world-wide in Capitalists have developed safe, alternative technologies, which can replace environmentally destructive processes and substances. But they do not want to install these new technologies, or even proper safety and monitoring equipment, because this costs money and cuts into profits. They prefer to leave ordinary people to suffer pollution. Capitalists also promote inefficient and resource-wasting products in place of those which are more suited to sustaining the environment. For example, they promote private car ownership which consumes massive amounts of petrol per person , in place of public transport systems which minimise fuel consumption. The State defends and supports these practices. It does not want to impose strong environmental protection laws in case this hampers profit-making. In addition, the military activities of the State are a major cause of the environmental crisis. Massive amounts of resources are wasted on the building the repressive arm of the State: Weapons such as nuclear bombs have been developed which are capable of destroying all life on earth. Often, the knowledge acquired in making these weapons is applied to industry, resulting in very dangerous technologies such as nuclear power from research on nuclear bombs , and pesticides from research on chemical weapons. Working people, unions and the environment We think that environmental issues are directly relevant to working class, poor and working peasant people. These oppressed classes are the main victims of the environmental crisis. It is the workers who have to work in the factories that spew out toxic waste, who have to spray the pesticides which poison the land and water. It is the communities of the poor which are built next to the polluting industrial areas. It is the working peasantry whose land is destroyed by soil erosion. The environment is not just the veld and the wild animals, it is also where people live and work. A safe environment is thus a basic need for the masses. Only the masses have a direct and immediate interest in fighting against the environmental crisis: We therefore think that the way the environmental crisis must be dealt with in a class-struggle manner. Clearly, capitalism and the State are by their very nature destructive of the environment, and are thus a potential threat to the very survival of life on Earth. It is only the working masses,

who are the main victims of the crisis, and who are the only force capable of defeating the ruling class, which can halt the environmental crisis. In fact, because most environmental damage takes place at the point of production for example due to dangerous technologies, poor plant maintenance, hazardous operating procedures, and poor worker training, the powerful trade unions can play the key role in fighting for the environment in the here-and-now. We have already seen in this in South Africa where the Chemical Workers Industrial Union organised against the importation of toxic waste by Thor Chemicals. In the long-term, the trade unions can move beyond just defending the environment to saving it, by taking over the factories, farms and mines and introducing safe technologies. A worker-peasant revolution will help the environment in several ways. It will remove capitalism and the State, the main cause of the problems. It will eliminate the wasteful and excessive consumption of the rich. It will redistribute the land and end poverty. It will restructure production in an environmentally sustainable manner. In the immediate term, the Workers Solidarity Federation argues for workers in polluting factories to enforce safety rules and monitor pollution. We support actions by workers and communities to reduce and stop pollution. Where factories cannot be made safe, they should be closed down, but their workers should get re-employed at the same pay and skill levels in the same area. The environmental question needs to be related to the issue of land redistribution by pointing to how the legacy of racist land allocation in South Africa has resulted in the ecological devastation of the homelands. While we think that nature reserves should be retained, we recognise that such reserves were often set up under Apartheid at the cost of poor communities, resulting in much bitterness. Therefore we call for these communities to have some access to grazing, dry wood and other resources. We call for the unionisation of workers at such facilities. We oppose all testing of atomic, biological and chemical weapons in all circumstances and support direct action and union campaigns against these tests. We oppose the testing of medicines and other products on animals. These practices are unnecessarily cruel, and scientifically flawed as results obtained on one species e. It is the oppressed classes who suffer the effects of exposure to unsafe medicines. This preserves both jobs and the environment. We call on unions to establish their own environmental monitoring systems, and to publicise and organise actions against companies that expose workers and the community at large to toxic substances, pollution etc. Within unions, we raise the issue of pressurising industry to use recycled products where necessary and to find alternatives for products or by-products that harm the environment. This should be backed by industrial action.

Chapter 9 : The environmental crisis

Ecological Crisis and the Tragedy of the Commodity by Stefano B. Longo, Rebecca Clausen and Brett Clark We live in an era of ecological crisis, which is a direct result of human actions.

Most people know the natural world is facing great challenges and degradation, but few know the true extents of the changes and deprivation the environment faces and its extended effects on human welfare and all other life on Earth. There is a great gap between the multitude of problems the environment faces on all fronts and the level of awareness most people have on these issues. During this critical period of human history, our generation has been given the urgent task of reversing the damages of industrial civilization and overcoming perhaps the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced - uniting as one conscious, sustainable force to secure the stability of our future environmentally, economically, and socially, for we cannot trash the planet, destroy its biodiversity, alter the climate, and continue living off the wealth of future generations without condemning ourselves and the basis of our civilization in the process. The environmental movement, with over one million environmental, social justice, and indigenous organizations present, is the fastest growing movement on Earth. Environmentalism has become a broader, unifying human issue where every living system in the biosphere is in a constant, accelerated decline. Global warming, for example, is real, destructive and its future impacts defy the imagination, but our collective will to make a difference is just as real and equally defiant in the face of great challenges. It all begins with overcoming the idea that you are too small to make a difference. One of the greatest illusions in the world causing most of the devastation we see today is that we are separate from all the forests and all the oceans, that we are separate from all other life on Earth. That we are superior to nature. But the reality is we are part of nature. That above all, we are nature. Beyond our stunning technological and intellectual advancements, we can clearly see our devastating impacts to the furthest corners of the Earth. Healing the lands and oceans, improving our health and well-being, protecting wildlife and giving our children the future they deserve begins with the inspiration, awareness and knowledge to do so. The impacts of climate change and environmental damage are often observed at a direct level, whereby sea-level is measured or temperatures monitored. This map however illustrates how the environment will have far-reaching consequences, with dramatic changes to the migratory movements of people and forced displacement as a result of the change in climate and environmental conditions. Click to enlarge and for sources. Global warming has already had observable effects on the environment, such as shrinking glaciers, earlier break up of ice on rivers and lakes, increased droughts, intensifying extreme weather and plant and animal ranges shifting. Without effective action to halt the burning of fossil fuels and reduce the levels of greenhouse gases released by human activity, humans and wildlife worldwide face an unwelcoming future. There will be increased disruptions to society from extreme weather, with more frequent flooding and storms, more severe droughts and heat waves, rising sea levels and warming permafrost. In many regions, the effects of water shortages and extreme heat will adversely affect agriculture and the effects on the natural world will be severe with a major loss of coral reefs as oceans warm and to tropical forests as fires become more frequent. These impacts will also be felt enormously in economic terms. The cost of doing nothing and continuing our trends will severely oppress world financial systems. Consequently, these costs are being passed onto society and nature. There will be many social consequences with mass human migrations from lands affected by drought or famine and extreme heat stress in the urban areas of tropical and subtropical countries. The scientific consensus regarding climate change is based on the work of thousands of experts from hundreds of research institutions located across the globe. Scientists worldwide have considered all the possible natural factors that affect climate on Earth, from the output of the sun to the effects of volcanoes. From cavemen sparking fires to leaders of our biological community, we have accomplished amazing feats and developed incredibly as a species. It is now time to continue our remarkable advancements, but with mother nature, not against her. For if we do not change many of our destructive ways, the changes will be forced upon us by a degraded, unstable biosphere - rapidly, destructively and without discrimination. Empower your mind to the challenges our society and natural world face and discover the actions you can take

today for a better tomorrow. Many of the major killers such as diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition, malaria and dengue are highly climate-sensitive and are expected to worsen as the climate changes. Areas with weak health infrastructure – mostly in developing countries – will be the least able to cope without assistance to prepare and respond. Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through better transport, food and energy-use choices can result in improved health. Defense of our resources is just as important as defense abroad. Otherwise what is there to defend? Saint Helens eruption to occur every 2. Image Science and Analysis Laboratory, NASA-Johnson Space Center "If the physical scientists who warn about limits to growth are right, confronting the global economic meltdown implies far more than merely getting the banks and mortgage lenders back on their feet. Indeed, in that case we face a fundamental change in our economy as significant as the advent of the industrial revolution. But there are few signs that policy makers understand any of this. Without urgent action, we could face threats to water, food, biodiversity and other critical resources: In one lifetime our increasingly interconnected and interdependent economic, social, cultural and political systems have come to place pressures on the environment that may cause fundamental changes in the Earth system and move us beyond safe natural boundaries. But the same interconnectedness provides the potential for solutions: As consumption accelerates everywhere and world population rises, it is no longer sufficient to work towards a distant ideal of sustainable development. Global sustainability must become a foundation of society. It can and must be part of the bedrock of nation states and the fabric of societies.