If land economies are the ecological imperative of the rise of the modern environmental movement, may one find an historical precedent in the origins of Christianity? (Edited)

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Abstract

This thesis will examine the contention that land economies, namely access to available land towards its capacity to grow food plants and rear livestock, and the preservation of wilderness, is the ecological imperative of the modern environmental movement. Having established that this is the understanding in some branches of the movement, it will consider the extent to which a biblical symbolism of land plays a part in the formation of the terms for its contextual analysis and offers some models for its solution.

In view of these environmental issues I make an overview of the social circumstances and the prevailing beliefs at the time of Jesus, and then look towards the modern era from the Reformation period onwards. Underlying this is the multitude of spiritual movements and social reforms that marked the progress into the Industrial Age, bringing the environmental movement right up to date.

The different ideological approaches towards the meanings embedded in the land's cultural history in the West are the central subject material of this essay. This includes religious and scientific perspectives, as well as its popular conceptions and its politico-economic value as attributed by governments and peasants alike. I highlight throughout this essay the motive that land has towards the basis for revolutionary behaviour and for the creation of a sustainable future. Due to the broadness of the question within a given size I have had to slim-line the bulk of relevant issues, for instance the land's natural health-giving properties, economic structures, land ownership and tenure, and the historical practice of management. In its place I have tried to focus on the plight of the peasantry and the symbolic representation that land has towards its usefulness as a resource for wealth and power mongering and not least its religious connotations, and contain my answer to the specific periods of both the founding of Christianity and modern environmental philosophy. I will use the footnotes and appendices to embellish my case if I deem it necessary.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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I Hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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The ecological imperative

The cultivation of seed plants and agriculture has never been taken for granted. The dominant method in the Mediterranean was the scratch plough.[1] Of cultivation, the opium poppy was harvested for its medical uses by the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians and Assyrians, and one may assume that its quality of oil had been exploited too. Barley, being a more salt-tolerant plant, gradually replaced wheat in Mesopotamia, with a general declination in yield between 2400 and 1700BCE.[2] Besides wheat, the two other main crops of the Mediterranean were olive (oil) and grape (wine). Even as far back as 5400BCE wine was being produced in the Zagros Mountains in Iran. One only needs to look towards Egypt, Mesopotamia and Mohenjo Daro (Pakistan) to see that ancient agricultural civilisations had already begun to make its mark on the earth's ecology, from the cultural decline that was intrinsically linked to soil depletion.[3] Most degradation though, happened in the arid/semi-arid zones where irrigation was necessary.[4] Without ample tree cover topsoil gets eroded away relatively quickly or simply used up. During the latter part of the Roman Empire terraced walls became dilapidated and the landscape, which was once forested, washed into rivers and lakes causing silting up. The history of soil erosion can be traced to the Neolithic period with the actions of both herds

[1] J. Donald Hughes, *The Mediterranean: An Environmental History,* p31.
[2] *Ibid*., p33.
[3] René Dubos, 'Franciscan Conservation versus Benedictine Stewardship', p153.
[4] *Ibid*., p155.

through grazing and farmers through fire (swidden).[5] Nevertheless, it was through the expanding Roman Empire that large clearances made way for shipbuilding, grazing land and agriculture to feed the growing armies. By the 4th century CE expansive areas of North Africa had become desert; degradation also occurring in major regions of Spain, Greece and Southern Italy.[6]

To lay any fault in the practices of one people or another, whatever creed or religion, is an unnecessary deviation of reality. With the expansion of Neolithic man came the rapid extinction of several large mammals and terrestrial birds, and the pattern would continue with the hunting practices of ancient civilisations, namely the Assyrians, Egyptians and early Amerindians.[7] White vindicates this point suggesting that the historical roots of the ecological crisis are not peculiar to the Judaeo-Christian tradition.[8] But it was the Judaeo-Christian people who were probably the first to develop a large-scale pervasive land ethic,[9] something I explore more fully in this essay. This can be surmised in the understanding of St. Symeon and other Fathers when the former advances that God did not give paradise alone, but the whole earth.[10] His expounding of the expression "to till and keep it" of the Old Testament (Gen.2: 15) underlines man's rights and responsibilities towards the environment, necessitating the conservation of the land if he is to maintain its farming potential. Likewise "to subdue" must also be aligned with the God-given right "to rule and reign" over all other creatures (Gen.1: 28), with the effect of being responsible and preservative of that position.

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5 J. Donald Hughes, *op.cit*., p21.

6 Michael S. Northcott, *The Environment and Human Ethics*, p16.

7 René Dubos *op. cit*., p159. He also refers to the techniques of the Australian aborigines asserting the claim that they were responsible for drastically altering the vegetation cover and causing soil erosion. See D. Holmgrem, *Permaculture*, p229 for a fuller appreciation of their seasonal methods.

8 Lynn White, Jr 'The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis', first published in *Science* 1 Report, Vol. 155 (1967), 1203-1207.

9 *Ibid*., p161.

10 Anestis G. Keselopoulos, *Man and the Environment*, pp.177-178.

Alistair McIntosh expresses a point here that modern scholarship provides a more appropriate translation: "to serve and watch over".[11]

If one were to carry this sentiment forward to the modern period and take a wedge out of the earth's surface, the richest growing zone is between Europe (SW France) and NW Iberia.[12] Where protein synthesis signify the element most likely to produce good agricultural land, one need only extend that wedge to the temperate climates of the Americas.[13] The fertility of the land is embodied in the soil's capacity to hold nutrients, unlike the shallow soils of tropical rainforests where minerals are actively stored in its perpetual biomass. Unlike also the higher pastures of mountain ranges where conditions are much harsher and growth much lower, it being more suited to grazing. Hence, most of the best agricultural land in the world is Western, which developed as a reciprocal process of population expansion and human emigration. Crosby states that the superiority of human existence in the "neo-Europes" verified it as the most important factor of their natural increase. Once the Americas were discovered and secured, fifty million poured through the ports, pushed from behind and carried by steamship between 1820 and 1930 when overseas travel became much safer and cheaper.[14] France, agriculturally the richest nation in Europe, had sixteen food shortages in the 18th century but hunger and periodic starvation were a natural part of life.[15] On the contrary, accepting the first years of the American pioneers, famine was relatively unknown in the New World, and as such too appetising to ignore. This does emphasise one major characteristic of the expansion of human civilisation. That is, with the commercialisation of technological invention either through war or market economy, so the layman could move beyond his native environment to effect external changes enough to dominate any foreign

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[11] Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, p48; see David Noel Freedman (ed.), 'Land', (entry in the) *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* Vol.4, pp143-154.
[12] Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, p306.
[13] *Ibid*., p304.
[14] *Ibid*., p295.

land. In reflection of this one sees a biblical precedent in the stories of the Israelite exodus of conquest and war leading to the discovery of the Promised Land. That the Fertile Crescent was gained through the brutal elimination of the pagan cults of Baal (Canaan) has been, arguably, a psychological premise for the elimination of the native Amerindian from the 16th century onwards. As such the victors may claim the privilege of redefining the vanquished, for instance after Cortés the friars that followed barbarised the Aztecs but nevertheless showed them compassion.[16] They despised everything about their culture in direct contrast to the high level of esteem Cortes had held them in for the civilized development and the evolved piety of their Aztec priesthood. It is more than coincidence that in Britain and Ireland (1536-1541), under divine justification, the developing scientific rationale during this era of voyage and discovery had accompanied the dissolution of the monasteries and most importantly, their loss of temporal powers. The Christian precepts of compassion and love took a back seat to plunder and the slave trade.[17] And further, with irony all secular wealth was being invested into industry, the very industriousness of which had been foremost in the attitudes of the Franciscans it superseded.

The dislocation of people is a point I explore in greater detail further on, especially with a view to the Enclosures and the change of usage of British common land. In particular, I highlight the plight of the Scots during the Clearances as an 'evolution' of British culture from the gradual development of elitism and wealth of the middle to upper classes. I ask the question: Is this the true Judaeo-Christian mentality, an otherworldly justification for the desire to exercise global homogeneity in production and development? And is this in sentiment with the Christian message for the providence of all especially in relation to its Judaic inheritance? More importantly, as a central theme to this essay, I make the claim here

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[15] *Ibid*., p299.

[16] W. Arens, *The Man-eating Myth*, pp59-62. Fifty years after the Conquest the consequences and the character of colonial rule were becoming a matter of rational debate in the capitals of Europe. Conquistadors penned the accounts only later in life.

that land availability is as much an ecological premise as it is a religious quest, no matter how far back one may strike a root towards its conception.

The politico-environmental milieu

It is indubitable that in the recent climate accessibility to land has taken precedence over most other issues within environmental circles.[18] The over-subscription for government funding made available to both small and large organisations is indicative of the public motivation to address one of the most basic necessities of our lives – freeing up more land for the production of locally produced food.[19] Nearly 40% of British food is imported though, under EU policy[20] and thus alludes to an aberration of that necessity. In his "honeymoon" year the new president and First Lady of the United States, Barack and Michelle Obama, posed for pictures with the family digging up the lawns of the Whitehouse in order to create areas for growing one's own vegetables.[21] This act in which the First Lady issues an environmental message of the need for organic food appears to be a statement for cultural reform. That food issues are strongly linked to the availability of energy is self-explanatory, since food plants and animals require feeding and the work energy necessary to maintain them. Most, if not all,

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[17] Jatinder K. Bajaj, 'Francis Bacon, the First Philosopher of Modern Science: a non-Western View', p45.

[18] See the many articles in *The Land*, in particular those on community purchasing and right to buy, c.f. Martin Large and Greg Pilley, 'Making Fordhall Affordable', No.3, p45.

[19] Organisations like the National Trust and Network Rail are now making land available for government incentives like the Capital Growth scheme '2012 New Growing Spaces by 2012 in London'. (See http://www.capitalgrowth.org/big_idea/ for more information.) That governments can mobilise alternative economies in a short period of time is not in doubt. The Second World War was an example of this. The Transition Town Movement seeks to prevent the major social upheavals this would entail and prepare for an easier "power-down". Rob Hopkins comes up with the figures for 1939 to 1945 of an increase of over 50% of land made available for cultivation to 19.8 million acres in which food production had risen by 91%. Essentially, it was people's back gardens that provided most of the fresh fruit and vegetables whilst farms produced the carbohydrates and fats. (Rob Hopkins, *The Transition Town Handbook,* p66.)

[20] Simon Fairlie, 'Can Britain Feed Itself?' in *The Land* No.4, p18. The UK's ability to feed itself is at its lowest in the last 50 years and since 2004 has lost its self-sufficiency in energy production too; NEF, "China-dependence' going up for life in UK as the world as a whole goes into 'ecological debt", 6th October, 2007 at http://www.neweconomics.org/press-releases/%E2%80%98china-dependence-going-life-uk-world-whole-goes-ecological-debt.

[21] See Andrea Wulf, 'Politics in spades: Why the Obama veg patch matters', in *The Guardian*, 24th March, 2009 at www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/mar/24/gardens-michelle-obama. The Obamas are following a

Western produce has its manufacturing process directly and indirectly related to the mining of fossil fuels, especially oil.[22] If anything, the contemporary crisis has very much been fuelled by the lack of self-awareness amongst the Western population regarding how food issues are intrinsically linked to the manipulation of land economies, since its availability has near totally been controlled by supermarket oligarchies and government policy. Wartime Britain in the Dig for Victory campaign dramatically increased food production on a local level as an exigent measure whilst the national economy and industrial infrastructure required time to readjust and stabilise.[23] Since that time the USA and Europe have furnished a strong bond both politically and economically to the extent that the USA have dictated much of the global market.[24] In his tour of Britain Obama is noted as saying that Britain has a special relationship with the USA.

"We can never say it enough. The United States and the United Kingdom enjoy a truly special relationship … Our alliance thrives because it advances our common interests," Obama said. "I think we've had a brilliant start as partners who see eye-to-eye on virtually every challenge." (29th July, 2010)[25]

One can only assume that the think tanks of both governments are designing in the mutual assistance of the other in mitigating the global socio-economic crisis of our present time. The political handling of such issues leaves a lot to be desired despite the humanitarian call of

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long line of legacy in the White House including George Washington and John Adams. The article leaves one inferring something of a loss of garden culture in our post-WWII legacy.

[22] Rob Hopkins, *The Transition Town Handbook,* pp18-19. To give an idea of how far we have come fossil fuel has allowed us to do 70 to 100 times more work than if we had done so manually. See http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2003-10/uou-bm9102603.php for more information.

[23] *Ibid*., pp65-67. See also http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A2263529. During the war farming was modernised and the Woman's Land Army (WLA) was successfully employed to keep Britain fed.

[24] Economically, this role is being usurped by China, the story referred to earlier.

[25] Simon Tisdall, ´Cameron has proved himself - as Obama´s useful idiot´. (http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jul/29/david-cameron-obamas-useful-idiot?INTCMP=SRCH). Of course this Anglo-American relationship goes back to the Bush administration and includes Tony Bair and Gordon Brown during the Iraq War for Oil period. Amongst environmentalists there is little doubt that the true motive was to do with future energy resources.

international governments and NGO's to consistently and increasingly provide aid to Third-World countries.[26] Bron Taylor shows scorn for this fact when he highlights the disparity between nations of contrasting narratives that often appear to compete against each other, for instance, multilateral "aid" that promotes cash-crop monoculture leading to deprivation, or huge "development" schemes that displace rural peoples and also contribute to declining biological diversity. [27]

Food issues are affected by many contentious factors. These factors have been the brunt of environmental campaigns because of their lack of sustainability, and whilst self-empowerment to grow one's own food is a way of getting back to traditional values, this does not necessarily implicate an immediate solution to solve the current global crisis, issues concerning factory farming, genetically modified crops, and corporate patented seeds that require corporate-supplied chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. Thus said, the response from the organic movement has been somewhat stifled in the least. For instance, it does not fully endorse a reduction in the number of cattle reared in the world despite being identified as one of the major contributors to the production of methane gas, (falsely identified as a major contributor to global warming[28]) and having a large carbon footprint. In fact, land put over to cattle rearing and the production of fodder could otherwise be planted with human food, which to an extent would mitigate the need to import from the rest of the

[26] DFID (Department for International Development), ´Providing budget support to developing countries´, National Audit Office (8 February 2008), pp7-9. (http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/providing_budget_support_to_de.aspx?alreadysearchfor=yes) Funding is given directly to partner governments who are then monitored against its agreed development strategy to reduce poverty. (1.3) For 2006-07 DFID estimated that it would provide £550 million to 15 countries but was subsequently lowered to £461 million spent in 13 countries. (1.9) This figure is 20% of its bilateral expenditure which somewhat obscures the data.

[27] Bron Raymond Taylor (ed.), 'Earth First! And global narratives of popular ecological resistance', p12.

[28] Ruminant livestock can produce 250 to 500 Ltr. of methane per day, an estimated contribution to global warming that may occur in the next 50 to 100 yr to be little less than 2%. (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8567486) Methane is also a product of landfill, which Susan Curran believes could be burnt off in order to reduce it to a less powerful gas in the form of carbon dioxide. (Susan Curran, *The Environment*, p48.) A lot of environmentalists have endorsed the approach to reforest the earth using trees as a carbon sink. See http://www.habmigern2003.info/biogas/methane-digester.html for some interesting facts of converting methane to biogas.

world. The obvious solution is mixed farming based upon pre-industrial patterns, but consumer choice favouring a heavy meat diet seems to outweigh the positives here.[29] Bron Taylor went on to say that urgent deep ecological, moral perceptions are distanced from the US democratic (Western economic) system to enjoin any specific political strategy, the process of which is leading to an anthropogenic extinction.[30] He asserts such a statement on the basis of the intrinsic qualities of nature to have both explicit and implicit connections to cultural conventions.

Land accessibility as central to the environmental claim for sustainability

The environmental movement in Britain is a case in study. In the second half of the 19th century the countryside was seen as a place of escape from pollution, and town dwellers sought to protect it from further degradation.[31] It was the beginning of an environmental agenda framed within the ethos of well-to-do pioneers. The Commons Preservation Society founded in 1865 is usually regarded as Britain's first national environmental group. Workers who had no means to access the countryside relied upon nearby common land for recreation. But this land was fenced in and speculated upon for future development, and so this led to the formation of the Society to protect commoner's rights for cutting firewood and grazing herds.

Environmentalism in Britain has gone through various themes, in which grass-roots mobilisation occurs when specific target groups have been involved.[32] By the 80's and 90's direct action lessened in the light of global issues and political initiatives. The passive means utilised by environmental groups like mail-outs and promotions increased and civil

[29] Simon Fairlie, 'Can Britain Feed Itself?', *op. cit.,* pp18-26. The article is based on Mellanby´s diet of 1975 which has been appropriately updated to 2005 by Farlie. He seems to espouse an organic livestock-based agriculture, carried out in conjunction with other traditional and permacultural management practices which are integral to a natural fertility cycle. (25)

[30] Bron Taylor, *op. cit.,* pp16-17.

[31] Wolfgang Rudig, 'Between moderation and marginalization', p222. See also Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (1983) who himself set out to unite the disciplines of history and literature through contemporary perspectives of nature of the British countryside.

disobedience was effectively mitigated. This was backed up by environmental campaigns that were, and continue to be so, scientifically grounded as pollution and global climate change are themes lobbied by activists. Any renewal of direct action radicalism was resolved to target groups like motorway constructors.[33]

So in answer to the main question, the modern environmental movement originated as an outcry against industrialisation and the need to preserve the loss of traditional pre-industrial society through the protection of the countryside from over-development. Although the motive for such action some consider to be a humanist development of society, its definite roots can be seen during the colonial expansion of empires during the Columbian era in which the conquest of the wilderness was a fundamental linchpin to its success.[34] That this phenomenon occurred during the Reformation period need not be without coincidence. The theme was particularly strong in North America. Roderick Nash forwarded the claim that, in the face of the hardships brought on by the wild, heathen-infested landscape, the belief in God and civilisation, and the (Protestant) mandate to cite biblical precedents, induced the colonists to justify their quest on grounds of morality, religion and civilisation.[35] But the post-Enlightenment Period would bring forward two prominent authors for radical conservatism. Of the more recent was Aldo Leopold (1886-1948) who's scientific assessment assigned wilderness preservation to the study of what he called "land-health", commonly known today as homeostasis.[36] *A Sand County Almanac* describes wilderness as important in its educational context in cultivating religious and ethical sensibilities towards the

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[32] *Ibid*., pp230-231.

[33] Note, at present the global economy is fuelling direct action campaigns against high street banks and lenders. Back in the 60's and 70's there was a lot of campaigning around anti-war topics. That international wars have environmental connotations poses the difficulty of knowing when environmentalism starts and stops.

[34] David Kinsley, *Ecology and Religion*, p135-136.

[35] *Ibid*.; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, p24 cf., esp. 31.

[36] David Kinsley *op. cit.*, pp156-157; Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, pp194-197.

understanding of the underlying reality from which humans emerge.[37] Born into that period when the consciousness of the American West was changing towards wilderness conservation, Nash had described the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872[38] as a crucial landmark for its history.

One discovers here the emergence of a critical approach to the role of religion for modern environmental politics. In fact, taking an overview of the last millennium one finds a renaissance of thought in general extending throughout the Reformation period and into the industrial age. For instance, the rise of Protestantism through Lutherism[39] and Calvinism[40] took to heart a work ethic that would ultimately drive the masses out of the countryside and into the cities. This included an outlook towards material well-being as being a blessing from God;[41] the Church and religious thought in general though, were undergoing a protestant upheaval. Individual salvation was coupled with this direct relation to God in which the Church and its priests cease to be required. The Genesis chapters were taken literally, for instance the Puritans of the 17th century in North America justified their conquests on the basis that the indigenous peoples were not farming or felling the trees.[42] It was the importance of work within the protestant ethos that carried over and would ultimately give rise to capitalism. One may note here though, that capitalism had already played a part in Jewish civil life since biblical times, for which I will explain more on later.

The other prominent environmentalist of the time was the Romantic, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), who's reference to the sanctity and natural community of forest groves

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[37] Aldo Leopold, *op. cit.,* p214cf., 'The Land Pyramid'.

[38] This is 3,000 square miles of untouched wilderness. The word 'park' here differs from the European usage which meant a 'garden'. Roderick Nash, 'The Value of Wilderness Preservation', p16.

[39] Martin Luther issued a notice of 95 theses partly in protest against the selling of indulgences in the Catholic Church and also the authority of the Pope. Basic to this was the primacy of biblical scripture, the *sola scriptura*. Early protestant thinking can be traced to the 12th century.

[40] John Calvin advanced the idea of the work ethic in which good works were now conceived with diligence, and was a sign of the elect who were chosen to be saved. It would subsequently align itself with capitalism and success, in the works of Max Webber.

[41] Elizabeth Breuilly and Martin Palmer (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology,* pp86-87.

extended to a criticism of Christianity for its churches built out of timber from stripped land.[43] He related the lust to conquer nature with the dominant religion, feeling detached from nature if he was denied regular visits.[44] In similar vein to Leopold he took the naturalist's view that particular life forms were an expression of an underlying life force that animated nature as a whole including one's senses. He was thus renowned to spend time immersed in swamps and earth. The superabundance of creativity was especially apparent, one of economic simplicity ennobled with self-imposed limitations. His version of the sacrament was to eat wild berries in celebration of nature – spiritual sustenance from the heaths and woodlands – not the laying waste of primeval woodland to feed their box stoves and build miles of meeting houses and horse sheds.[45] To study nature as separate from the human world is a scientific model for detaching humans from their healthy environment. He claimed there to be a self-centred, anthropocentric calculating attitude to nature that lay behind public policy, an aspect of the humanist tradition. Killing creatures for scientific study ultimately dehumanized people by cutting them off from sympathetic communion with those creatures.

We have here then a rejection of the Protestant way of life, not least the capitalist elements of it. Toward the end of this essay I provide some modern examples for a Christian concept of nature now tempered with the creative ecological process. For instance, the spiritual ethics of farmers like Wendell Berry resonate more with these early well-to-do environmentalists, including the hitherto unmentioned John Muir (1838-1914). Shunning the comforts of life, Muir would also explore large tracts of unpopulated wilderness.[46] He considered wild nature to have a liberating influence, existing primarily for itself and creator.

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[42] *Ibid*., pp88-90.
[43] D. Kinsley, *Ecology and Religion,* pp141-144.
[44] D. Worster, *op. cit.,* p77cf. Thoreau once described his experiences as a muskrat where even his bare feet could discover empirical truths. (79).
[45] *Ibid*., pp86-87; D. Kinsley, *op. cit.,* pp144-147.

People, he said, could not grasp the idea that each creature is made first and foremost for its own happiness, "the rights of all the rest of creation".[47]

Figure Int.1: Roderick Nash, 'The Value of Wilderness Preservation', p12. The concept of wilderness is important towards a concept of nature. For the American West it was the "frontier". Where biblical narratives allude to a place of death, ecologists and naturalists tend to see more of a cyclical nature to it, preserving in its homeostasis the "seeds" of evolution. This includes dead matter necessary for the habitation of a multitude of species. In this light, one may regard biblical figures like Yahweh, Moses and Jesus as "evolutionaries" of society and humanity.

Thus said, we ask whether one can outline criteria towards judging biblical causes for the claim of land. For instance, the mishnaic sages had also written with great concern into the late Talmudic era of the fifth and sixth centuries about the natural world.[48] *Genesis Rabbah*

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[46] D. Kinsley, *op. cit.,* p147.

[47] Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* pp127-129.

[48] Daniel Swartz, 'Jews, Jewish texts, and nature', pp95-97.

and *Leviticus Rabbah* mention the sacredness of planting trees and the preservation of species.[49]

Individuality also has a role to play in the emergence of new spiritualities. One can identify a pattern almost immediately where state-control teeters with the pursuance of free thought and action, whether that is religiously or secularly instigated. That said, I make the bold assertion that a growing spirituality is always linked to land issues and the re-identification of the self with a new lifestyle. Thus, in looking at new movements within Christianity one should relate how the developing spirituality of the people is inextricably linked to the loss of a previous identity for the re-emergence of a new faith. Hence, one sees a general precedent in the rise of early Christianity and the formation of a new covenant with God, and not least the multitude of sects and different Christian teachings within the greater umbrella of the movement. Likewise the phenomena are repeated right into the modern age within secular-based ideologies in an era of cultural expansionism. I address the point of re-identification and memorial throughout this essay and always in reference to how this reflects in the political economics of the landscape. Alastair McIntosh expresses a concern here.

"At a social level such understanding of covenant as expressing the interconnection of all things urges us to place the spiritual at the centre of concern, motivation and methodology for "*development,*"*.....Development ought therefore be spirituality expressed socially.* Such is the intent of God's covenant with humankind." (His italics)[50]

He urges us to reconsider all forms of development, not least what one considers sustainable development. Taken from his response to the request of Dr. Dmitry Lvov, Academician-Secretary of the Economics Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences, he asks

[49] From the 1400's onwards other important texts arose concerning the environment within the context of the Diaspora. This includes the collection of the *Midrash*, Ecclesiastes *Rabbah*, *Midrash Tankhuma*, and *Midrash Tehillim.*

[50] Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood,* pp58-59.

whether Russia is entering into contracts with the IMF and World Bank rather than developing its relationship to the land as a form of God's providence, ironically replacing state-espoused atheism with idolatry. It is the issue I claim for Thoreau; the developing landscape for him was rooted in spirituality and not convention. And for contemporary examples of this one must search for it in the formation of new movements.

Spirituality - A new sense of beginnings

McIntosh reminds one that the blessing of the land is conditional upon looking firstly to God before any human economic construct can satisfy human needs.[51] His reference is to Matthew in whom Jesus says that one cannot serve both "God and wealth... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin". (Matt. 6:24-28) McIntosh makes clear contextual reference to Liberation Theology and the means by which it "gives life", from theologians like the Peruvian Gustavo Gutiérrez.[52] It likewise espouses the claim that oppression of the poor, say by denying them food, through unjust economic and social structures, is a religious offence, a sin against the creator.[53] Likewise damage to the environment through contamination is a direct affront against the poor who God has taken under His wing. McIntosh also makes reference to the liberation theology that has been developed within the Jewish faith under Marc Ellis in order to bridge relations with their Palestinian neighbours.[54] In fact, one finds forms of it throughout the major religions.

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[51] *Ibid*., p49.

[52] *Ibid*., p40cf.; Gustavo Gutiérrez, A *Theology of Liberation*, p291cf. See also the work of activists like Ricardo Navarro, founding member of the Salvadoran Ecological Union (UNES). An interview with Navarro can be located on the web at http://bikesnotbombs.org/node/57. His background is engineering and works to promote sustainable technologies.

[53] Bron Taylor (ed.), *op. cit.*, p64.

[54] *Ibid*., p43. See Marc Ellis, *Towards a Theology of Jewish Liberation*, pp55-56. Oz VeShalom, Religious Zionists for Strength and Peace opposes the view that Palestine should control the West Bank and Gaza, because it implicates force. This is contrary to *mitzvoth*, divinely commanded acts that pertain to interpersonal and inter-communal relations.

Spirituality though, undercuts religious protocol. In conversation with Zaytoun,[55] representing the commercial and humanitarian interests of the Palestinians, Atif Choudrey, an international volunteer, likened their plight to death by a thousand cuts because of the gradual destruction of their livelihoods.[56] In a more recent interview he responded by saying that this has nothing to do with religion. When questioned further he went onto to say that ethnic cleansing has distorted history. Religious narrative is not sufficient enough to do this justice, rather dehumanisation is the real narrative.[57] It is obvious that curfews imposed by the Jews, and the segregation of Palestinian communities through the creation of a partition wall,[58] are having an effect on the country likened to political and economic genocide. "Our life, our identity, is in the land – even our destiny," says Taysir Sadia Yaseen.[59] "We won't leave it." There is now less than 12% of pre-1948 land titles left to the Palestinian inhabitants who have become "immigrants in our own land" explains Hamda Blilat.[60] Hence, I raise this issue further along in this essay, one in which as a pro-activist, Atif Choudrey is willing to sideline issues of religious difference in favour of a purely environmental outlook. If this is the role of environmental activism – the plight of dislocated peoples from their homeland and their social equality, then it must matter also that Jewish theodicy seeks to address this point too. In fact, one can refer to the biblical prophets and the prophetic role Jesus plays in attempting to restore peasant rights in the face of political ideology. Isaiah looks towards an era when the poor shall build their houses and plant to eat their own fruit. (Is.65: 21-23) Jesus came as the

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[55] Zaytoun export the first Fair Trade organically-certified Palestinian olive oil and other products for the strict purpose of restoring Palestinian socio-economic existence, the motive of which is access to agricultural land.

[56] In conversation at Urban Green Fair, Brixton, (London, 2008).

[57] See http://www.zaytoun.org/ for more information.

[58] See http://www.theironwall, a video narrative directed by Mohammed Alatar, (2006).

[59] Joanna Blythman,'Farmers in Palestine create amazing produce in adverse conditions – and are fighting to export them', in *The Observer*, Sunday 13th September, 2009. Taysir owned 1,000 olive trees before the fence had been built, which had been a family heirloom. What remains are 400, the other 600 are on the other side where he is not allowed access. As a Palestinian farmer he risks confiscation of equipment if he attempts to work his trees. Confiscation was one of the prime tools that peasants were kept subjugated by in Roman Palestine.

[60] *Ibid*. Women make up 67% of the refugee population.

"Prince of Peace" to herald a new era of inclusivity. [61] Jesus refused to become a worldly king or landlord, putting Satan's temptations behind him. (Lk.4: 1-13)

It rings true that liberation theologies develop from the effects of imperialism that, in the words of the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez,[62] in seeking to wipe out the victim's memory of the struggle it enables them to take their source of energy and will – rebellion.[63] He asserts a contention here with rigid institutional churches because the poor subscribe to a much deeper theology.[64] Hence the message here seems to be more spiritual than it is religious. McIntosh comments on this by asserting the very basic requisites of existence, firstly the need for "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11) in this-worldly immanent realm of God. And from this one develops spirituality from an inner life of living on more than just "bread alone." (Matt. 4:4) This order of sustenance is highlighted in Mark 8 in which Jesus liked to see his people fed before preaching to them. He goes on to cite that Jesus carefully selects from Isaiah that which pertains only to God's preference towards the poor." (Luke 7:22).

We may note here then, that criteria for establishing a biblical precedent for the rise of the modern environmental movement should relate to various social phenomena intrinsic to both Christianity and the environmental movement. Hence, in relation to land issues, models for death rights, farming and hunting rights, rights of access to land, rights to commune, rights to dwell and forage, and rights to alter the landscape all need to be addressed. And secondly, it becomes obvious that a multiplicity of beliefs exist regarding the interpretation of ethical concerns and how this reflects through political and moral decision making. I surmise here that the variety of religious viewpoints is itself reflected against the multitude of atheistic and humanistic ideologies, the comparison of which owe their denomination to the nature of individual experience throughout the evolution of societies.

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61 Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, pp62-63.
62 See Gustavo Guiterrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, p20.
63 Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, p44.

Land as the catalyst for change

One can make a case for the plight of the Diggers who stood up against authority and tried to make England a free people with a free allowance to dig and labour the commons – a "Common Treasury of All".[65] Simon Farlie also comments that a good many of them were idealists who promoted the original "back to the land" movement, rather than being solely peasants. This I believe is an objective indication of a new sense of beginnings emerging concerning social reform. Enclosures were favoured only if it redistributed the commons back to the landless, but the growing British Empire had internalised the colonial mentality.[66] The Scottish Clearances were a classic example of this. Due to the need to grow more agricultural food on vacated land to feed the growing population, and the importation of Indian and American cheap cotton replacing wool, thousands of Highlanders were shipped off to Canada where many perished on the boats, or taken to Glasgow to be replaced by Cheviot sheep.[67] The countryside had become depopulated for reasons of providing labour for the industrial revolution. So thorough was this eviction that few people have any collective memory of it. What remained from these evacuations would later form the nucleus of the crofting community.

Under the Highland clan system land was held in common by a chief. A farmer was often referred to by the name of the farm. But researchers like Charlotte Farlie found a general lack of acknowledgement of the Clearances in the 18th century, from Scottish peers including Robert Burns and Robert Lousie Stevenson, of their own culture.[68] One should understand that these peers are themselves 'victims' of the tremendous colonial drive of the

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64 *Ibid*., p40.
65 Simon Farlie, ´A Short History of Enclosure in Britain´, p21.
66 Alastair McIntosh, 'Wild Scots and Buffoon History', p9. McIntosh mentions earlier that many of the Scottish lairds had received anglicized public schooling.
67 *Ibid*., pp23-24.

English to institutionalize themselves on foreign land. But McIntosh *et al* make an interesting assertion that radical environmentalism developed in Scotland due to its traditions and beliefs not being so strongly affected by invading cultures because of the general inaccessibility of the Highlands.[69] Hanson and Oakman made the parallel observation that strong group orientation in the Mediterranean is also factored by the rugged and climatically challenging landscape.[70] This indubitably expresses some sort of distancing of the relations between the controllers of land economies and what is going on at ground level. The point is further mooted by Charlotte Farlie who found solace outside the British canon of literature from the Highland poets themselves who wrote in Gaelic and who explicitly recount the forced mass emigration of the natives. Counterpoint to this however, in relation to the liberation theology of Latin American countries, McIntosh was also apt to say that, as a violent loss of originality, cultural invasion convinces the invaded of their intrinsic inferiority as they conform to new instituted values.[71] The struggle then begins when men recognise they have been destroyed; the re-humanization of which requires the revolutionary leadership to establish a permanent dialogue with the oppressed.[72] This leadership does not bestow freedom but a process of conscientization. Whatever the actual full reality may be, it is shown that the presence of resistance movements of sorts can defy political sanctions at its most grass-roots level. It surmises to say that local histories juxtapose those of legitimated historical declarations.[73]

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[68] Farlie, C., 'Literary Response to the Clearances', p39.

[69] Alistair McIntosh, *Soil and Soul*, p245.

[70] K. C. Hanson, & D. E. Oakman, o*p .cit.*, pp16-17. In my personal experience I would add that the proximity of nature was likewise a factor of its fauna and capacity to convey disease.

[71] Alistair McIntosh, *Soil and Soul*, p248; Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p20cf.

[72] Paulo Friere, *op, cit.*, pp44-45.

[73] For instance, the Epoch Times had published an ongoing story throughout July 2010 concerning the Shen Yun Performing Arts group, a New York based music and dance company that seeks to revive traditional Chinese culture. The Chinese Communist's opposition to their travelling shows throughout the USA was said to frighten the party's totalitarian leadership, known for its brutal snuffing of people's resistance to government oppression. The Epoch Times ran an editorial series based upon the serialisation of the book entitled *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party*, which goes in depth in documenting the genocidal character of the

Effectively one see the same story retold from nation to nation, that "agricultural improvement" was the necessary evil at the expense of indigenous rights to land; the loss of livelihoods and the restructuring of society. Atif Choudrey of Zaytoun, in defence of the Palestinian people, made the lucid point that nation building is based on rewriting myths.[74] Even Gandhi was accustomed to rework the concept of caste within stratified society. He sometimes described *ahimsa* – the insistence of truth - as soul-force in relation to the "essential unity of man", and *satyagraha* as the laying hold of the truth or reality.[75] The *satyagrahi* were to become Gandhi's resistance movement against British colonial rule in his drive for independence and bio-regional control of resources. *Swaraj* – "self-rule", was a term used during India's struggle to mean freedom from the British. Gandhi, on the other hand, used it to refer to an ideal of personal integrity, linking it to the notion of finding one's inner self.[76]

CCP. The July 14-20, 2010 edition of the newspaper highlights some interesting facts concerning the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. Quoting figures from the Central Committee of the CCP over 4.2 million people were detained and investigated; over 1.73 million people died of unnatural causes; and over 135,000 people labelled as counter-revolutionaries were executed. However, the county annals calculate some 7.74 million people died of unnatural causes during that 10 year period. The Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 has been followed by Jiang Zemin's suppression of the Falun Gong, a Buddhist sect, from 1999 onwards. The Chinese economy depends substantially on foreign capital to sustain economic growth and social stability, but open killing would result in the imposition of sanctions. For further reading around Chinese land grabs see 'The Water Needs the Good Earth', in *The Land* Summer 2006 pp20-22.

[74] In conversation during Spring, 2010. At a recent talk I gave at the Festival of Life, 2009 in London I put it to the audience what they thought was the measure of sacredness. The simple answer was everything is sacred. So I put it to the respondent whether that radiator he was leaning on was sacred. What came out of that discussion was this sense of connectedness to the greater whole. I qualified this observation by saying that things have intrinsic worth, things that shouldn't be valued individually but remain as a continuum into the known and unknown past. Contraction ad infinitum must be placed into the broader picture. Thus a radiator on its own is not sacred, but if taken into the greater picture requires some sort of environmental assessment - Where does the material come from?; Who or what might it affect in its extrapolation?; What energy needs were required in the manufacture and implementation of that technology? A phrase I don't hear so much now is "embodied energy", i.e. a measurable environmental impact. Can an object be fully assessed within a scientific context only? We can transpose the same rationale to a landscape - how many people does it truly influence? Spirituality for me is this notion of the higher mind, or the soul force, one rooted in the collective consciousness.

[75] D. L. Gosling, *Religion and Ecology in India and Southeast Asia*, pp45-48. For further reading see also Gandhi, M., *Young India* (1981) for a serialised dialogue on the development of his philosophy.

[76] L. Jones (ed.,) *Encyclopaedia of Religion* 2nd Edition, p3272. I have elsewhere compared Gandhi in 'Was Gandhi a forerunner for the modern-day environmental movement, in particularly addressing 3 criterion for this perspective, namely: 1) A "true" Christian? 2) An implicit green philosophy. 3) The religious use of politics.

I can surmise here then, that essential to the making of something "whole" or holistic is narrative, a continuing dialogue between the person experiencing and the experienced,[77] and one must see the narratives of both ecology and religion, however political this may result, but importantly, how one is infused within the other. This way a continuum is created within the psycho-spiritual collective consciousness, between current and ancestral interactions with the land.

In such a vein landscapes can take many forms and meanings. To moot a point, Yash Tandon states that the complexity of popular land movements in Africa have not deterred the 'newness' of the Western environmental perspective towards the tendency to assign Northern labels even though no one particular social category is evident, what Bron Taylor referred to earlier as competing narratives.[78] The deep ancient veneration for nature in Africa is overseen by the Western façade to provide an environmental framework towards popular struggles that open doors to generous donor funds. Economists elsewhere may call this adding productive value, but instead is more likely to reduce the moral value of the particular society as a whole.[79] Likewise Bron Taylor refers to the small-scale agriculture, hunting, and rotation habits of the Amazonian *Seringueiros* (peasant rubber tappers) and indigenous peoples who, in their livelihoods, implicitly attack private property and capitalism under its presumption of communal land ownership.[80]

[77] For further reading see Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred,* (1998).
[78] Yash Tandon, ´Grassroots resistance to dominant land-use patterns in southern Africa´, pp172-173.
[79] *Ibid*., p174.

The contemporary social milieu of Israel during the rise of Christianity

- The inheritance of the Holy Land
- "Bread" of sustenance
- The Jewish legacy
- The Greco-Roman background
- Roman Palestine as a centre for socio-economic and political expediency
- Environmental impact of Roman occupation

The inheritance of the Holy Land

Now, at this point one should make the link with the Judaeo-Christian outlook for it is conducive to find that the contemporary Jewish resistance to foreign authority and the "wake" of self-organisation that has historically proceeded from it are indelibly printed into European consciousness,[81] since it is from here that Christian Europe delineates its cultural heritage. From the Greeks, Romans and Byzantines, to the Arabs and the Seljuks, then the crusaders, the Mamluks, the Ottoman Turks and finally the British the pattern elicits a story of being conquered and dominated before and after the Christ era.[82] But it was during the early period that the Hellenistic influence of Alexander the Great developed the trade links between India and the Atlantic, which eventually gave rise to the land of Israel becoming a centre of major trade relations.[83] Old Judean harbours were enlarged and towns modelled their organisation on the Greek 'polis'. Although the Jews at this time had already dispersed

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[80] Bron Taylor,'Earth First! And global narratives of popular ecological resistance', p19.

[81] Jewish ethics came to predominate financial and medical institutions. As a result of the Diaspora Jewish scholars passed down the insights of the Arab world, being part of the court of caliphs. Many also became personal physicians to Christian princes, popes and emperors. (Information boards in Jewish Museum, Berlin.)

[82] Elizabeth Nussbaum, *The Modern World. Israel*, pp.34-35.

to various centres around the world, a small minority remained. The Hasmonaeans in the 2nd century BCE in Jerusalem first reacted to the change and influence encroaching in from the ports, and created unrest. Despite the Seleucid King Antiochus IV's dictate to abolish Jewish autonomy the Jews would eventually form of a small state. It grew in power and wealth, near to the size of the united kingdom of King David. Not all Jews returned from the Diaspora but such was the wealth and commercial potential of this area that the political and social strife of two quarrelling brothers invoked the militancy of Pompey in 63BCE, who had just conquered Anatolia and Syria; Israel would become a Roman province. Once order was restored from the general local tussles, *pax romana* offered considerable commercial opportunities over the ensuing century, which the Jews accepted at first.[84] Jewish trading communities sprang up in many parts of the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, leading to voluntary dispersion. Many sizeable Jewish communities developed abroad. Back home though, tensions were strained and Cicero soon complained of a Jewish pressure group in Jerusalem. A strong sense of nationalism and their refusal to concede to Roman rule led to pockets of Jewish resistance, ending with a repressive Roman regime destroying the temple in CE70 and a mass suicide at Masada. Finally, with the creation of Palestine they were dispersed forcefully.

Hence, first century Palestine was shaped by several dominant factors. These include the political control of the Roman Empire and the pervasive cultural influence of Hellenism, as well as the linguistic, cultural and religious heritage of the Israelite tradition.[85] It becomes apparent then, between the various Jewish loyalties and their differing affection towards the Promised Land, that the peasantry in general would have harboured a deep sense of loss of religious and ethical land management. For instance, the Roman war effort bore heavily on the agricultural economy. This was reflected in the development of technological warfare,

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[83] Yehuda Karmon, *Israel: A Regional Geography*, pp.45-46.
[84] Elizabeth Nussbaum *op. cit.* pp.34-35.
[85] Hanson, K. C. & Oakman, Douglas E., *op. cit.*, p10.

although in counterpoint agriculture remained relatively inert.[86] The *annona militaris*, the Roman tax to support the army, would have been of secondary concern, for citizen farmers were frequently conscripted into the war effort.[87] Also, the seasonal management of fields often succumbed to burning during war times and farms were often abandoned. It is worth bearing in mind that the cutting down of fruit trees, including the sacred olive, was forbidden to Jewish soldiers. Despite there being market gardens located in or around cities, and even though the Romans and Greeks knew of the necessity of fertilisers and crop rotation, the agricultural burden was becoming too much to sustain during foreign occupation. On top of this Jewish dietary laws inhibited hunting for food even though hunting to kill predators was allowed.

The relevant point I am making here is the threat that cultural expulsion has on eroding one's moral values, or as the case may be, reinforcing them. (Roman) Jewish society was, in the main, structurally dysfunctional and exploitative due to the inordinate power and privilege of the élite.[88] Most power relations were conferred to a growing urban citizenship, the decentralised nature of which ensured peasants could maintain strong relations through loyalty to family, clan, village, political faction, and religious group.[89] This entailed, to a degree, restrictions on both geographical and social mobility. But the peasantry would not tolerate radical individualism amongst themselves and as such the land had an ancestral obligation.

One can see in the biblical narratives, especially in the charge of the prophets, famine is intermittently mentioned. Most relevance seems to be associated with the Exodus story and the wanderings in the desert, and this is precisely where the covenant was made with God in which the Israelites were promised the Holy Land. John Allegro, writing in the latter part of

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[86] *Ibid*. p69
[87] J. Donald Hughes, *The Mediterranean*, pp33-35.
[88] K. C. Hanson & D. E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p9.

the 20th century and one of the chief decipherers of the recent discoveries of Dead Sea scrolls, made a very good case for the ethical survival of God's chosen during their sojourn in Sinai of 40 years. It seems inconceivable that man could live on bread alone, so in his reference to *manna*, the spiritual food granted by Yahweh to his chosen, one must conceive of it as being endowed with special qualities.[90] (Ex.16: 4 cf.) "It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers, made with honey." (17:31) They ate it for 40 years in the wilderness until they reached the land of Canaan. (17:35-36) The wilderness experience is crucial for the forming of the covenant with God. Is it not conceivable that the moral code, developed through Moses, was a direct result of the intoxication of this spiritual food with a commensurate act of suffering through nutritional deprivation?[91] In anthropological terms survival of the fittest becomes the religious context of man. Secondly, does this historical analogy resonate towards the founding of the New Testament amid the resultant loss of ethical land rights during the period when Rome was at its most powerful and the peasantry was frequently dis-appropriated? It is relevant to note here that Jesus was himself a peasant, contrary to the popular opinion of some commentators to liken him to a royal image.

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[89] *Ibid.*, pp7-8.

[90] J. Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross,* p49. He makes a case for the fly-agaric mushroom which is found in that region of the forested mountains of Mount Horeb where they rise for a period of two to three months following the rains. I have elsewhere written around this subject in 'Death is a life crisis and conjuncture of changes and transformations of the physical body, social relations and cultural configurations.' (MA0520) There are a lot of symbolic qualities to be associated here, not least the veil patches that have the appearance of white wool on skin. Fly-agaric also resembles burning coals flecked with white ash. Some of the symptoms of intoxication have been critically analysed, with its ability to confer great physical strength and endurance. But taking them can induce violent illness sometimes referred to as an ecstatic death, although the illness is always recoverable despite warnings to the contrary. Being unpredictable and difficult to master the spiritual death and rebirth is a well-documented shamanic act. For further reading see Carl A. P. Ruck, Blaise Daniel Staples, Clark Heinrich , *The Apples of Apollo*, pp163-166.

[91] But see Ex.12: 37-39 which clearly indicates a food source before any ordinances (Ex.20-23) were laid down, other than the Passover to mark God's chosen. (13: 6-10) In Ex 14 the Israelites are complaining in the wilderness whilst Pharaoh pursues, after which they moan again in the wilderness of Sin, approaching Sinai.

"Bread" of sustenance

The subject of Jesus as the Giver of Life, the partaking of the Eucharistic bread, is familiar to many lay peoples of the world. Metaphorically and religiously, bread is a synonym for the Body of Christ. In this vein the natural theology of the Christian Greek East was essentially artistic through its use of imagery and iconography.[92] Nature was primarily conceived as a symbolic system in which God speaks to man. This symbolism could be likened to the prevailing Hellenistic influence that advanced the Platonic theory, in that the physical was relegated to a position that gave prominence to the essence of things,[93] as of an archetypal image. This did not occur throughout the broad spectrum of Christendom; the Latin West would develop a unique approach to nature, namely hands-on and objective - the result of the technocratic influence of Rome.[94]

I will return to this theme further into this essay but for now I make a pertinent analogy with the Manicheans of the 3rd century in which Jesus was defined as pure spirit and salvation, as divine knowledge (gnosis).[95] The resonance here shows a precedence towards divine revelation over that of the physical limitation of the body and hence, the enrapture of the soul. This general sentiment among the early Christians who waited for the Second Coming was to produce a body of writings acknowledged as the New Testament. The sense of community and identity with the one God was without doubt intrinsic to the inheritance of the Mosaic Law, clearly pointing towards the consumption of the sacred food that provided over the safety of tribes during their sojourn. Simply digesting the food source without recourse to God's blessing would have been a soulless act. Its symbolic functions serve as a focus for group identity and communal activities, as a means towards the wielding of political

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92 Llyn White, Jr., *op. cit.,* p.32.
93 Anna Peterson, 'In and of the world: Christian theological anthropology and environmental ethics', pp116-117.
94 White, Jr., *op. cit.,* pp31-32.
95 Anna Peterson , *op. cit.,* pp116-117.

and economic power, as an indication of social status and wealth, and for the expression of love and caring.[96] For the survivors there seems little doubt that periods of deep hunger or starvation occurred out of the general lack of food availability and required the continued altruistic development of morals.

One is reminded that during the Middle Ages Aquinas, in presenting the Decalogue in *Summa Theologica,* makes extensive comment on the doctrine of natural law and its basis within natural principles of action, which in turn is linked to the image of God.[97] Scriptural passages were basic to its comprehension for the development of human nature, albeit the individual act is contestable on rational grounds but its justification can only be granted by God and not human law.[98] For instance, killing in self-defence is a legitimate act of self-preservation. (II-II 64.7)[99] What Aquinas makes implicit here is that the natural experiences of suffering and death had collectively been preserved as an anamnesis of the wanderings in the wilderness, in the process justifying human law as divine providence. In giving prominence to the essence of things he would rediscover the early Greek texts of Aristotle who, along with Plato, promulgated the concept of pure thought or intelligibility as the prime mover of all things, including nature.[100] However, there was nothing in the Hebrew Bible that promoted nature as a system or order with its own distinctive life attributes. For the early Christians this was a Greek influence, which would later lead to the practice of the Christian expurgation of biblical texts and the establishment of the transposed meaning of the host related as it is to atonement and the Resurrection. The attribution of the God-plant, i.e. the Jewish host, to the Exodus narrative has its 'prequel' in the story of Moses and "the burning Bush". (Ex.3) Ruck uses this scriptural exposition to connect the law of the land with that of

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96 Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting,* p5.
97 Jean Porter, *Natural & Divine Law,* pp16-17.
98 *Ibid*., p155.
99 See http://www.op.org/summa/ for an on-line version of *Summa Theologia.*
100 Daniel Day Williams, 'Changing concepts of nature', p49.

the forming of the covenant between God and the people.[101] It is necessary to show then, how this Jewish legacy becomes the bedrock of early Christian hermeneutics. But before we look at the influence of the prophets and the psalmists regarding the relation of God and nature I refer to Willy Rordorf, who quotes the four original blessings that have subsequently been Christianised, i.e. Christ as spiritual sustenance.[102] These are:

- Praise God as king who feeds all creatures and man
- Praise God of Israel who entered into a covenant and gave the Law and bestowed the Promised Land
- Ask God to have mercy on Jerusalem and its people
- Petition to God as "kindly lover of men"

The Jewish legacy

Jewish groups held food rites with great austerity, for instance the "pure meal" of Qumran sectarians, and often regarded food deprivation as a form of punishment against sin.[103] It is such that these food rites were expressions of sorrow, guilt, fear and suffering. As with Moses it alluded to the expiation of sin. (See Deut.9) It likewise coexisted with the manner in which adultery and whoring were considered transgressions.[104] The corollary of sexual intercourse under Jewish law explains this. The emphasis here is not on the constant denigration of the flesh for the sake of a free spirit, but a supplication to God for forgiveness, mourning and repentance.[105] Hence, one hears that fasting was strongly denounced by the sages after the

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101 Carl A. P. Ruck, Blaise Daniel Staples, Clark Heinrich, *op. cit.*, pp163-166, cf. Exodus 4, 'The three signs'.
102 Willy Rordorf, 'The Didache', pp10-12.
103 Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp20-21. See both the BT Kiddushin and BT Taanith for further examples. A good on-line reference article by Solomon Schechter can be found in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 3 (1891) pp. 34-51 at http://www.adath-shalom.ca/div_retr.htm.
104 *Ibid*., p26.
105 *Ibid*., p23.

destruction of the Temple because it was considered too extreme to fast off meat and wine, nor bread, as the life of the community would be affected. And likewise it was considered a public nuisance for its affect to cause illness.[106] Yet it is known also that during the period after the destruction of the Temple or when travelling to the temple would be a problem, amongst the Diaspora fasting could substitute for the sin-offering sacrifice. Regarding the threat of the "wrath of God", still fresh in the minds of the Jews, the synagogues would once again turn to the words of the prophets and psalmists,

> "He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground,
> a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.
> He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water.
> And there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in;
> they sow fields, and plant vineyards, and get a fruitful yield.
> By his blessing they multiply greatly;
> And he does not let their cattle decrease." (Ps.107: 33-38)

Nature was itself subject to God's redemptive action.[107] The eschatological dimension is central to the perspective in which the present world is seen. Throughout the Bible the subject of divine judgement is paramount. I could surmise here then, that Christianity inherited a strong eschatological element crucial to the development of the concept of the "Kingdom of God".[108] The "bread" would become a mnemonic for the celebration of God's salvation in the desert and the granting of the Promised Land, and hence the Christian development from the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In reference to the ecological covenant the key texts here are Gen.8: 22; and 9: 12-17. McIntosh quotes Ps.95, that those who err in the heart, as those who

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[106] *Ibid*., p27.
[107] Daniel Day Willliams. *op. cit.*, pp50-51.
[108] See the appendices for an in-depth comprehension provided by McIntosh.

wandered the wilderness, "they should not enter my rest", i.e., loss of access to the favourable land.[109] Land is the reward for faithfulness and justice. (Isa.57: 13; see also Lev.25: 23; Ezek.47: 21-23) Again, more will be said in the next chapter.

In summary, the Judeao-Christian religion evolves through time, and so does humankind's understanding of it.[110] The sacrifice can only be acceptable in God's 'eyes' and refutes all forms of human arrogance. All creation belongs to God. (See Ps.50: 9-11) One sees in Num. 27: 15-23 and Deut. 34: 9 the appointment of Joshua by Moses at God's command by the ritual act of the 'laying on of hands'. The context of this event is again, for the granting of the land and for the necessity of a leader who will lead the congregation. Immediately after this summons the ordinances for the burnt offering by fire is detailed out. The closest parallel in the New Testament is Acts 6:6 in which members of the brethren were ritually appointed to serve over the whole community regarding the fair distribution of food. In each case the mention of the spirit is paramount for both events. Again in Acts13: 1-3 one sees the act of 'laying on of hands' when persons are appointed to conduct special duties in the name of the Holy Spirit. It was in this vein that fasting was seen as a means of reinforcing national cohesion, a humbling of the self in the light of God's goodness reflected both in Jewish and then in later Christian development. But we should make a clear point here that Jesus himself did not (ritually) fast, as was the pharisaic custom of the day.[111]

It is very much a pattern of religion – amongst the Jews all were required to fast on the Day of Atonement, but women were in the main excluded from these cultic practices of abstention.[112] Both the Talmud and Bible stipulate the requirement to fast between sunrise and sunset. Little evidence points to it being a means to prophesy though, and I would take

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109 Alistair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, p47.
110 *Ibid*., p48.
111 Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp87-88. See Mk 2: 18-22 'The story of not fasting with the bridegroom'. The context here must refer to ritual for Jesus steadfastly endured his test in the wilderness too.
112 *Ibid*.,pp32-33.

the assumption that both fasting and prophesy can be induced by a specific set of environmental circumstances. These mores are reflected in the spiritual communities of the time. Two that highlight their importance in relation of their attitudes towards the environment have been documented both by Philo of Alexandria (*De Vita Contemplativa*), and Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*). They include the Therapeutai and the Essenes respectively. I will refer to these again, later.

The Greco-Roman background

With Aristotle and Plato the concept of the pure idea or thought took precedence before later philosophers forwarded the supernatural origin of the natural order.[113] The lives and powers of the Gods, like humans, were bound up in the natural world and could thus provide continuity between the divine and earthly realms. Only through the empirical experience could the discovery of her structures be intelligible. As such the Greeks saw nature under the overwhelming influence of mathematics and logic. That said, probably the most pragmatic inheritance from this realm was the philosophical understanding of health and its corollary of good food. Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Philosophers)* reports that Plato *et al* conceptualised health as a state to be attained.[114] Coupled with strength, vigour and beauty it required regular exercise. The nature of foodstuffs and what constitutes good exercise was circulated continually in competing philosophical circles that included physicians, athletic trainers, cooks, bath attendants or masseurs, and compounders of drugs. But only the medics left written evidence, such as Hippocrates' *On Ancient Medicine* in the 4th and 5th centuries BCE. Likewise Pedanius Dioscorides in the 1st century CE collected information on 5oo plants and remedies in tours with the Roman armies, expounded in *De Materia Medica*.[115]

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113 Daniel Day Willliams, *op. cit.*, p49.
114 Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp44-45.
115 See J. Scarborough,.'Drugs and Medicine in the Roman World' (1996), 38-52.

Intrinsic to the health of humanity, and by extension nature in general, the physician affirmed that the health of the individual was affected by the food one ate, by their physical activity, and also the geographical location and climate.[116] This was reflected in the basic rule of Hippocrates, considered the 'father of rational medicine', in that the 'opposites' combat disease, i.e. those due to idleness by exercise, to exercise by rest, to repletion by evacuation. The fundamental principle was that nature is a dynamic force manifesting phenomena as it expressed its purpose. [117] Treatments engaged these powers, either in the case of drugs or foods. The dynamic qualities of medicine had 'temperaments' reflecting well-understood climatic influences.

The Hippocratic writings were a complex series of treatises from a school, not from a single individual. It invoked practice based around dietary lifestyle, environmental and psychotherapeutic means. It is associated with the natural healing powers of life, the *vis medicatrix naturae.* It was the wider doctrine of whole healthcare that was being formulated. Physicians also categorised foods into 'strong' and 'weak', the former including bread-stuffs of grain, honey, and cheese.[118] It succumbed that those who wanted to lead a "healthy life" required following complex rules.[119] This way of living was not accepted without criticism. Plato says in *Republic* that medicine beyond its necessary application inflicted a sluggish character upon those who could afford to devote their whole life's efforts to it.[120] In the example of Galen (2nd century CE) in Rome, physicians who aspired to philosophy came up

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116 Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, p48.

117 Simon Mills and Kerry Bone, *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy*, pp4-5. Criteria for establishing the 'powers' of a remedy included showing the drug to be more powerful than the illness. It must be specific to humans, and its effect the same for everyone. Lastly, it must be distinguished, by its qualities, from food and its substances. See Brock , A.I. R. (trans.), *Galen: On the Natural Faculties*, Heinemann (London, 1952)

118 Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, p49. See Lloyd, G. E. R. (ed.), *Hippocratic Writings*, J. Chadwick & W. N. Mann (trans.) Pelican (London, 1978), pp186-205, 'Regimen in acute diseases.'

119 *Ibid*., p52.

120 Plato, *Republic*, chapter 1, esp. p39cf. See http://www.literaturepage.com/read/therepublic.html and http://www.greektexts.com/library/Epictetus/index.html for on-line resources.

against rhetors and sophists.[121] One can relate to the problems elucidated in *Discourses*, by both the Stoic philosophers Musonius Rufus and Epictetus, that were encountered in society in the first century, which included the unequal distribution of food at Roman banquets and not least the preference of sweet foods over savoury.[122] "The adversary spies on us …so that he may seize us with his hidden poison and bring us out of freedom into slavery. For whenever he catches us with a single food, it is indeed necessary for us to desire the rest. Finally, then, such things become the food of death." (30: 6-27)[123] Plutarch (*On Love of Wealth*) confirms this sentiment. In his reflection on craving he states that it is not poverty but insatiability and avarice that ail a person.[124]

These pagans differed from the Jews whose food laws were ordained by God. For the former there were no boundaries, they worked out the rules themselves.[125] To be 'godlike' was the philosopher's desire; the 'gods' were contented but required their ritualistic sacrifices. Overall though we see an indulgence of foodstuffs, the Cynics accusing the high-headed of eating effeminate foods not conducive to the rigours of nature and thus inducing one to become slave to the passions.[126] These highly valued food stuffs constituted offerings to the Greek and Roman gods (who ate the same foods as mortals) made up of cakes of wheat, barley, salt, fruit and honey, but mainly meat and wine, but never from wild animals or the hunter's kill.[127] Grimm also asks what became of the hundreds and thousands of

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121 Veronika E. Grimm *op. cit.*, p53.
122 *Ibid*., p55.
123 Quoted in Richard Valantasis, 'Demons, Adversaries, Devils, Fishermen: The Asceticism of "Authoritative Teaching" (NHL, VI, 3) in the Context of Roman Asceticism', in *The Journal of Religion,* Vol. 81, No. 4, Oct., (2001): 549-565 (561). Musonius Rufus forwards a moral reform in his *Authoritative Teaching* in which he uses the metaphor of food that tempts the ascetic as a fisherman would, baited by various demonic functions. See also Musonius Rufus, 'The Roman Socrates', Cora E. Lutz (trans.), Vol. 10, (1928).
124 Plutarch, *On Love of Wealth* 524D quoted in Abraham J. Malherbe, "The Christianization of a Topos (Luke 12:13-34)", in *Novum Testamentum,* Vol. 38, Fasc. 2, Apr., (Brill) 1996, 123-135 (126).
125 Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.,* p59.
126 *Ibid*., p56.
127 *Ibid*., pp35-36.

animals sacrificed in yearly rituals for which are not accounted for in literature.[128] The Hellenistic influences would continue to prevail, not least in the early Christian Church. As for the economic disparity between the rich and poor, it is a subject I moot throughout this essay. Nevertheless, all this points to an abundance of food and medicines in the hands of the élite. In conversation, Alistair McIntosh put the case thus.

MP: *Okay, my point was, the Greeks had this rationalistic approach and rather than going to their God and saying, "'God, I am suffering", we could [compare] take the story of Job for instance, who lost hundreds and thousands of cattle and sheep, and his family, but he never lost faith in God. Or we could look at the rational viewpoint, which the Greeks gave. Which resurfaces again, I think, with the modern scientific movement, and that is, we can find a cure for our illness, and we don't need a God for it. We can just find a cure or we can try even prevent it, through medicine.*

AM: *Well, there is plenty of medicine around. It depends on the illness, depends on the medicine doesn't it. And if you think you find the medicine you got to ask, 'Did the medicine cure you or was it just your body's natural healing properties that made you feel better at that time'?*

MP: *There is a continuum there then, for me, the rational approach of the Greeks. And the fact is, they are asking us to go beyond this supplication to God, we don't need that, here's a medicine, here's a cure.*

AM: *Oh, I see, you mean they were substituting God for medicine.*

MP: *Yes, and even though they had their gods of medicine, their approach was how to deal with the basics on ground level. And they did that with plants, through behaviour, practice.*

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[128] *Ibid*., p38.

AM: *Well, you notice that Jesus didn't heal using medicine, but you got to ask what was going on in Jesus' healings? Was he dealing with the neurotics in his culture and getting to the source of what was giving them pain as a human being and tackling that? Or are we, in fact some of the early Christians would say, to read these signs allegorically and so when Jesus let's the blind man see it is about learning to see spiritually. And when deaf it is about learning to [hear] inwardly. The gathering demoniac is the propensity to self-harm within all of us, when we are cut off from the source of life, in the gathering demoniac's example by colonisation, because who was it that ate pigs in that culture? It wasn't the Hebrews. It was the Romans who predominantly ate pigs. You can see that whole story is a metaphor for what colonisation does to a human being.*

Now, McIntosh raises a couple of issues here that arrogates elucidation. Namely, the spiritual awakening required in order to receive healing, (cf. Mk. 1: 21cf., 'The story of the unclean spirit; 10: 46cf., 'The story of the blind beggar') and secondly, that the parables connected to the gathering demoniac refer to Roman domination. (Cf. Mk. 5: 1) What this points towards is a comparative example of peasant oppression based on the materialist outlook of Greco-Roman governance. This resonates, albeit tentatively, towards a Marxian viewpoint on the historical and material conditions that structure modern society, a throwback to the imperial development of human society in general and the struggle between the proletariat and the capitalists.

Roman Palestine as a centre for socio-economic and political expediency

Much of the ancient world was embedded in kinship and politics, not least their economic and religious institutions.[129] For instance the emperor of Rome was supreme commander of

[129] K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p5.

the government and military *Princeps*, but he was also *Pontifex Maximus* or highest priest of Roman religion. In this light the Senate attributed to him divine status. Since the time of the Macedonians up to the Romans all the Jerusalem high priests were appointed by successive political rulers. The Hasmoneans themselves had ruled Judea as both kings and high priests. By the time of Jesus, Rome had controlled this minor imperial province for over one hundred years.[130] They influenced the Israelite religion through patronage of the Jerusalem high priesthood. The Palestinians did not elect their rulers, they were either hereditary monarchs or appointed élites.[131]

Both domestic and foreign policy served the urban élites. Most civic duties within the Roman Empire were sanctioned from the emperor or senate, served by client-kings and an appointed high priesthood working from the Sanhedrin. Auxiliary troops were headquartered in Caesarea and the legions in Syria were under the leadership of prefects and procurators, and later through the Herodian tetrarchs who had married into the Jewish royal family. Through the ruling aristocrats they lived off the agrarian peasants' labour. [132] Their primary concern was not ownership of the land, but honour and the control of both land and peasant families. They exercise this power through non-constitutional rules, civil abilities and obligations. In support of the "noble life" their primary function was warfare and tax collection, whilst the peasant families are kept at subsistence level; much of their produce is extracted by aristocratic families. Monies are collected through the business of tithes, taxes, tolls, rents, tribute and confiscation, and serves to maintain power relations and honour. Infrastructural improvements, for instance in the building of aqueducts, only sought to increase these privileges.

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[130] *Ibid*., p67.
[131] *Ibid*., pp65-66.

Environmental impact of Roman occupation

At the height of Rome in the first and second centuries the introduction of the amphitheatre was a spectacle for sheer mass destruction.[133] Mock hunts, *venationes,* held within them were common events, Augustus was known to have held twenty-six in all in which 3,500 beasts were killed. Their cultural demands of the surrounding regions did not cease there because both animals and fish were hunted or caught to extinction in particular areas.[134] Wolfgang Liebeschuetz makes a case study of Northern Syria from the first century onwards.[135] He provides ample evidence for the effects of the expansion of the Roman Empire. Hellenisation continued unabated with the development of cities and roads that arrogated military control. Sedentary agriculture and arboriculture replaced the nomadic way of life over wide areas. Hughes reminds us though, that in other parts of the Mediterranean basin deforestation occurred in the war effort to build fortifications and war ships. The general burning of wood accompanied population growth and urbanisation. The subsequent erosion of the landscape caused silting up of rivers and flooding; extractive industry was a fundamental part of Roman culture. The Romans were fully aware of this impact. They understood the effects of cities on the environment and the concentration of wealth and resources as much as they did pollution. Wells in cities were always prone to pollution and so the Romans had to build extensive aqueducts to carry the water in.[136] Underground cisterns could also provide for times when aqueducts were damaged and non-functional.

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[132] *Ibid*.,pp68-69. Aristocrats usually constitute less than 2 percent of the population. The familial control is based upon tradition and heredity and tends to ride above commercial interests. Upward mobility from lower élites require some form of patronage.

[133] J. Donald Hughes, *op. cit.,* p37.

[134] *Ibid*., pp38-44.

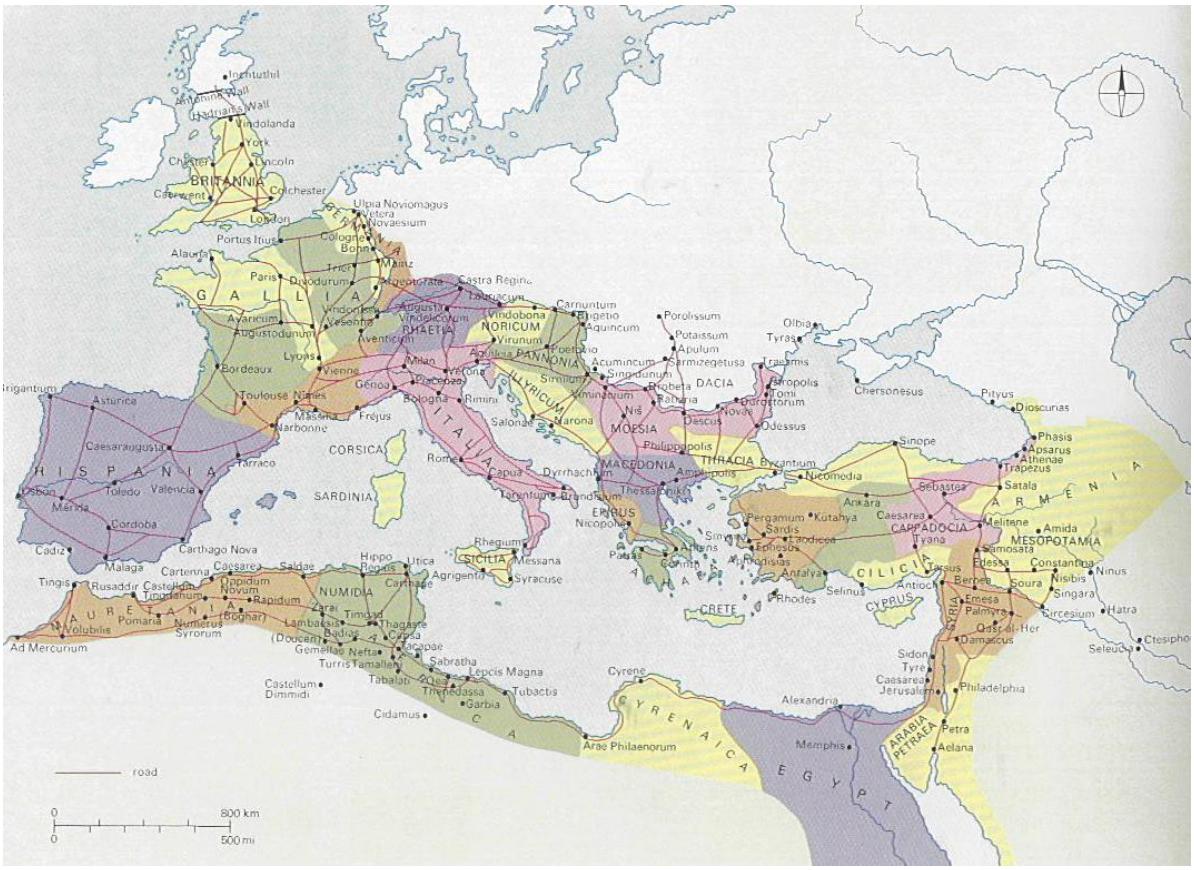
[135] Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, "The Impact of the Imposition of Roman Rule on Northern Syria", available at http://ebooks.brillonline.nl/view_pdf?id=nij9789004160446_nij9789004160446_i-589-64 in, *The Impact of the Roman Army (200 B.C. – A.D. 476): Economic, Social, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects: Proceedings of the Sixth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 B.C. – A.D. 476),* Capri, Italy, March 29-April 2, 2005.

[136] J. Donald Hughes, *op. cit.,* p26.

It must have been increasingly difficult to maintain law and order where pockets of guerrilla resistance continued. Some of these aqueducts, like the arcaded one built by Claudius in CE47, were as much as eight miles long. The stone required for that would have been dug from nearby quarries, cut on site and transported. Urban cities on the scale of Rome, Babylon and Athens had already started a process of global extrapolation. The movement of labour and soldiers between towns, cities and continents was a breeding ground for the contraction of malaria and plague.[137] Epidemics would have regularly occurred through contact with China and India and especially with merchant traders after the time of Augustus. The Greeks had themselves built edifices to their pantheon of Gods. But the Israelites had also built under King Hezekiah, in order to provide for Jerusalem. As such the Jews would not have been unfamiliar with large works. In fact the attraction of cities with its wealth and repertoire of skilled artisans would have been overwhelming, the subsequent increase in population requiring sewage outlets and areas of retreat known as parks in abundance.[138] The deforested landscape was to change forever.

[137] *Ibid*., pp48-50.

[138] *Ibid*., p29. See footnote no.38 (this essay). One wonders whether the Roman concept of park also constituted an "unmanaged" or "undeveloped" area like Yellowstone national Park, or whether this is more akin to something like a green belt area.



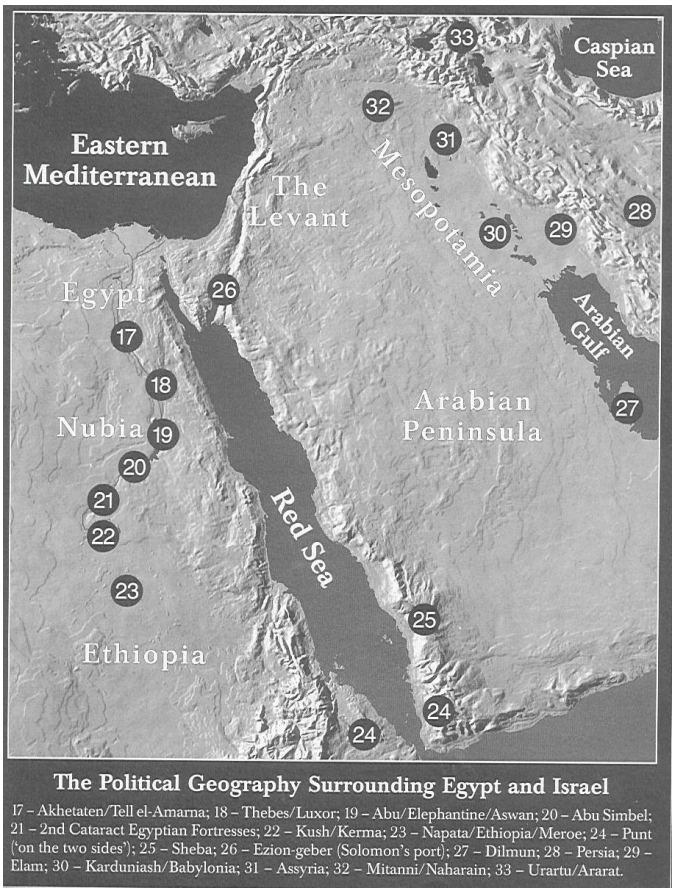


Figure 1.1 (above) The Roman Empire and its Roads. (Michael Vickers *The Making of the Past* p120.) The Romans managed to control such a huge expanse of land through patron-client relations. These often bypassed civil law through the lack of bureaucracy.

Figure 1.2 (left) The Political Geography of Egypt and Israel (David M. Rohl *A Test of Time* p37.) Since time immemorial these lands have played a fundamental part in the politics and economics of the whole Mediterranean basin.

Early Christian environmental tendencies

- The Kingdom of God as "land"
- Messianic influences
- Death rites in Judaeo-Christian religion
- Religious healing in first century Palestine
- Popular reactions against Christianity in the Roman Empire
- New Testament factors concerning food habits
- Pauline theological implications
- Summary

Having thus established that there was not a shortage of food, rather its reallocation towards an elitist economy, what one sees instead is more indicative of a repression of culture that gives rise to new religious morals. We need only equate this repression to the individual's perpetual necessity to associate him or herself with their vocational tendency towards the land. McIntosh pinpoints Luke 4:19, "…to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" in which OT land theology is anchored into NT Christian ethics.[139] The prophetic tradition had posed a viable social alternative for land not as a commodity but rather a social arena for human interaction.[140] By this, Brueggemann meant that "...the Bible in its odd, insistent way stands as an abiding warning to and testimony against uncurbed technological exploitation in the interest of self-enhancement and self-aggrandisement".[141] It is of value then to look at the early influences and themes that gave actual rise to the movement of Christianity and how this connects with the belief in God's Providence.

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[139] Alistair McIntosh, *op. cit.*, p48.
[140] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith,* 2nd Ed., xx.

The Kingdom of God as "land"

Brueggemann posits the advent of Christianity as significant for a new political-historical arrangement symbolically referred to as both the Kingdom of God for the exigent world of contemporary reality.[142] Jesus' birth epitomises the dawning of the messianic age, towards the remembrance of land and the movement out of bondage. In sharp contrast to the old theology, the "haves" must lose and the "have-nots" will bear the promise that Jesus signifies. He terms this as "land-loss" and "land-receipt"; the graspers as opposed to the powerless.[143] The radical inversion of the landed-landless is evidenced in Luke's teaching on salvation. (Lk.9: 24; 13: 30; 14: 11) The story of the aforementioned demon-possessed man, (Mk.5; 2) examples this instance where, being landless and living among the tombs, he was healed and sent home; the rejected are restored. Thus, to have been placed into wilderness (outside civilisation) is to have been cast into the land of the enemy; without promise and hope.[144]

And there are other prevailing, symbolic qualities. For instance, land that is barren, beyond cultivation is represented by the lack of an heir – the missing heir of Abraham and Sarah. Such a land is seedless; cf. *Zera,* either "seed" or "heir". In my conversation scripted earlier, McIntosh referred to the act of Roman colonisation and subjugation as one that leaves the human being bereft of the source of life. As such, Jesus is considered a threat because of his show of power here and so his opponents mobilise against him. The Pharisees held counsel with the Herodians on how to destroy him. (Mk.6cf.) The relevance of this is elucidated upon further into the essay. Brueggemann's message here then is that the providence of new land is presented in a paradoxical way – the way to land is by loss.

Taken as a metaphor, Brueggemann asserts that "exile" is the important context for which to understand the "dis-establishment" of the Christian church and faith in early

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141 *Ibid*., xxiii.
142 *Ibid*., pp160-162.
143 See Luke 1:51-55 and 7:22 in which the lowly are raised.

Mediterranean culture.[145] It should conjure an image of freedom, courage and imagination of the community rather than one of dominant cultural-political forces.[146] The manna narrative of Exodus 16, as a theological claim to power of the creator, exhibits creation in its fecundity.[147] It relates to the continuing interpretation of the Hebrew term '*eres* which refers to both "earth" (the created earth) and "land" (the Promised Land), and by which wilderness is seen as the way to attain "nourishment". After Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness (Luke 4:19), it is then followed by a proclamation of compassion and justice for the sick, poor and oppressed.[148] It then continues with the annunciation of "the acceptable year of the Lord" - the "jubilee" land ethic – whereby the soil is rested every 7th year; debts are cancelled; bonded slaves are released and compensated with wages of hired labourers. Jesus is thus establishing himself as the fulfilling of the prophecy spoken by Isaiah, a parallel to Moses and the giving of the law. The Jewish decree that every 50th year (the Sabbath of Sabbaths) all land is returned to the original inhabitants prevents gross inequalities of wealth distribution (Ex 23:10; Lev.25; Deut.15: 1-18). And desolation is portrayed as the consequence or "punishment" for human inequity. Lev.26: 32-35 refers to how God regains the Sabbath thus. In other words, it is only through the experience of land-loss, i.e. the sojourn into wilderness, that inheritance is made apparent. Land rights are in direct consequence of the relationship with God, what Brueggemann calls a promise characterised by something "heavenly", a "city".[149] The term *epouranion* hints at a spiritual process, hence homelessness is a sojourn of faith but nonetheless it is still a country of sorts that is sought.

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144 *Ibid*., p28.
145 *Ibid*., xviii.
146 This appears to be a retrospective interpretation of the New Testament in the manner of an apologist.
147 *Ibid*., xiii.
148 Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, pp48-49.
149 Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.*, p168.

Jesus had used the bible selectively to redeem a fallen theology in accordance with his revolutionary gospel of radical love.[150] (Lk.7: 22; 1 Jn.4: 8) This is shown in the context of the Johannine use of land as eternal life in a new age where Christ is the embodiment of the this land.[151] In reference to the OT the resurrection undoubtedly symbolises a call to return from the exile.[152] Both histories are enacted: landless (Gen.12: 1-3) to land = resurrection (Josh.21: 43-45); and landed (Judg.2: 6) to landlessness = crucifixion (2 Kgs.24: 14-15).[153] The third history, that of the homeless one who comes to dominion, is announced by Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Second Isaiah. "...that by his poverty you might become rich." (2Cor.8: 9) The Church is likewise depicted (v.6:10). So then, land-loss and land-gift became one of the primary tools for understanding the symbolic representation of the homeless one given dominion.[154] It is meekness that leads to new turf, a consolidation of OT history. Paul's reference to the inherited Abrahamic land theme is elicited as the paradigm for its faith – land that is freely given (as in the beginning). Crucial to understanding this is the promise to Abraham's descendants resulting, not through the law, but from the righteousness of faith.[155] In summary the heirship in Rom.8: 17 subsequently relates to suffering and glory, crucifixion and resurrection.

Messianic influences

The history of messianism goes back to prehistory and is attributable to the presence of the stern forces of nature.[156] The Hebraic myths are no exception to these experiences. Yahweh as both destroyer and deliverer became the cause of all supernatural activities in which messianism is a vision of a blessed age. Both Judaism and Christianity would eventually

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150 Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood,* p55.
151 Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit,*. pp165-167.
152 *Ibid*., p169.
153 *Ibid*.. pp170-172.
154 *Ibid*., pp165-167.
155 See Rom.8: 17; Gal.3: 14,18; and 4: 7,28.

reject apocalyptic literature yet it had flourished in the inter-Testament writings.[157] The NT preserves traces not found in the known apocalypses (e.g. Rom.8: 22). The historical Jesus would not immediately be compatible since such a figure was cast in the light of Yahweh. We know of various strains made familiar by John the Baptist, carried in the early chapters of Acts of the Apostles. The Johannine message was essentially about receiving the Holy Spirit through baptism.[158] Jesus' followers differed in that they emphasised this rite through hands-on and not water.[159] For Jesus to be accepted as the Messiah required Christian elaboration of the Jewish expectancy, and this was the connection between the gift of the spirit and repentance.[160] In this vein Paul's moral requirements in preparation for the imminence of the "kingdom" seem strangely new over the inherited messianism of Judaism.[161] This lack of acknowledgement required explication.

Brueggemann refers to the movement around Jesus as being an alternative to scribal consciousness, one that harboured militant tension.[162] But the Christian messianic application of all such passages in the OT to Jesus Christ was repudiated by the Jewish authorities; the ominous absence of messianic ideas in the Mishnah ironically alludes to the first century with its revolutionary uprisings and the rebellions of 70CE and 135CE. As such behind the symbolic context of Masada and the Western Wall is a sense, a yearning, for the coming of the Messiah, teetering as it does with a desire for conflict. On the one hand there is a grieving hope, on the other a resistance for the seizing of power. This mentality resolves the covenanted Jew to keep God's commandment and generates an age-old feeling that waiting for land secures it but grasping it forfeits it. Regarding the ancient texts, those Jews who did

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156 Clyo Jackson, 'The Hellenization of Jewish Messianism in early Christianity', p36.
157 *Ibid*. pp37-38.
158 Ernest William Parsons, 'The significance of John the Baptist for the beginnings of Christianity', pp4-5.
159 *Ibid*., p16.
160 *Ibid*. pp4-5.
161 Clyo Jackson, *op. cit.*, p46. See F. Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (S. I. 1911) available at http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/orrp/orrp02.htm.

accept Jesus' messianism obviously added to a variety of existing interpretations to land theologies at the time.

There were a number of reasons why the Jews rejected the messianism of Jesus. Without due recourse to the doctrines of Incarnation and the Trinity, which are anachronistic to my point, Cohn-Sherbok elucidates some of the main objections to his mission. For instance, Jesus did not restore the kingdom of David necessitating the gathering of Israel, nor did he re-institute some of the laws of the Torah, such as the sacrificial cult, and connected to this the rebuilding of the Temple.[163] In fact, the cataclysmic age he was supposed to usher in with a new order of universal peace and political and spiritual redemption of a perfected humanity didn't happen. That said, there is no lack in the gospels as to the obverse message of the writers, the NT is rife with statements to this effect. For instance, '… no one comes to the Father but by me…" (Jn.14: 6-7) Likewise, "No one knows the Son except the Father; and no one knows the Father, except the Son." (Matt.11: 27) As will be seen, the Christian perspective wholly differs.

First, one must consider that Matthew was intent in developing a genealogy ascribing honour to Jesus as would have been expected in any Mediterranean society, in order to validate his claims.[164] In the case of Luke the apical ancestor is God by way of Adam. (3: 23-38) John's Gospel is however more spiritual, declaring Jesus the embodiment of the divine Logos (Jn.1: 1-18) and referring to him as the giver of light (grace and truth). Eagleton himself agrees with a more spiritual messianism, stating that the two sources of Jesus claiming to be the messiah are of dubious origin.[165] Without recourse to the Apocalypses and the inter-Testament period of writing the gospel background would be unintelligible.[166] Now,

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[162] Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.,* pp157-159.
[163] Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *World Religions and Human Liberation,* pp22-24.
[164] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.,* p52.
[165] Terry Eagleton, *The Gospels, Jesus Christ*, Introduction, xi.
[166] Clyo Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp38-39.

the importance of this is manifest, what Brueggemann has referred to as a land theology. Where Matthew draws a lineage to Abraham he roots Jesus in the inheritance of children, land and reputation.[167] In *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*[168] the descendant of Abraham, a Judean king, will usher in a new priesthood "after the fashion of Gentiles", (*T. Levi* 8: 14-15) the divine parentage of which Hanson and Oakman link in with the immaculate conception of the infancy narrative. That Matthew wants a genealogical connection to both David and Abraham, one a biological birth, the other divine, is a conceptual tool for an heir who, because of his rejected claims by the Jews, is in exile. Again, one is reminded of Brueggemann's reference to land in waiting, i.e. the coming of the Kingdom of God. Carol points this out, that dual paternity was an established mode for claims of royal and miraculous divine heritage in the Mediterranean; a social construct.[169] To conclude on this point the genealogies of Jesus ascribe important origins based upon his achievements during his lifetime.[170] Matthew is intent to linking him to the glorious ancestors, towards a Judean audience, whilst Luke is intent to show his significance to non-Israelites.

The messianic truth of Jesus could not have lived the test of time. What remained was a first century lifestyle in a Jewish setting that gave rise to the Christian Church that developed through Paul, whose redemption could not enclose the apocalyptic messianism of Judaism.[171] Instead the Christ would become pre-existent through the Logos Christology of John.[172] It vindicates one of the growing issues amongst the early church. In particular the death of the Messiah is a problem that Paul had to deal with in his letters. As well as that, the

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[167] *Ibid.*, pp54-55.
[168] 1st/2nd century document in the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha available at http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/patriarchs-charles.html.
[169] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p54; Carol Delaney *Man*, (1986). There seems to be ambiguity here, since the essay focuses on whether physiological paternity was known or accepted.
[170] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p59.
[171] Clyo Jackson, *op. cit.*, p48.
[172] *Ibid*., p52.

historical fact of John the Baptist being hailed as Messiah by his own followers would have been an embarrassing matter for Jesus groups, hence the emphasis is upon the Davidic descent of Jesus, as opposed to the Levitical or priestly (the Baptist's) descent, throughout the NT.[173] Not least one finds here the *modus operandi* of these early groups who practised their domestic religion in households under the patronage of their Jewish Fathers, outside the jurisdiction of political religion and temple operations.

Death and rebirth in the context of social salience

There are continuities between the wilderness, the ocean and themes of death within the Hebrew scriptures.[174] As noted, the wilderness is either the way to the land or the way to death.[175] Numbers 14 shows the failed efforts of the doubters to enter into the history of promise, the consequence of mistrust and their deduction into slavery. This promise, one of faith narrated in the Abrahamic story in which he buries his wife Sarah in a cave purchased from the Hittites, (Gen.23: 4-6) is a testament to the inheritance that God would grant, and is tied in to land rights and mortuary practice.

Biblical land management comes under three articulated themes that when considered together, represent policies that end in death.[176] These are *moving boundaries,* e.g. enclosures, *coveting* – rapacious land policy, for instance where the monarchy (1Kings 21) permitted and legitimated confiscation of a greedy kind,[177] and *defilement* – pollution of the ecosystem. They respectively concern geographic, economic, and ritual dimensions of life. Both Micah 2: 1-5 and Isaiah 5: 8-10 often make indictments against the Jerusalem royalty. Those who attempt to grasp land are threatened with the retribution of Yahweh and so meet

[173] Ernest William Parsons, *ibid.,* pp11-12.
[174] Philip Sheldrake, *Living Between Worlds,* pp23-24.
[175] Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.,* p37.
[176] *Ibid*., pp189-191.
[177] *Ibid*., pp184-186.

death. Infertility of one sort or another generally follows because productive land is premised on just social relations. Hos.4: 1-3 says much the same.

As noted, the death of Jesus thus posed a considerable problem for the Christian Jews, whose messianism would prove spiritual. The Resurrection was linked to the necessary admission of the avoidance of decay.[178] Elsewhere Jon Davies referred to the empty tomb as a signature underlining territory, dynasty and tribe[179] which, as previously informed, has its precedence in Abraham. Its main emphasis though was upon an underlying strong community.[180] Bloch and Parry give support to this point of view when they say that the funeral acts as a mechanism that negates a finite individuality and social role in order to preserve the eternal and unchanging order of authority.[181] Continuities are reasserted by equating death with birth into the collectivised and depersonalised realm of ancestors, which one may note, is the fundamental basis of Jewish household religion. The theological unfolding of the new Church was grounded in the communal empathy required to confront death.[182] It was pivotal to its conceptualisation, at the centre of which was the belief of the triumph of Jesus. Decay was relegated in view of the transcendent appreciation of the creative spirit.

Bloch and Parry affirm that the 'bad' untimely death is subsequently denied in favour of the 'good' regenerative death although there remains a place for the suspicion that the victory over discontinuity is an illusory one, e.g. a mistake of ritual.[183] Christianity was no exception to this, the early centuries saw the development of a Resurrection ideology from an Apocalyptic one, the former very much rooted in the growing Gentile audience whilst the

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178 Douglas J. Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief,* 2nd Ed., pp126-127.
179 Jon Davies, *Death, Burial and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity,* p8.
180 See John 19:41cf. The act of laying Jesus in the tomb in a garden resonates with Harold K. Schilling, (‘The Whole Earth is the Lord's’, pp115-116*).* The gardener is now at once conservator-protector-pathologist and in fact it was a symbolic theme that the monastic movement would nurture.
181 Maurice Bloch & Jonathon Parry, *Death and the Regeneration of Life,* p11.
182 Douglas J. Davies, *ibid.*, pp127-128.
183 Maurice Bloch & Jonathon Parry, *op. cit.*, pp17-18.

latter was a specific Jewish inheritance. For throughout the ancient world death and resurrection myths were already prevalent – Tammuz, Adonis, Mithra, Virbius, Attis and Osiris and of various animal representations too.[184] Christian hermeneutics and exegesis would continue to find form in the development of ritual through the "second birth" of baptism, and of course the eucharistic partaking of the bread. Jews had already started developing the idea of the resurrection (from the Roman notion of apotheosis) alongside the concept of atonement, where suffering could serve as an atoning function to offset sin and restore right(eous) relations with God.[185] Death would also serve to atone for sins. These ideas came to together in Jesus – a fulfilment of the divine covenant. What awaited the Christians was a Judgement and a future destiny in the Kingdom of God in which, spurred by the good news that God had forgiven sins through the death of Christ, there would be a resurrection of believers in the last days. This led the early Roman Christians to change their mortuary practices to that of the first Jewish Christians who preferred burial, even second burials.[186] The less wealthy could join a burial club or *collegia* run on subscriptions.[187] Differences in religious customs were transcended for the sake of the institution of death. By the end of the 2nd century the Roman practice of cremation had somewhat diminished. Augustine, writing in the 5th century, dedicates a tract or two in *The City of God against the Pagans* of this incredible act of rapture.[188] By this time burials are the norm. But over the course of centuries the belief in a resurrection, what Brueggemann referred to as the arrival of some kind of "city", became otherworldly, and not of this earth. The majority of Christians

[184] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* p143.
[185] Douglas J. Davies, *op. cit.,*p6.
[186] *Ibid.,* pp127-128.
[187] Steven Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns,* p6.
[188] Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 22 Chp.5 'Of the Resurrection of the Flesh, Which Some Refuse to Believe, Though the World at Large Believes It'. Available at the Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library at http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/AugCity.html.

would come to interpret 'eternal life' as eschatology and not a quality of earthly (apocalyptic) existence.[189]

Religious healing in first-century Palestine

The Jewish legacy of the Passover which begins on the 15th day of *Nisan* (Lev.23: 6, Num.28: 17; 33: 3) and is celebrated in the northern spring season, immediately precedes the Festival of Unleavened Bread celebrated on the 50th day.[190] The Christian Pentecostal tradition begins during the Days of Unleavened Bread and ends by the time of the "Feast of First Fruits" and the "Feast of Weeks" with an offering of grain. These fruits of faith and love, in Ignatius' words, were indelibly stamped into the Jewish nation, when the ancestors were freed from their Pharaonic enslavement and became followers of Yahweh instead. In the story of the "Burning Bush" located on Mount Horeb, the god-plant – the 'burning coals' of the red and white flecks of *amanita muscaria* - told Moses to go back to Egypt and lead out the Israelites, to his effect of becoming "consubstantial" with it.[191] In so doing the plant 'told' Moses to show three signs that would confirm God's authenticity. These were turning the staff into a snake and back again, withdrawing a leprous hand from his cloak and returning it back clean, and thirdly, to draw water and turn it red when it was poured out. As described in the Book of Exodus, Passover marks the "birth" of the Children of Israel from oppression.

As alluded to earlier, Ruck claims a biblical precedent for the use of the drug as symbolic of the liberation from oppression, a tradition which he strongly suggests, and vindicated by John Allegro, was carried into the Messianic uprising during the first century CE. It was subsequently purged by Paul from early Christianity, thus giving it a new frame of

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189 Douglas J. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp6-7.

190 For a listing of Jewish festivals see Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts%20About%20Israel/People/Jewish%20Festivals%20in%20Israel.

191 Carl A. P. Ruck, Blaise Daniel Staples, Clark Heinrich *Op. cit*. pp163-166. "Consubstantial" is normally a term reserved for the Eucharist but here the authors are ascribing a legendary root.

reference.[192] If one looks at the influence of Platonic circles that linked the health of the individual with wealth, good birth and reputation, one may understand the motive for Pauline theological implications of all of this.[193] Plato (*Republic*) said that health was a virtue to be acquired, and the Stoics also considered it coextensive with the intellectual virtue of temperance. Good health was the motive upon which the formation of morals and continuing faith in God was upheld. Thus Paul, in his heretical purging must have established the need to use foodstuffs wisely, not least in allowing the administering of food drugs, which were prevalent throughout Mediterranean societies, with caution and through official outlets only.[194]

The Jews as well as the early Christian movement held that illness was sent as a punishment for sin.[195] For Jewish life suffering was not solely caused by sin though. Levitical regulations stated the need to isolate persons and houses of those with contagious disease, as a form of preventative medicine in this century. This would have been extended to derangement in which the mental personality experiences possession, the exorcism of which is related to the demonology of older Semites and Egyptians, as well as the Greeks and Romans.[196] However, the exorcism of demons, associated both with the Jews and early Christianity, may not be much older than the first century. Jesus of course practised exorcism and gave his disciples the power to do so. The great outbreak of such possession seemed to begin in Palestine and have parallels to the healings found amongst the Greeks and Romans of the time, not to mention the great shrines of Asklepios and the legends associated with

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[192] We can find modern versions of the same story. For instance, in El Salvador the use of herbal medicine is considered politically radical since it is a women-controlled peasant movement. It is also an alternative economic development model against the Salvadoran health services. Bron Taylor, 'Earth First! And global narratives of popular ecological resistance', p61.

[193] Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.,* pp44-45.

[194] The evidence, especially in the *Didache,* points to the bishopric. (See Raymond Johanny, 'Ignatius of Antioch', pp*52, 54-55.* I have elsewhere written of this subject in 'Death is a life crisis and conjuncture of changes and transformations of the physical body, social relations and cultural configurations' (MA0520).

[195] McCasland , S. Vernon, 'Religious healing in first-century Palestine', pp18-19.

[196] *Ibid*., pp21-22.

Apollonius of Tyana.[197] It has also been psychologically linked with the breakdown of the old religions and the emergence of the individual's re-newed fears. Healing was one of the most important functions in first-century Palestine, both preventative and curative.[198] Palestine, without any significant healing shrines, surpassed the likes of Rome, Asklepios and Memphis with the activity of individual religious healers.

Some commentators even considered Paul's Christianity and magical sacraments a mystery religion. For instance, Paul's mystery and baptism for the dead, (see 1 Cor.15: 29; 51) and sacred meal could have tragic consequences for the unworthy, who thus died of spiritual causes.[199] For Justin of Martyre (ca. 150CE) was aware of the parallels between mystery cults, accusing the devotees of Mithra of imitating Christian usage.[200] In particular the Therapeutai were a segregated community who practised celibacy and chastity.[201] They abstained from wine in its cause to displace the logic since alcohol inhibits the activation of many herbal entheogens, and they also oiled their bodies.[202] On the 50th day (Pentecost) they celebrated by singing, dancing and clapping, experiencing divine rapture. They made an especial study of the medicinal roots, charms and amulets. If, from using Philo's essay as his source, Eusebious mistook them as an early Christian community, it would suggest that they shared many a common characteristic with the early Christians, especially in their relation of using the "god-plant", cultic as it may have been.

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[197] *Ibid*., p26.
[198] *Ibid*., p34.
[199] Clyo Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp44-45.
[200] Maurice Jourjon, 'Justin', p72. See Justin Martyr, *The Testimony of the First Apology*, Chp.67.
[201] Ruck, C., *op. cit.*, pp158-160. Their names derived from the Greek *therapeuein*, "to heal", not of the body but the soul. The "theoretic" or visionary lifestyle included renouncing personal property. They were also dedicated to austere vegetarianism, fasting and self-deprivation. Their goal was to achieve the mystical vision of the Pythagorean numerical universe, "the Being that is better than the Good and purer than the One and more primordial than the Monad," interpreted through an allegorical exegesis of the Hebrew Testament. (Philo of Alexandria, *De Vita Contemplativa*,) For a Jewish perspective see http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=281&letter=P#1048.
[202] Ruck, C., op. cit., pp158-160.

The Christian common meal (*agape*) or eucharist and their monastic regimes, may also have derived from the Pentecostal ceremonies of the Therapeutai. It explains the heretical in-fighting of Christianity that had been purged by Paul of all corporeal involvement; by the time of Eusebius knowledge of Christian early practice would still have been extant. In this light Paul makes a deliberate declaration of the new mystery in Corinth, for the annunciation of the Second Coming; at this time he was preaching about the concepts of immortality (athanasia) and resurrection ideology. (I Cor.15cf.)

In their likewise characteristics to the early Christians, the Essenes differ little from the Therapeutai, except in their activities of asceticism and hard agrarian labour.[203] They studied herbalism and the prophetic arts, spent all-night vigils in caves, and employed purificatory bathing rituals. A branch of theirs, the Sikarioi or zealot terrorist "assassins" named after the *sica*, a concealed dagger, is again a metaphor for what Ruck attributed as the curved cap of the fungal sacrament. But their hatred of Rome and its collaborative local healing practices probably had more to do with the subjugation of their religious freedom since Rome had little interest in drug taking and never made it illegal. Hence one can note the context of the teaching of Ignatius when, around 110CE, a short-lived but violent persecution was directed towards the Church of Antioch.[204] According to tradition he was arrested and tried in Rome, to be fed to ten leopards. The first Christians who had known Christ at this time were disappearing, calling for greater unity among its disparate groups of Jews.

Popular reactions against Christianity in the Roman Empire

The disappearance of the Sadducees accompanied the Temple's destruction and the resultant rabbinism of the Pharisees kept the Jewish people together.[205] However, the factual evidence

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[203] *Ibid*., pp168-169.
[204] Johanny, R., 'Ignatius of Antioch', p48.
[205] Clyo Jackson, *op. cit.*, p39.

of Tertullian that the continuing synagogues were the source of persecution is supported by various accounts, including the Passion story, the persecution in the Book of Acts, and the early Christian martyrdoms.[206] In particular, one may refer to the accounts of strong Jewish nationalism. For example, the aforementioned Church of Antioch is probably the origin for the naming of 'Christians' whereas before they had been referred to as Nazarenes.[207] (Acts 11: 26) This was largely due to the Gentile admission of converts who, within the sphere of Hellenised Judaism, would only require baptism. The Jewish Christians considered this intolerable and against God's law. But two generations later Christians had considered themselves a 'third race' besides both Jews and Gentiles. And this must be tempered with the apologetic technique of early authors. It is accepted that the author had as his purpose conciliation with Roman officialdom; that the situation of the Jewish part in its role of persecutor has been overstated. There was widespread popular hatred of Christianity as there was for any religion. The Jew and Christian alike were subject to the same indictments, and as such was no cause for the biased persecution of Christians, but rather just the soil from which things were born. For Mediterranean traditionalists as a whole the monotheistic belief had contended and negated the supremacy of local Roman deities prevalent throughout city territories and incumbent within political religion.[208]

It would not be unusual for the mob to have condemned Christians as Christians, their aloofness was epitomised in the fourth gospel in which the Christian is seen not of this world and its affairs.[209] Their exclusivity and in-group mentality provoked suspicion, even disgust at their often-fanatical martyrdom.[210] It successfully competed against both contemporary

[206] Eernest Cadman Colwell, 'Popular reactions against Christianity in the Roman Empire', pp55-56.
[207] Knut Schaferdiek, 'Christian Mission and Expansion', pp65-66.
[208] Schaferdiek, K., *op. cit.*, pp381-382.
[209] Eernest Cadman Colwell, 'Popular reactions against Christianity in the Roman Empire', pp57-59.
[210] Schaferdiek, K., *op. cit.*, p67.

philosophy and the mystery cults.[211] Preachers often proclaimed the doctrine of the third race in an arrogant manner, for instance its classic expression is in the fourth gospel where non-belief in Jesus is considered wickedness. The frequent accusations of them being haters of mankind was supported by their repudiation of other group practices and attitudes.[212] The charge of anti-social behaviour is factored by their distaste of 'pleasure', the breaking of family ties, the ruining of business, the abandonment of religion, and the avoidance of civic duties. Contemporary parallels for the opposition to the status quo have been no more apparent throughout the ages and goes with any influential reform movement.

As already noted, the focal social institution of ancient Mediterranean societies was kinship. Politics was concerned with out-groups and its main arena of pertinence were cities and its surrounding villages, towns and lands.[213] The home was used for business and social interaction as a secondary dwelling in the city by the élite; this was not the case for non-élites who could not afford a second home. Thus on one hand it focused upon economics, on the other for domestic religion. Both affairs were considered in relation to kinship and politics. As such rankings could be both domestic and political. Religious conversions had to yield either kinship or political advantage. That said, groups patterned after kinship were called fictive-kinship groups as opposed to Jewish political religion contained mainly in the Temple.[214] And it is here one finds the solidarity for the formation of Jesus groups; fictive-kinship groups focused upon a specific deity or deities. The household deity was considered a source of solidarity, mutual commitment, and belonging mediated through ancestors, and was expected to provide well-being, health and prosperity for the kin-group and its patriarchs towards the benefit of family members. The spiritual meal and hearth of the home were the

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211 Eernest Cadman Colwell, *op. cit,* pp57-59.
212 *Ibid.,* p61.
213 Philip F. Esler, (ed.), *The Early Christian World,* Vol.1 p375.
214 *Ibid*., pp376-377.

symbols of life, typical environmental indicators that continued through Christian and pagan developments into the modern era.

It is interesting to note that from the view of the early Christians all Israelite groups (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes) were considered ´heretical´, listed as such by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius and the likes. In fact, even into the 4th century these Israelite groups continued to be seen as family members gone astray, less favourable than if they would be a different religion altogether. The Jesus groups had been the first Palestinian-rooted form of non-Temple Israelite religion. Only after the destruction of the Temple in 70CE did the pharisaic groups follow in this but remained largely reclusive. As such the Jesus groups claimed to be the true Israel (Matthew's Gospel) or the only real Judeans. (Rev.2: 9) It was not until the 5th century that Pharisaic Judaism consolidated itself formerly through the formation of the rabbinical order and the composition of the Talmud as focuses for Jewish norms. After the official insertion of Christianity as the political religion of Rome in the 4th century only then does one find evidence of these 'heretical' groups being labelled as 'traitors'. (Theodosius 381CE) It is in this light that one can understand the variations of Christian beliefs that prevailed in the first four centuries CE.

The ideology and theology of the various Jesus groups at first would only make sense to members of the house of Israel, resident immigrant Judeans throughout the Roman Empire.[215] Their detachment from the sphere of scribal Judaism of the Pharisees who had held political power at the Temple would subsequently become the basis for Pauline conversions; the Roman cities outside Judea provided the 'other' ear of Gentile listeners, not many at first since the literate audience was limited to a few members of the aristocracy and élite classes. One can understand then, the contentious claims of early Christianity for Israel and the advent of the Messiah. But for the Gentiles one saw the beginning of a new belief in

[215] *Ibid*., pp381-382.

the resurrection. The cosmic Lord would be explicated under various understandings, each derived from a fictive-kin group who developed its forms by locality (See Acts 13:14 for Pisidia; 17: for Thessalonica; 14:1 for Iconium) and personage, e.g. Simon Magus, Nicolaus, or by distinctive ideological takes, e.g. Ebionites and Encratites.

New Testament factors concerning food habits

Food, understandably, was central to public debate. We have already exampled the Platonic connection with good health and well-being. Examples occur where prominent men had starved themselves to death, maybe in protest or as a consequence of shame.[216] Feasting was linked to a god's resurrection. The most important rituals were secret to but a few. Hence we find here the opportune setting for the sporadic rise of a new movement before any form of standard practice has time to take hold. At this point it is worthwhile looking for evidence in Paul's writings of the food rules that highlight any indication of prevailing Jewish habits that further the inception of a frame of reference for the new covenant with God.

Not least, early accusations against the Christians revolved around their eating habits and the early practice of the *agape* that some Jews found distasteful. In this, the early Christian community bears resemblance to the idealised Essene communities of Qumran.[217] The communal meals of Acts 2: 42-47 have been repeatedly compared to the religious common meal of the Dead Sea community described in *1QS* 6: 4-5.[218] The expression 'to break' before a meal is usual only in Hebrew and Aramaic and not found in classical Greek literature nor the Septuagint. The Hebraic meaning differs from Greek in that the former is associated with blessing and the latter suggest a full meal. As such, it has been interpreted both as a common meal and the origin of the Eucharist. The ancient Jewish custom may be

[216] Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, p57. See F. Cumont, *Oriental religions in Roman Paganism* 40-41 as to why the nature of austerities, self-mortifying practices and fasts had no place in state or city cults but rather attributed to mystery cults like Isis, Magna Mater, Cybele and Mithras.)
[217] *Ibid.* p78-80.

based on Psalms 104: 14-15, "bread to strengthen men's hearts," since both the Essenes and the Therapeutai would always have blessed food before consuming it. As such Paul presents Christianity in this light, in which food does not have to be an issue of contention. The 'breaking of bread' is and was a Jewish norm.

Some New Testament scholars like to see the celebration of the Eucharist in two passages: Acts 16: 34 and 20: 7-12. No where in Acts is the Eucharist mentioned as a sacrament. There is no reference of the cup following the 'breaking of the bread'. In 16: 34 one sees the conversion of a new follower, with rejoicing. In 20: 7-12 the act of thanksgiving for the continued life of the youth may be no more than an account of communal relief and the resumption of peace. Rather, sharing food is known to alleviate anxiety as well as reduce hostility and friction within the group.[219] Food rules about eating naturally follow on to include potential marriage partners, and so the meal was a place for conversions to occur. This would have included the needy and the poor, for there is good evidence that the Christians evolved the Jewish custom of *tamhui* or soup-kitchens.[220] The advantages of euergeticism were obvious since charity increases good will and provides an ear for the gospel. It was an already quite established system in the Greco-Roman world. As such in Paul there are no theological implications concerning food habits, no obvious conscience, but he only encourages eating together when it is conducive to peace and mutual understanding.[221] (See Romans 14: 2-3; 14: 6; 14: 14-15; 14: 17: 14: 19-22), 1 Corinthians 5: 11; 6: 13; 8: 8-13; 10: 16-21; 10: 25-27; 10: 31-32; 11: 20-29; 11: 33-34, Ephesians 5: 18; 5: 29, Colossians 2: 16-17; 2: 20-23, 2 Thessalonians 3: 8-10 and I Timothy 4:1-5; 6:8). Food laws were of neutral concern, so that the 'weak' could keep their rules of *kashrut* if they wanted to. Instead, meals should be avoided where dissension is apparent. But he does also

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[218] Robert Eisenman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians*, p388.
[219] *Ibid*., p81.
[220] *Ibid*., pp82-83

warn against associating (eating) with a brother who is a fornicator and avoided where food indicates participation in pagan cults i.e., this may be an allusion to the gnostic elements among other sects. Meat is also allowed, in fact in Romans, Paul advocates eating anything.[222] In the manner that Jesus allowed his disciples to eat without first washing their hands, there is no clean or unclean food. Food should serve for cohesion rather than disruption, for *koinonia* or community. It was essential that hospitality and conviviality were maintained since it was conducive for the spread of the gospel throughout people's homes used as the first 'churches', especially those of unaccustomed Gentiles. New converts were prone to experiencing a disorientating process so it was important that Paul always emphasised the need for community. Food sharing was a matter of fact necessity for survival as a community.[223] Despite the warnings of gluttony by his contemporary Philo of Alexandria[224] as the road to lasciviousness and fornication, as I say Paul was a neutral.[225]

Pauline theological implications

"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12: 2)

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[221] *Ibid*., pp60-61.
[222] *Ibid*., pp67-68.
[223] *Ibid*., p71.
[224] The Platonic heritage was no more apparent than in the strong influence of Philo, a wealthy Alexandrian Jew who attempted to harmonise the Pentateuch with Greek philosophy. His writings are radically dualistic. He came to influence Christianity more than Judaism, appealing to the Diaspora as he did. He borrowed from the Stoics the trappings of the four passions: anger, grief, fear and pleasure. His approach of extreme piety was to console the man who reached God only through the higher realm of the soul, in which all passions needed to be suppressed, including gluttony. The true ascetic was embodied in the Therapeutae, exemplified in *On the Contemplative Life*. This ideal community was both vegetarian and celibate, and what he found ostentatious in others were idealised here through the study of philosophy. He attributed high values to virginity and celibacy; the holy philosopher who is nourished by the Law alone and who eats food no more than once a week, it being only bread and water, were so contradictory to Jewish custom that he came to be recognised as a Christian. He high-handedly reinterpreted the Bible and turned his back on the biological nature of the human being, something unique within Jewish custom. (Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp29-32.)
[225] *Ibid*., pp72-73.

Interpreted widely, Paul's exhortation is about not conforming to this world.[226] He is alluding to otherworldliness; the created world as an act of God's goodness. The "new man" is a result of human redemption through Christ, not as an act of transcendence but by the re-creation of a new earth. [227] Through redemption the new vision of heaven is made possible by the crucifixion and resurrection. Genesis 1 is explicit here. Humanity's uniqueness, defined as transcendent for its ability to contain a soul, is inextricably tied up with power over the earth and other animals, first by his vertical tie to God, and second by his horizontal embedding within nature. [228] One sees a relationship here with the Hellenistic legacy that tended to subordinate the physical.

To reiterate, the early Church experienced two main contentious issues - what was new in their faith and how it related to Judaism.[229] The problem is both a practical and theological one. To be 'liberated from the law' whilst retaining the Judaic heritage with all its literature and holy days was an issue that the simple Christian had to come to terms with. Even though ceremonial was very attractive to proselytes, as iterated above involving the 'breaking of bread' for example, Paul's eschatological expectation sidelined these practicalities, despite the fast development of Christian holidays. Grimm is of the opinion that Paul's' vigorous attacks on Jewish beliefs and practices on every available occasion suggests that a reference to 'weak' vegetarians is directed at 'Judaizers' and not the pagan converts who still adhered to philosophical or ritual vegetarianism. In support of this he neither has recourse to say anything against the Aristotelians, Pythagoreans, Stoicism or any rational approach accorded to animal rights. Despite very old attempts to attach Paul to Stoic sources, Paul instead focused his asceticism on sexuality and admonition against fornication derived,

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[226] Anna Peterson, *op. cit.*, pp114-115.
[227] *Ibid*., p118.
[228] *Ibid*., p116.
[229] Veronika E. Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp69-70.

not from Stoic influence, but rather his deep personal anxiety.[230] So, where Philo saw sexual passion as an impediment to rationality, Paul saw sin as the root to rejection of the Kingdom of God.

Summary

Deuteronomy explicitly points out that those obedient to the law will live fruitful lives, whilst transgression is punishable by severe natural disasters.[231] At this point it is becoming quite difficult to pin-point any clear environmental motive for the inception of Christianity other than freedom to live. I have tried to refer to the Mosaic tradition of imbibing the sacred mushroom *Amanita muscaria* and how this could be related to Jesus and the Messianic tradition through the anointing and revelation of God's will. But as I say, the Romans did not make it illegal to do so. One does discover though there to be a purging of heretical sects in the first century CE as the likes of Philo and the Gnostics exert a strong influence, but Paul's continued administration continued to depart strongly from the norms of its times.

Food seems to be in plentiful supply, and the apparent degradation of the Mediterranean landscape would continue through the following centuries. What one may be identifying here then is rather the (Christian) need to confirm a new covenant, a new consciousness, for the shoulder of (prophetic) blame can then be put firmly on the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah by those initial Jewish converts who saw Christianity as the only way forward from the "hardness of their hearts". The destruction of the Temple would be for them, in retrospect, a "natural" disaster, one of ecological ramifications and justification for the sins of their fathers, what Brueggemann had referred to as the coveting and defilement of land grabs (land loss). The prevailing Jewish anxiety had already made its mark with the Hasmoneans. In the words of Alastair McIntosh, "spirituality concerns the

[230] *Ibid*., pp72-73.

dynamics of interconnection".[232] He says that where religion has become dysfunctional, the trellis upon which the vine of spirituality grows, then the vine is perfectly capable of growing wild. He talks about the need for psycho-spirituality, in which one needs to face the darkness else it gets projected out into the world. Now, this seems to be getting closer to our natural disaster, albeit it manifests both socially and psychologically. His assertion is that psychologically naïve groups are always infighting and that spiritual abuse within politicised religious structures has, in his opinion, too often tainted dogma and creed. One may confer an explanation for Jewish dissension in Jung's pioneering research into depth psychology and later, in the 20th century, transpersonal psychology. He also asserted that spiritual psychology, taken in its entirety, has always dealt with the dark side of nature.[233] We have indication of this in the stories of Jesus. The overturning of the tax collectors tables in the temple is itself a prophetic statement for the downfall of the Temple and coming social reforms.

Again, one finds the common theme of repression here of the instinct, but likewise how blame has deeply ingrained itself in the collective consciousness of man as being descended from his involvement with temptation. The harlotry was now of Rome, and Rome sought to extend is control and idolatry of material resources through the reconstruction of the temple and the manipulation of the tax and tithe system by inducement and coercion of the priesthood.[234] One sees the correlation with Jesus whose preference to tax gatherers and prostitutes to that of Pharisees deeply offended the latter, since he could also legitimately flout their conventions or interpretations of the Torah on particular points. May one tentatively add that the enigmatic nature of Jesus' own self-claims was in some way related to

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[231] See Deut. Chps. 6, 7 & 8 and Leviticus Chp.26.
[232] Alastair McIntosh, *Hell and High Water*, pp222-224.
[233] See Anthony Storr, *Jung: Collected Essay* (1983).
[234] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman , *op. cit.*, pp153-157.

the ideal androgynous qualities that he possibly exuded, believing that God revealed Himself in special ways to the like, whilst hiding Himself from the 'wise'?[235]

Paul saw these characteristics in Jesus, not least to maintain the simple lifestyle and the importance of family custom and the home. The spiritual significance of Jesus' existence would take prominence over the prevailing Jewish anxieties tied in with messianic expectations, by which Paul had little time for ritual enactment. In fact he was more a pragmatist dealing with ongoing real-life exigencies of developing community. It was far more important to see Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law rather than a political agitator mobilising the peasantry to anti-imperialism. As a prophet Jesus signified the beginning of the inevitable – a new consciousness that only borrowed from both Judaic and Hellenistic streams of thought, not least from the influence of the Therapeutai and desert communities like the Essenes. And likewise I have noted the Platonic relationship between good food, by extension communal agriculture, and wellbeing. His suffering and death on the cross would be a signature for the unbearable groaning of ecology and a decadent communion with God as the "giver of life" through the Resurrection. One may make an analogy here with Prometheus (the bringer of fire to humanity) who had learnt his lesson of temptation and bluntly refused association with Pandora before his own brother would fall into her vices. Relating the thoughts of Professor Toynbee, Joseph Campbell reiterates the crisis by which the higher spiritual dimension is attained in order for the Hero to transcend the deathliness of nature.[236] In the case of Prometheus, help came from without, and Herakles (Hercules) who slew the vulture subsequently released him from the rock on top the mountain. For Jesus, the

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[235] Wayne A. Meeks, 'The Image of an Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity', in *History of Religions*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Feb. (1974), 165-166 (University of Chicago Press), Article Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1061813. Maximus the Confessor in the 7th century is quoted here as indicating the abolishment/unification of the opposites of male and female in the greater context of the whole to the effect of freeing one from the earthly domain. The Gnostic texts themselves highlight many bizarre forms of this as a mode of salvation. Paul's baptismal ritual gives an early source here, "…there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in the Christ Jesus." (Gal.3: 28)

[236] Campbell, J, *op. cit.*, p17.

spiritual retreat necessitated movement to the peace of the everlasting realm of within. This is the magic realm of the infant, where all the ogres and helpers lay in wait. A potentiality that, if one can experience and return from, will conjure a marvellous expansion of powers that indeed will be the boon of mankind or an entire civilisation even. Such forgotten experiences of humanity, the conquering of death, were embodied in the crucifixion. Hence the need for the Resurrection; the ecological analogies here cannot be underestimated either.

My point is to flag up the connection between humanity and nature, and the requirement to motivate oneself through the needs of a landscape. Else, what we have is a neurosis, one that has carried through within the 'evolution' of societies. Thus, it is notably important to understand here that the forceful separation of the child (man) from its mother (Earth) is emblematic of the scientific rape of spirituality, what McIntosh calls secular humanism. The object then is to see something of this pattern evolve out from the Roman model. The centuries leading up to the Enlightenment of the 18th century had started to de-sanctify nature and in its place aid was to come from the outside, from the material dimension. Hence I make the claim here that history is repeating itself, and that which gave rise to Christianity were the same psychological, sociological, material and spiritual motives that saw the advent of a modern environmental movement. These namely, were the need for community in the home, solidarity of the lower classes, the abolishment of elitism and inequality, an 'apocalyptic' mythological mindset for the conversion or destruction of the human mindset,[237] ecological purity and respect for Creation, and a subsequent soteriology rooted in the renewal of spirituality and reconnection with the landscape through atonement and suffering.

Modern environmental perspectives

- The modern era
- Historical analogies to farming
- Land economies for spiritual renaissance
- Comparative sociological norms towards an environmental perspective
- Modern day environmental values for the Jesus groups of antiquity
- A vision of the future

Increasingly, as I research this essay, one finds that there is an intrinsic quality bound in with any movement, the experience of oppression to influence the gathering of resistance. We have already noted that the modern Western environmental movement has its contextual inception in the countryside and particularly through the change of land use. I have shown that this mentality is indubitably linked to the plight of the peasantry and the role of traditional practice, but I have hitherto taken for granted the lives of commentators that are inextricably tied up with the stratification of society and peerage. And furthermore, the use of oppressive measures for its effect to cause resistance and change had become institutionalised in the prevailing educated classes of the time, whether religious or scientific, documented through the increasing literal population and developing hierarchies of power. Well-to-do pioneers of the Anglo-American West during the period of the Enlightenment led the way and provided a middle/upper-class voice to the plight of the working class after two centuries of increased technocratic expansion and land exploitation. It is in the interest of this essay to understand the revolutionary nature of environmental resistance movements and to highlight comparative examples from the modern period with our early Christian forbears.

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[237] Cf. The 'hundred monkey effect' which originated with Lawrence Blair and Lyall Watson in the mid-to-late 1970s. It alludes to the simultaneous spread of behaviour to other groups after a critical number of members is

The modern era

In his *Letters from an American Farmer*, nearly every animal and plant and food source in the colonies of the "Neo-Europes" that are positively mentioned by Crévecoeur was of European origin.[238] The exchange of animals, tame and feral, between the Old World and the New World has been as one-sided as the exchange of weeds. Crosby cites that not even the European arrival in the New World and Australia with 20th century technology "could have made such an impact as the change that occurred through horses, cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, asses, chickens and rats, because these animals are self-replicators and can alter environments with efficiency and speed more than any technology".[239] Humanity was preceded by its livestock on a scale unimaginable at the time. A long way, it seems, from St. Symeon's divinely inspired duty of conservation and the right "to rule". It was the mechanisation of Europe's textile industry that prevented feral cattle from taking over, as for example they did in Texas.[240] But it was not so much the mechanisation of the market economy that arrogated human dissension but rather the de-spiritualisation of the landscape through its externalisation. This has interesting parallels in the origin of landscape art and horticulture which developed simultaneously throughout the major capitals in the world, namely Paris and London. The privileged sought to capture the mythic through the sciences, as such to contain it. The conquest of nature was subsequently followed by its enclosure. One can take refuge when Jesus said, "Do this" (in the breaking of the bread). It was an anamnesis of the covenant with God, an identification with the historical economy of God[241]; a retelling of the myth and the spiritual re-internalisation of the 'other' – nature. In this respect one can see the spiritual

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reached.

[238] Alfred W. Crosby, *Germs, Seed & Animals*, p.300; J. Hector St. John de Crévecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*. As far as I can see no Latin names are given although Carl Linnaeus had only just died at the time of publication.

[239] *Ibid.*, p.173.

[240] *Ibid.*, p.180.

strength that Jesus conferred at a time of strife and the threat of the externalisation of the environment. The wafer became a sure sign of the continued historicity with Providence. Gandhi, likened in his death to Jesus, extolled unceasingly the virtues of traditional society and the need for religion. He believed that technology could be contained in its usage as a mediation to God, releasing man from drudgery but maintaining his stewardship and governance with it – very Jewish!

The technological determinism of agrarian societies is often obscured by modern industrial societies.[242] Agrarian societies continue to develop over centuries but at a much slower rate. This slow internalised environmental change is generally missed by contemporaries and only discovered by later analysts. And this brings up another major issue, that European ecosystems and human ecologies had already evolved to such a far-reaching degree that it dominated other environments. As such the sheep, horse, pig and bee, as well as rats that vigorously adapted to the "neo-Europes" is indicative of another phenomenon of European culture – its embodied energy. The new markets of Europe's prosperous industries, its new sources of raw materials, helped to maintain its population increases.[243] Between 1840 and 1930 it grew from 194 to 463 million, double the rate of increase in the rest of the world. Modern industrial innovation in technology can hardly play itself out before a new technology renders it depreciated.[244]

Historical analogies to farming

Simon Farlie is of the opinion that the historical process bears little relationship to the 'Tragedy of the Commons', the theory that ideologues in the neo-liberal era adopted as part of

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[241] Maurice Jourjon, 'The Testimony of the Dialogue with Trypho', pp81-83.
[242] Peter C. Perdue, 'Technological Determinism in Agrarian Societies', pp.170-171.
[243] Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism,* p302.
[244] Peter C. Perdue *op. cit,*. p171.

a smear campaign against common property institutions.[245] He quotes the figures that half the British landscape is owned by 40,000 land millionaires, or 0.06% of the population,[246] removed as it has been from some form of collective ownership over the course of centuries. The greatest form of reclamation had been through enclosures. It was insisted at the time that it was necessary for economic development or "improvement" in preference to the backward methods of 'unregulated' land use, for instance overgrazing. For 500 years it has been disputed on both sides. Those against assert that it is the root of rural depopulation. My personal objective here is to discover something of the spirituality of this aspect of the environmental movement – land loss, which itself can be related to the fundamental origins of Christianity. Simon Farlie calls it a conflict between the global and the local, between development and diversity.[247] He refers to Daniel Defoe[248] who says that it gives the advantage of freedom where common ownership illustrates equity.

We have already highlighted Jewish land ethics – fundamental of which is the acknowledgement that the land is God-given and shared by all. Pre-enclosure effectively shared a common creed with the Jews of antiquity. In outlining the farming system of the Somerset town of Cheddar Farlie observed that management could shift between the individual and communal several times throughout the course of the day, simply through the interaction and sharing of common resources that made for efficient gains. Farlie does warn though, of profiteering from communal largesse. In referencing Garret Harding's 'The tragedy of the commons', he points out that it became one of the most cited academic papers ever published, and forwards that it has "asserted a baleful influence upon international development and environmental policy, even after Harding himself admitted he had got it

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[245] S. Farlie, 'A short history of enclosure in Britain', p16.

[246] See Kevin Cahill, *Who owns Britain*, (2001). That is189,000 families own two-thirds of the UK's 60 million acres, of which nearly three-quarters is owned by the top 40,000. For further information see William Walter Kay, 'Cahill's who owns the world', (http://www.ecofascism.com/review21.html).

[247] S. Farlie, 'A short history of enclosure in Britain', p16.

wrong, and rephrased his entire theory."[249] Harding concedes, "...We must admit that our legal system of private property plus inheritance is unjust... Injustice is preferable to total ruin." However, Farlie also states that all this was incidental to his main point, that of population control.[250] Nevertheless between the decades of the 70's and 90's it was picked up by right wing theorists and neo-colonial development agencies to justify unjust and sometimes ruinous privatization schemes used by the World Bank and marine economists as a rationale for further enclosures within third world countries. Farlie concedes his argument to Harding's retraction that the latter referred to unmanaged commons, that it was the over-exploitation of poorly regulated commons that led to private gain.

It was the common field system in Britain that made for economies of scale, including sharing the use of great plough teams making them potentially accessible to small-scale farmers.[251] Here one can find a common root with the true Christian ethos, that communal living amongst the peasants bound by family ethics is the road to organic spiritual growth. Open fields were not restricted to any one kind of social structure or land tenure system. Through its evolution from serfdom to customary land tenure known as copyhold, and through the money economy known as leasehold, none of these changes appeared to diminish the effectiveness of the open field system. Open field systems are still used extensively across the globe, as near as France and as far as Ethiopia.

In Britain the first onslaught of privatisation occurred between the 14th and 17th centuries converting arable land to pasture – supported by the Statute of Merton 1235; several hundred villages disappeared off the map. As early as the 1381 Peasant's Revolt the Abbot of

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[248] For further reading Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies,* Letter 3, Part 2: Salisbury and Dorset, esp. the section on communal farming.
[249] S. Farlie, 'A short history of enclosure in Britain', p16; Garret Harding, 'The tragedy of the commons', in *Science* (Dec., 1968)
[250] *Ibid.,* p18.
[251] *Ibid.,* p20.

St. Albans among other abuses enclosed common land.[252] In 1450 land rights formed a prominent basis for Jack Cade's rebellion. Kett's rebellion of 1549 also depicted enclosure as the main issue. [253] The terms "leveller" and "digger" appeared between the years 1604-1607 during the Captain Pouch revolts. They referred to levelling of the ditches and fences.

If one continues this analogy with the Roman milieu we discover some interesting parallels. We know that the Romans were more generally interested in control rather than ownership. That said, the primary élite residence was the country estate which, ideally, was the material gain urban non-élites aspired to own.[254] Power rested in the hands of about 2% of the population including absentee landlords and land speculators, bureaucrats and retainers.[255] The cities in the ancient world drew workers and resources away from agrarian villages, especially the farms.[256] As such cities, through bureaucratic, military, commercial and fiduciary means, controlled the operations of the country and the production of raw materials. Effectively, one sees an ancient form of enclosure in which the landless must seek an alternative lifestyle. Meanwhile the elitist Greco-Roman world disdained labour but exalted leisure.[257] Kautsky said that even though it rationalized their role as rulers, it gave rise to a disturbed mentality.[258] By extension, one may apply this model throughout the history of imperialism, for Lenski remarks that peasant uprisings were indicators of internal stress, i.e. the bureaucracy. [259] The modern era is a canny replica of this period – the gentrification of the country is created at the expense of would-be small-scale farmers who cannot afford the legal costs to push through local planning applications nor have the political clout to overturn

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[252] See Jesse Collings, *Land Reform*, p120; and on Cade, p138cf. To get a flavour, "The name "Jack Cade" is, to this day, a byword denoting a low type of pillage, robbery, and everything else of predatory character."
[253] See W. E. Tate, *The English Village Community and the Enclosure Movements*, pp122-125.
[254] Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p375.
[255] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E., *op. cit.*, p84. See Lk.14: 1 and Gospel of Thomas 64, 'parable of the guests'.
[256] *Ibid.*, pp78-79.
[257] *Ibid*., p104.
[258] Kautsky, K., *Foundations of Christianity: A Study of Christian Origins,* George Allen & Unwin Ltd. London, 1925 pp117-118.
[259] G. Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology*, 3rd Ed., McGraw Hill (Edinburgh, 1970)

national and regional legislation. On top of this, modern economies of scale dictate that farming families on, say a 90 acre farm, can barely afford to support a single wage.[260]

Josephus provides some excellent facts accorded to the Roman period.[261] Most Judeans were agriculturists, maybe as much as 90%. Most operated from villages and used traditional hand tools. This pattern of farming remained a Jewish vocation for centuries to come. During the period of the Mishnah and the Talmud farming was considered the normative way of life, since many of the Mishnaic sages were so.[262] Even today where only 40% of Israel is cultivated, as much as 70% was under cultivation during the Roman period. The seven kinds of staple the Mishnah names were wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olive and honey. Josephus states that Galilee was itself under cultivation from one end to another.

"For the land is everywhere so rich in soil and pasturage and produces such a variety of trees, that even the most indolent are tempted by these facilities to devote themselves to agriculture...every inch of the soil has been cultivated...even the villages, thanks to the fertility of the soil, are all densely populated that the smallest of them contains about fifteen thousand inhabitants." (*War* 3.36-48)

This clarifies why Jesus conducted most of his teaching amongst the peasants; most economic decisions about agriculture were taken out of the hands of the peasants.[263]

The parallels today are quite relevant. Most agricultural production is controlled by corporate oligarchies and government stipulations akin to the power relations between patrons and

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[260] Ed Hamer, 'Reclaim the Fields', p18; (http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/farmmanage/fbs/fbsincomes/)

[261] See *Jewish Antiquities,* Book IV, 224-242), pp583-593. He mentions the care of oxen and vines, as well as the normal stipulation of tithes. He also reminds one of the importance of boundary markers. Interestingly preceding this section he says, "Aristocracy, with the life that is lived thereunder, is indeed the best. Let no craving possess you... be content with this, having the laws of your masters."

[262] Daniel Swartz, 'Jews, Jewish texts, and nature', p95.

[263] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E., *op. cit.*, p105.

clients of antiquity. Luke 19:22 clarifies this position. "...taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow." Likewise most farmers today have little say in the means to production, reflected in the words of Jesus to Nathaniel a true "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile... when you were under a fig tree, I saw you." (Jn 1:47-48) Hanson and Oakman refer to this as the aspiration of every Jew, to be able to manage their own production rather than being labourers on an estate. Both the fig and the vine were Israelite symbols of welfare.[264]

By extension we can continue the analogy to modern times in regards to the European markets and the global mechanisms that dictate the importation and exportation of food stuffs. The main shift in farming economies happened post 2nd World War. Ed Hamer cites the figure that in 1950, 1.2 million people were employed in agriculture and forestry in the UK.[265] At that time many school leavers considered it a worthy job. Within 30 years the Common Agricultural Policy which advocated the intensification of farming, reduced employment figures by a half, and most small-scale farmers went under. Caroline Lucas drives this point further. Concerning the welfare of UK residents, she states that 21st century food systems are so dependent on intensive energy use it makes them particularly vulnerable to the impact of high energy prices, for instance petroleum. The protest of farmers and road hauliers during the 2000 blockades at oil refineries and distribution depots triggered a crisis that within days forced supermarkets to ration sales of bread, milk and sugar.[266] And further, the UK has one of the lowest self-sufficiency ratios in the EU, with imports rising all the time.[267] Half of all vegetables and 95% of all fruit consumed in the UK are now imported.[268]

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[264] *Ibid.,* p105.

[265] Ed Hamer, ´Reclaim the Fields´, p18; See 1951 census in B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*. The figure reflects male and female workers combined and includes horticulture and forestry. There has been a steady decline since after the First World War.

[266] ´Fueling a Food Crisis: The impact of peak oil on food scarcity´, a report by Caroline Lucas (MEP), Andy Jones and Colin Hines for the Greens/European Free Alliance (2006), p4.

[267] *Ibid.,* DEFRA puts the figure as rising by 38% between 1988 to 2002. (2006)

This is as much to do with the Common Agricultural Policy and the Single Market to prioritise international competiveness over national food security and has forced farmers to put over land to the production of biofuels because of the rising fuel prices.[269] Quite simply, food commodities get converted into fuel commodities if there is a higher value here. This could result in developing countries unable to afford the direct price increase on imported staple products like grain because of a world-wide shortage.

To continue my argument for a Roman analogy seems well placed - the peasant is firmly embedded in toil whilst the élite classes cream off the agricultural surplus. The subsequent political unrest from the danger of famine in the country was noticed by the progressive emperors Nerva (CE96-98) and Trajan (CE98-117) and led them to produce edicts that required landowners receiving government grants to make subsistence payments to poor children.[270]

Land economies for spiritual renaissance

Land economies must also denote the preservation of ecosystems, to include the biodiversity of the landscape and conservation practice in both the humanist and religious traditions. I have already made note regarding our aforementioned American conservationists Henry David Thoreau *et al.* Closer to home though, it would be the European markets that dictate where oppression would be greatest, and it is on these soils that we should turn. In Scotland for instance, most of the common land had been taken through nepotism, corruption and laws passed by the powerful.[271] This is likened to Walter Brueggemann who elsewhere refers to it

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[268] Concurrent to this one can reflect on the more recent events in Cuba after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of trade, when the flow of fuel and critical agricultural products dried up. [268] This caused a predominantly oil-based culture to revert to organic practice in which resources once again became internalised, as has been the case in the majority of traditional cultures across the world.

[269] *Ibid.,* pp4-5.

[270] Donald J. Hughes, *History* 'Case Study B: Ecology and the Decline of the Roman Empire', *The Mediterranean: An Environmental History,* pp205-206.

[271] Andy Wightman,´Half of Scotland is missing´, p24.

as an intolerable commitment to violence when old traditional claims are merged with contemporary military capacity.[272] This history of land entitlement had been repeated throughout the modern period and functioned as a warrant for European seizure and the brutal dismissal of Native Americans. Likewise, 17th century American Puritans justified land grabs towards a religious basis of economic discipline, on the lines of Max Weber's (1864-1920) economic sociology, (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*)[273] and have been credited with being the first American individualists. They had aligned themselves with the growing commercial world and together with the Scottish Presbyterians became a major political force in Britain as a result of the First English Civil War. As such, with the Protestant movement came radical changes. These included the outlook towards material wellbeing as a blessing from God, [274] and the Bible literally took pride of place. But not all Protestants distinguished nature with such objectivity. One had abandoned the idea that nature was of God, even though it was considered that something of nature, the second 'Book of God', could be understood.[275] At about this time thinking behind the conquest of nature had become apparent, and this carried over into the importance of work and of success. Harvest festivals, until only recently, were celebrated according to how much grain was cropped. In fact, one sees a continuum between this work ethic and the rise of capitalism, through to individualism and the lack of mediation. 16th century Calvanism became a very successful commercial creed through its rationalistic approach. Once salvation had been guaranteed so one felt they could do what was rationally useful. Of the many different attitudes that evolved from Calvanism included the Quakers (Society of Friends) and the

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[272] W. Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faiht,* xv.

[273] Calvinist Protestantism laid the foundation for the development of capitalism. It was the ethics of individualism, hard work, self-control, and obedience to authority that capitalism is premised on. Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion,* p69. [These aspects appear to be a modern day fallacy now.] See *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* introduction by Anthony Giddens, (1993). Weber calls it a rationalised capitalistic enterprise requiring a disciplined labour force, and the regularized investment of capital. This varies from the ancient models of capitalism due to the element of free labour. (3)

[274] Elizabeth Breuilly & Martin Palmer (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp86-90.

Mennonites. The former took a leading role in getting blood sports banned in the 17th century.[276]

The spiritual traditions too were subject to an extraordinary diversity of sentiment towards nature and in their way provided an answer to the overbearing weight of Protestantism pervading the Western world. For this I will refer to the era of Romanticism that is often referred to as an unprecedented insistence on an intrinsic value in nature, something that cannot be quantified towards an instrumental value or agricultural resource.[277] William Wordsworth saw man and the rural condition as a passionate embrace. "Three years she grew in sun and shower, Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower on earth was never sown", ('Nutting').[278] In this he differed from previous poets who preferred to associate with urban mores instead. He was thus considered to have inspired the creation of National Parks.[279] On the other hand German Romanticism was more aesthetic, linked in some part to its lack of industrial development. Britain though, had its strong anthropocentric outlook shaken by the development of evolutionary ideas. Rural people constantly saw non-human phenomenon as pre-figuring or symbolic of the human or divine worlds, which ultimately led to the birth of ecological science. This disenchantment and reification of nature probably gave free rein to the development of industry which had a reciprocal influence on materialism. However, Keith Thomas in *Man and the Natural World* related this phenomenon with the increased longing for nature and protection of wildlife.[280] This extended to the development of sentimental attitudes towards pets in the face of animal exploitation. Britain would lead the way towards a historical movement gradually more inclusive of 'out-groups' such as women,

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[275] *Ibid.,* pp91-92.
[276] *Ibid.,* pp93-94.
[277] Greg Garrard,'The Romantic´s view of nature', pp113-114.
[278] See Wordsworth & Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads,* p193.
[279] Greg Garrard, *op. cit.,* p115.
[280] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* p301.

slaves and ultimately animals and ecosystems.[281] Burn´s 'To a mouse (on Turning her up in her Nest with the Plough', November 1785)[282] is a clear indication of this sentiment. Attitudes towards the natural world though, were still ambivalent and variable even within Romantic nature poetry. For instance, it is considered that, in his early life, Wordsworth´s spiritual kinship was pantheistically inclined but that by 1830 he was an Orthodox Anglican in which nature was subordinated to a transcendent divinity.[283] That said, he continued to see within it an essentiality. To give an example, in *The Prelude* (orig. 1805), "Man free, man working for himself, with choice of time and place, and object, by his wants he comforts, native occupations, cares, conducted on to individual ends...", was a significant revision from the earlier version.[284] In counterpoint we could look at the poetry of John Clare who, as a country labourer was raised in poverty and largely self-educated.[285] And like many of his American counterparts, Clare found the Church quite uneasy. Considered one of the finest British poets of the natural world, he wrote lines like, "Nor fence of ownership crept in between, To Hide the prospect of the following eye, Its only bondage was the circling sky." ('The Mores')[286] In this he considered even the hedgerows and copses as human intervention upon the freedom of the land. One should be wary though. As Garrard points out, the contention that enclosure impinges upon a natural sanctity is not necessarily well-founded. The open field system, even if less efficient, was not noticeably denuding of nature.

Garrard concludes that Romantic nostalgia, in view of its ambiguous proto-ecological thinking, has supported the "ghetto-ization" of nature through urban sprawl. Cities seep out in search of a lost world dominated by the scientific and political rationale of an extreme

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[281] Greg Garrard, *op. cit.*, p116.
[282] See http://www.worldburnsclub.com/poems/translations/554.htm.
[283] Greg Garrard, *op. cit.*, p118.
[284] See http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12383/12383-h/Wordsworth3c.html.
[285] Greg Garrard, *op. cit.*, pp121-123.
[286] The other poem Clare wrote about concerning the Enclosures was 'To a fallen elm'. See http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/ecohist/readings/clare-poems.pdf.

nationalism.[287] But one should also heed the call of the modern day reform movement in Scotland. Andy Wightman saw the establishment of the Scottish Parliament as crucial towards the reforestation of the Highlands and Islands, which mainly focused upon rural areas. It included communal ownership and the right to buy, feudal abolition, and access rights.[288] Under the terms of the Scotland Act 1998 Westminster agreed to devolve some of its responsibilities over the domestic policy of Scotland to a new directly elected Scottish Parliament. Such matters are known as "devolved matters" and include education, health, agriculture and justice. How much the Church has a role to play here in cultural reform is a topic I prefer to reserve towards the plight of Third-World peoples for it is in these countries where state religion provides a moral and in some cases, an economical ethos towards their development.

Comparative sociological norms towards an environmental perspective

One of the main features of Westernisation is the increased depopulation of the countryside in favour of urban residency, despite recent figures suggesting a counter-urbanisation culture in Britain. Simon Farlie quotes the statistics that total population is increasing in Britain but cities are shrinking.[289] Rural depopulation is the pattern for technocratic expansion and we know much the same was occurring around the time of Jesus. Hanson confirms that the urbanisation of the land was partly due to an agricultural surplus appropriated by the cities.[290] In similar vein, one can see the conditions that dictated the industrialisation of the West. The old practices of viticulture, horticulture, fishing, herding, plow-farming, peasantry, household

[287] Greg Garrard, *op. cit.,* p129.
[288] Andy Wightman,´Half of Scotland is missing´, p24.
[289] S. Farlie, 'Is Urbanisation a Temporary Phenomenon?', pp27-28. For example, Liverpool's population has halved since the War, and London has much the same affairs although the last three decades has seen a turnaround due to the influx of immigrants.
[290] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p78.

slaves, and clear demarcated social hierarchies[291] were the physical conditions of a colonial take-over, still extant in developing countries today. Albeit the goal posts have moved and physical land acquisition has been superseded, in the main, by market operations through corporate control. Ever since the separation of business and state was observed by Adam Smith (1723 – 1790),[292] and further articulated by Marx and Weber, the main indicator of rank for Western nations was namely through its economic mechanisms. Esler related this concept of wealth in the ancient world as inducement,[293] but in contrast to Mediterranean kinship politics, modern political societies are premised upon economic power relations. Smith also noted the imbalance in the rights of workers in regards to owners (or "masters").

"We rarely hear, it has been said, of the combination of masters, though frequently of those of workmen. But whoever imagines, upon this account, that masters rarely combine, is as ignorant of the world as of the subject. Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise the wages of labour above their actual rate. (The Wealth of Nations, Book I: viii.13)[294]

What's important to realise here is that political and economic power was maintained, in ancient Mediterranean culture, through groups of families ascribing privilege down a rank of patron/client relationships, not as one individual over many others as in modern

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[291] *Ibid*., p10

[292] One of the key figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, Smith is the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments and An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Usually abbreviated as *The Wealth of Nations*, it is considered his magnum opus and the first modern work of economics. It earned him an enormous reputation and would become one of the most influential works on economics ever published. Smith is widely cited as the father of modern economics and capitalism.

[293] Philip F. Esler (ed), *op. cit.*, p374.

[294] See Kathryn Sutherland, 'Adam Smith's master narrative: women and the Wealth of Nations'; Heinz Lubasz, 'Adam Smith and the 'free market', in Stephen Copley and Kathryn Sutherland (eds.), *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: New interdisciplinary essay*, Manchester University Press (1995)

democracies.[295] Having said that, some would say that modern corporate bodies reflect this elitism at a very high level – a fictive kinship - and control the operations of not just the market, but hold sway over political leadership.[296] The shifting responsibility between public and private interests is akin to the ancient role that political religion played as opposed to the familial kinship ties that bound together community groups. Where patronage relations provided the backbone for social stratification and inequality in Mediterranean societies,[297] the lack of bureaucracy is a factor in its employment and leads to power mongering.[298] They are interpersonal and promote a strong quality of unconditional and long-range social credit, i.e. it is unusual to exchange benefits and obligations simultaneously. Exchange is "packaged" so that the elements of power, influence, inducement and commitment are not separated. These deals are informal and often opposed to official laws, and thus have the freedom to be abandoned at any time. Likewise modern-day arms dealers, oil giants, and forestry workers have in the past, and still do, violate International trade agreements, and corrupt government officials into accepting bribes whilst indigenous populations suffer state-enforced genocide. Alexander Hinton affirms this when he says that genocide is now contextualised in modern forms for the values of modernity.[299] It supports the teleological myth of "progress" and "civilisation". Reason and science provide those myths and meta-narratives construct the inverted images of indigenous people as savages.

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[295] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p81.

[296] The Trade Unions came about in Europe as a response during the Industrial Revolution when bargaining power over working conditions lay firmly under the influence of the employer. They have likewise induced or financially supported individual candidates or parties (such as the British Labour Party) for public office whilst promoting favourable legislation towards the interests of their members or workers as a whole. To this end they may pursue campaigns, undertake lobbying, and cast block voting. (For more information see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_union) The recent leadership battle of the Labour Party in Britain was hotly contested between the Milliband brothers where in fact the TU were considered instrumental in its result.

[297] See Halvor Moxes, 'Honor and Shame', 1987.

[298] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, pp71-72.

[299] Alexander Laban Hinton (ed.), 'The Dark Side of Modernity: Toward an Anthropology of Genocide', pp7-8.

A good example here centres on the GM debate and the need for a second Green Revolution[300] in order to feed the world's population. In 2002, Zambia was left with a famine-stricken population without food aid after cutting off the flow of Genetically Modified Food (mostly maize) from UN's World Food Programme. "I'm not prepared to accept that we should use our people as guinea pigs," said the President Mr. Mwanawasa at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development. ('Zambian Leader Defends Ban on Genetically Altered Foods' by Henrie Cauvin *New York Times* September 04, 2002) Likewise, several European countries banned Monsanto's MON-810 corn and similar genetically modified food crops. In late 2007, the U.S. ambassador, in an attempt to fight the French ban and changes in European policy toward genetically modified crops, recommended "moving to retaliation" against France to cause "some pain across the EU."[301] The lesson that was learnt from the Green Revolution was that in order to alleviate hunger one must alter the tightly concentrated distribution of economic power, especially access to land and purchasing power.[302] (But as we have seen, one is again referring to competing narratives.) Modernity has rather tended to quantify wealth through statistics and proportions, failing to deal with the root concerns, and converts it into power where investments are protected by national law

[300] Norman Borlaug, an American scientist is credited with the beginnings of the Green Revolution for conducting research on disease resistance high-yield varieties of wheat. In combination with new mechanised agricultural technologies, Mexico was able to produce more wheat than it required to feed its citizens, prior to which the country was importing almost half of its wheat supply. By the 1950s and 1960s it became a world-wide phenomenon. These domesticated crops were bred specifically to respond to fertilisers that forever changed agricultural practices because these varieties cannot grow successfully otherwise. This led to only a few species of the most productive types of say, rice being grown in India where, from 30,000 rice varieties prior to the Green Revolution, today there are around ten. They were also irrigation-dependant and fostered a homogeneity that was also more prone to disease due to its lack of bio-diverse resilience, which ultimately led to growing pesticide use as well. (By the 1970s, the new "dependant" seeds replaced the traditional farming practices of millions of Third World farmers. By the 1990s it had impacted anything up to 75 percent of world-wide production leading to overpopulation but it also arrogated market and economic reform based upon Western models. Africa, on the other hand, hasn't significantly benefited from the Green Revolution through lack of infrastructure, governmental corruption, and insecurity in nations. (http://geography.about.com/od/globalproblemsandissues/a/greenrevolution.htm & http://www.foodfirst.org/media/opeds/2000/4-greenrev.html)

[301] Truthout, 2010 Dec. 21, 'WikiLeaks: US Ambassador Planned "Retaliation" Against France Over Ban on Monsanto Corn', (http://www.truth-out.org/wikileaks-us-ambassador-planned-retaliation-against-france-over-ban-monsanto-corn66131) ; the US cable is available here: http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/12/07PARIS4723.html

enforcement agencies and nation-state armies.[303] It can also be converted into influence, commitment and solidarity in which the opinion of the wealthy matter, who subsequently arrogate praise and affection, loyalty, and the votes of grateful politicians. At its root it can be considered imperialistic, or its legacy can be as such. In retrospective view of the advancement of Mediterranean society, it is apparent that the politics and economics of the day were both divinely sanctioned for the ultimate benefit of élite groups, and can be seen to be the blueprint for the development of modern societies.

To summarise the turn of events then, the ecological regulation of the world used to be effected through a locally balanced barter and exchange system, and only a small proportion entered the market cash economy.[304] Carry forward the agricultural smallholder who was considered the archetype of virtue, before the impact of the Enclosures had yet fully to make its mark from the commoditization of goods and the practice of usury.[305] The agricultural developments of the 9th century, as shown by the new Frankish calendars, depict the passive personifications of man mastering nature.[306] By the time the West monopolised the global scientific field from the 13th century onwards the cultural transformation of this was explicit. For instance, the distribution of land was no longer based upon family need, but the capacity of a machine to plough it, since heavy ploughing imposed upon the peasants the need to pool the oxen required to draw it. This arrogated the need for a powerful village council to determine the sequence of ploughing and decide disputes. The traditional use of the commons for hunting, grazing and fuel, for subsistence, was piecemeal denied to the peasants.[307] That coupled with increased food supplies and better diets conduced to startling population growths of the 13th century and beyond, along with their cities, which rely heavily

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[302] Http://www.foodfirst.org/media/opeds/2000/4-greenrev.html.
[303] Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p375.
[304] Michael S. Northcott, *Ibid.*,, pp48-49.
[305] *Ibid*. p122.
[306] Llyn White, Jr., *op. cit.*, p29.

upon agricultural surplus.[308] The ensuing productive milieu, gave rise to a new exuberance of spirits.[309] A religious fervour had set in and, even as late as the 18th century, every notable Western scientist, including Newton and Leibnitz, explained his motivations in religious terms.[310] It was from the dynamism of religious devotion that science gained its impetus. Then, after the late 18th century the hypothesis of God became superfluous to scientists. The immoral use of technology had no more a divine ministry to baulk its perpetuity. Access to this level of power was previously thought unimaginable. Moreover, it can also give rise to war. The philosopher Vladamir Solovyov puts it succinctly when the politician, in company of the Lady, the General and Mr. Z, says,

"I can and perhaps, even must, pity and protect every human being and every animal too… but I shall regard myself at one, of the same family, not with the Zulus or the Chinese, but only with the nations and people who have created and observed all those treasures of culture which form my spiritual food and afford me my highest pleasures…For this war was necessary and war was a holy enterprise."[311]

I am left then with the need to seek the progressive attitudes of environmentalism as pre-empted in the formation of Jesus Groups of early antiquity.

Modern day environmental values for the Jesus groups of antiquity

The teachings of Jesus, one must conclude, provide ample evidence for much of the underlying currents within Palestinian society. Rather than argue for the historicity of Jesus the man, my approach is to look at the social phenomenon of his followers' movement and to

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307 Michael S. Northcott *Op. cit*., p50.
308 *Ibid*. p45.
309 Peter C. Perdue, *op. cit.*,, p176.
310 Llyn White, Jr., .*op. cit.*,, p.32.
311 V. Solovyov, *War, Progress and the End of History*, pp.105-106.

relate specific aspects of their teaching. Jesus opposed any form of stratification, instead he instructs the ruler to invite those at the bottom of the scale.[312] (Lk.14: 13 'invitation to the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind'; see also 14:15-24) Jesus plays down the network of friends, brothers, kin and wealthy neighbours, (blood- and fictive-kin) because the patron has always something to gain from this. In effect, Jesus turns the thinking upside down regarding the role of the patron. In God's reign it is the socially powerless who have nothing tangible to offer and these are the ones who will inherit. These parables concern patron elitism. It is the fringe groups outside the city who are invited to dine along with the urban non-élites – the artisans and traders. These acts of Christian charity were extended to Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) who, as patron, sold his land to the early Jerusalem church and allowed the apostles to distribute the proceeds among the group.[313]

Religious political control was through the control of theology, ritual and purity standards, that mainly served to honour the élite groups.[314] The only real method open to non-élite religion that could challenge this power was through redefining the meaning of received tradition,[315] as had done the Jesus groups against the Judean élite, namely the priest and the Levites who operated from the temple. Importantly, the temple was also linked to judicial institutions.[316] But it was domestic religion on the other hand that provided solidarity, mutual commitment and belonging mediated through the ancestors.[317] Where domestic religion sought meaning through belonging, political religion always remained the other side of the coin; 'conversion' was for either kinship or political advantage. Jesus flew in the face of convention. Moreover the Gospel writers were conclusive in the arrival of a new

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[312] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman *op. cit.*, pp75-76.
[313] *Ibid.*, pp79-80. The following story of Anani'as and Sapphi'ra also highlight patronage and fictive-kin relationships. (Lk.5:1-7)
[314] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p134.
[315] *Ibid*., p135.
[316] *Ibid*., p140.
[317] Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p376.

paradigm or consciousness. The Jesus influence would ultimately become a threat to political religion.[318] The ideology and theology could only have made initial sense to members of the House of Israel,[319] immigrant Judeans throughout the Roman cities who fell outside the sphere of the budding Pharisaic ideology of scribal Judaism. Paul would find Jesus groups amongst the mixed communities of Jews in the urban Diaspora. Yet we also know that Jesus was indirectly linked to social banditry, being from the villages.[320] The "disreputable" he associated with (Lk.7:36-38 The story of the forgiven sinner) and the sayings against taxes and the Temple (Mk.12:13-17 "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's…") were inflammatory remarks against politicised religion. Social banditry, targeting as it did the elitism of the day, is listed in the gospels, in Josephus, the Babylonian Talmud, and Dio's *Roman History*, illustrating how pervasive this institution really was.[321] It is observable then, that within one generation the target audience for Christian conversions had moved beyond the countryside of Galilee and was carried with the peasant 'exodus' into the cities.

The question to ask here is whether this is the pattern for a modern-day environmental movement, and I have shown this to be true both in cultural terms – the general exodus of the countryside, and in social terms – the uprising of rebellious groups premised on their fringe characteristics, often with a hardcore element in the vanguard. Effective resistance only happens in numbers vindicating in the main that the machine of the Roman Empire was

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[318] Jesus would have drawn from many traditions including the popular knowledge prevalent at the time. It is highly likely that the historical Jesus, as the son of a carpenter, gained access to different familial influences; classical science would certainly have been partially accessible. Elementary schools probably under the influence of Hillel and attached to synagogues were usually backed up by parental teaching. And access to Hebrew especially around Jerusalem, and some Greek, would have been used by scribes and sages who taught in Galilee. The Greek-speaking cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias were close at hand to Jesus and one must assume that the scriptures in their original languages were accessible. It is probable that just like many Jews in the Holy Land today, and with city-dwellers in the world as a whole, Jesus would have been bi- and tri-lingual. The body of Jewish historical studies requires further reading on the subject. They include Joseph Klauser, Flusser, Vermes, Sandmel and Maccoby. Overall the general acceptance of Jesus' didacticism is reflected in the Jewish rejection of his claims.

[319] Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p381.

[320] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p86cf.. The indirect reference to Mk. 1:45cf. is linked to miracle working.

[321] *Ibid*., p90.

substantially taking its toil on the peasantry. In an interesting article in the *New Statesman* Jesus is likened in his revolutionary spirit.[322] Not least to have political accolades thrust upon him from various notable figures, all in the name of political reform and perhaps a true indication of the modern mode of revolution. (Compare John the Baptist and his rallying claim to Jesus Lk.3:15 cf.) There are attributions from Christian pacifists (the Quakers, Martin Luther King or Bruce Kent of the CND), Christian socialism (Tony Benn or Hugo Chávez the Venezuelan president, and Christian communism (the French Utopian philosopher Étienne Cabet). In 2007 the Marxist literary critic Terry Eagleton noted that Jesus has most of the characteristic features of the revolutionary activist, including celibacy, homelessness, property-less, a disdain for kinsfolk, being socially marginal, without trade or occupation, a friend of outcasts, a scourge of the rich and powerful, anti-establishment, and without material possessions.[323] One must take caution here, where modern day critics apply their own political tendencies and ideological make-up upon distant figures.

I have already noted above that Jesus had an education, and although he played down the traditional patronage system it seems unlikely that he did not have support from friends in high places. He taught for at least 3 years and probably had a full grounding in temple politics and the taxation system. Much of his education would have been domestic, using the roles, values and goals of the household to articulate religion.[324] That he could wander from place to place indicates a definite air of religious authority probably linked to familial ties. Additional aid outside the religious family would have come from political authority.[325] Yet we know that Jesus called for his followers to recognise that their discipleship would bring divisions within families.[326] "…I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come

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322 Medhi Hasan, 'What would Jesus do?', pp25-27.
323 Terry Eagleton, *op. cit.*, xxii.
324 Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p376.
325 K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p133.
326 Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.410-411.

to set a man against his father… and a man's foes will be those of his household. He who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me…" (Matt.10: 34cf.; Lk.14:26-27) An interpretation of this statement could prove to be negative. But set in the light of Jesus' prophetic qualities effectively what we have is a Jewish exigency in which Jesus is actually stating the ongoing situation, and it is this that one must be wary of. John Davidson says much the same when he compares Jesus' message to Moses in which the latter only provides a dispensation for divorce because they would break up anyway.[327] Likewise Jesus admonishes divorce. (Mk.10:2-12) Yet even at his death on the cross Jesus arranges for the welfare of his mother, according to John. And everywhere there are messages of peace, "…for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt.5: 9)

It is essential then that the prophetic content is understood. Brueggemann shows that Jesus' very presence presented the ultimate criticism of the royal consciousness by dismantling the dominant culture and nullifying its claims.[328] The vulnerability of the marginal people requires their solidarity. We can surmise from this that Jesus usurps the authority of Rome and claims it as a message of the Father that the Roman machine and technocratic expansion is itself the work of God for the identification of those who have lost their families to urbanisation, slavery and land exile. Caracalla's edict of 212 CE showed that cultural Roman reform ended up with 80% of the citizenry being descended of slaves.[329] Brueggemann affirms that Herod had reasoned correctly in his decree to slaughter the new-born – the coming of Jesus meant the abrupt end of things as they stood.[330] This was the expectation of the coming Kingdom of God. (Lk.4:18-19 is paramount to this understanding, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled…") On this note then, one may see the message

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[327] John Davidson, *The Gospel of Jesus: In Search of his original Teachings,* p881.
[328] W. Brueggemann *The Prophetic Imagination*, p81.
[329] Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p383.
[330] W. Brueggemann, *op. cit.*, pp82-83.

carried by Paul. Firstly, most Jesus group members were annexed from the élite world.[331] They were intolerant of behaviour that dishonoured God, and group cohesion was central to the creation of ethical inventories.[332] (See Mk. 7:21-22; Gal.5: 19-23) Ultimately, in the 'cruel' world of cities Jesus groups developed their own regimen predominantly within Judean neighbourhoods.[333] It is from here that any modern environmental comparisons should be ranged from, and ultimately, with a prophetic voice behind it.

A vision of the future

Jesus Christ then, fits into our history as an icon of environmental change, as an oath made between Providence and the provided – the people. During his ministry, as an itinerant teacher Jesus would have epitomised the shamanic or environmental spirit. In the spirit of hunter-gatherers it naturally arrogates indigenous rights to land and freedom to "nourish" oneself better - an assertion of humanity's solidarity reflected in the Hebraic understanding that Adam was made from the soil.[334] Unlike Bacon's cynicism to liberalism, Jesus going about spreading his word would have been a pediment to receiving and giving spiritual sustenance.

Environmental (agrarian) determinism asserts that physiological and economic well-being is premised on the natural world of human exigency, but also the political, social and intellectual relationships of peoples.[335] One need only make reference to the Jewish ethic of labour as Creation here and ask the question whether environmental determinism dictates a belief in God.

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[331] Philip F. Esler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p394.
[332] *Ibid*., p389.
[333] *Ibid*. p395.
[334] Sarah Jane Boss 'Does God's Creation Hide or Disclose its Creator?', p178.
[335] Peter C. Perdue, o*p. cit.*, p172.

"And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job that there is none like him on the earth a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?'" (Job: 1.8)

"And the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself do not put forth your hand.' (Job: 1.12)

This, a man with 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 Yoke of Oxen, 500 she-asses and very many servants who offered burnt offerings according to the number of his sons and daughters, who lost everything but would not curse God. As Joseph Campbell illustrates in his interpretation of this hero, man cannot measure the will of God.[336] Job had proved himself capable of facing a greater revelation. As such he lived in the fullness of days, until an old man by which time all wealth had been restored and four generations of sons passed beneath him. Campbell makes it clear that Job betters his inquisitors' judgement about the nature of things. Job is rewarded even more greatly for his acceptance of environmental catastrophe, which one should add, includes both the sword and nature (wind and fire). Accordingly, revelation/reward is here determined by environmental forbearance.

To take a modern slant one may refer to McFague again, for she upholds Job's forbearance and regards the earth as God's caring body.[337] She views the world/God as mother and saviour who nourishes daily her children. God is always here. Anthropocentrism is replaced with the kinship of all beings, (which is very akin to Deep Ecology). But to note, McFague says that a theology is useless if it does not observe the fact of humanity´s potential to annihilate earth life. A revitalised Christian attitude must aim at altering human attitudes and assumptions and deal with the major question of whether life is to prevail or be

[336] Campbell, J., *op. cit.*, pp47-48.

extinguished. But she asserts that times have changed and so must theology, for it seems that without those high morals one loses sight of the environmental determinism of God. The message is the same though, one of humility and forbearance. In the thoughts of Matthew Fox, the Cosmic Christ is here represented by the long-suffering Mother Earth. The new religion needs to be mystical and panentheistic.[338] Or in the words of Thomas Berry, the grandeur of the universe should now form the basis of a new mythic image.[339]

Peter Jones was also aware that spirituality relates to an enhanced level of consciousness above that considered normative.[340] Dogmatic religion is transcended by the mythological landscape. Both secular and religious asceticism can achieve this state. Now that the world is unquestionably "global" in its operations environmentalism calls for a frugality whilst religion for interfaith dialogue. This requires a contraction, one of resource and energy use, and the upholding of local economics and politics, and expansion of the earth as a single living organism. Wendell Berry said that the destructive influence of the home is no more felt as in its remoteness from work.[341] Local economies seem to be intrinsic for the formation of all new movements. The settling of land is important for concepts of providence and faith. He also said that the food and energy crisis is "overridden by the brazen glibness of official optimism."[342] It appears Fox is right when he says that the crucifixion is an ongoing drama. The bottom line is not whether the earth can support increasing population numbers, although this is a crucial issue, but whether man can offset their immoral greed for exploitation.

"The scrawl of lichens on stones in the old archway; day-tourists rush past.[343]

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337 David Kinsley, *op. cit.*, pp175-177; Sallie McFague, *Models of God*, pp 63-64, 69-87, 97-116.
338 Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, p108.
339 David Kinsley, *op. cit.*,., pp172-174.
340 Peter Hope Jones, *Beauty and Spirit at Bardsey*, llangefni, Yns Mon, 2008), p16.
341 Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, p52.
342 Wendell Berry, *op. cit.*, p59.
343 Peter Hope Jones, *op. cit.*, p90.

Conclusion

Stable, global land economies are intrinsic to the fair distribution of food, both for the Jesus groups of antiquity and modern environmental ethics. It would suggest that the very demand for control over one's own food indicates something of an environmental catastrophe in the shadows, albeit the foreboding sense of its arrival can be regarded as a lesson learnt from the recent world wars and the freely-made available information concerning the scientific and technological data on the environment. Rob Hopkins (2008) shows that important statistics data regarding oil reserves and climate change have been withheld from general circulation in the past. But knowledge regarding ecological degradation has been known since the Greco-Roman period at least. No human race has been exempt from its practice. Most soil erosion has been a factor of expanding population demands and the militarisation of the landscape. This has been reflected both in theological and humanist narratives. Josephus provides ample information regarding the physical conditions of Israel during the time around the formation of Christianity.

For the ancient Greeks and Romans the evidence is clear, there were no real food shortages but the peasants were systematically subjugated and kept at subsistence level, whilst the developing middle-classes and aristocracy creamed in their agricultural surplus. Jesus represented the peasants; his groups had little, if any, interaction with the bourgeoisie materialists. The experience of the peasant was a religious one, both domestic and political, and tied in with the covenanted laws and ordinances given with the promissory granting of land and faith in God. Access to this land has been the central Judaeo-Christian heritage throughout succeeding centuries, contextualised as it was, within the framework of religious morals and God's providence. This can be compared to the modern period in the West, which signified greater exploitation of earth's resources. The commoditisation of land happened in

the face of increasing food demands, concentrated population, and political centralisation through its expanding cities. The land became subject to mechanisation. The history of this technological advancement was seeded by the Roman Empire; large enough to begin a massive mobilization of resources. The Greeks and Roman philosophers warned of avarice and the pursuit of happiness through wealth. The effects of this can be considered as an ongoing human malaise that precedes the collapse of human systems in one form or another. Both cultural and environmental determinisms give increasing rise to social reforms manifest in the creation of political ideologies and rebellious activity.

The central Jewish institution of the Temple was important for its connection to the Mosaic Law. Jesus followed this prophetic tradition and his woes became apparent when he entered the city during the latter part of his life. Reversing the common claim of banditry directed at insurgents whose personal interests lied at the heart of peasant culture, Jesus made his arraignment towards the role of the priests and what had become of the temple; it was being used as a bank that stored the surplus wealth denied to the poor. The corruption here was for all to see, but the sheer burden of making the festival trip to the temple three times a year became a Christian motive for the re-instatement of the simple worship of God – the New Testament. Thus solidarity, reform, and rebellion could be instigated from the city centres and the synagogues where Jewish males were allowed to air their sentiments to a Jewish audience. Christianity grew as an urban phenomenon, in cosmopolitan surroundings where the Jewish inheritance could be redefined for the acceptance of Gentiles. The old texts were expurgated to suit this. Not least was the relaxing of Jewish rites including food laws. The Pharisaic tradition of fasting was renounced in favour of spiritual sustenance in the ‘new’ land of the Kingdom of God. The prophetic message here was one of the *death* of culture (*apocalysm*).

The scenario has been played throughout the history of civilisation. The imbalance of material rights between the rich and the poor is a reflection of the degeneration of religious life coupled with a loss of spirituality attributable to the degradation of land and human ecology. This voice has found movements throughout history, including propheticism, monasticism, romanticism, and environmentalism, and always harangued towards power élites and the mishandling of land economies. I have implicated spirituality as the basis for any social reform that requires the increasing awareness of changing landscapes and its economies, as well as the mixing of stratified society. Environmentalism is no exception here. That science is the *modus operandi* of most Western conventions for the control of those economies does not detract from the fact that spirituality is still a political tool. And though it is arguable whether Gunton, after Blumenberg, were right in their analysis that secularised creation and the ecological crisis traces back to the Christian Gnostics and their notion of the inherent evil of matter,[344] I personally see the deeper message that binds all social reforms. In a word, it is the suffering that people endure that requires explanation – the arena where people evolve which provokes the question of the meaning of life. If one takes God out of the equation the question still requires an answer. There is hardly an author in this thesis that has not alluded to the issue of suffering in one form or another. Consider the fundamental issue at the root of all these "isms" - the miraculous healings that followed both Moses and Jesus around the landscape. Brueggemann states that Israel lives by a miracle (Sarah)[345] and showed that miracles and healing were fundamental to the forming of new morals, a way of revealing God. Hence it becomes an explanation for the "fall" of man. We need only relate this to the monastic practice of herbology and its unimpeded progress within protected holy

[344] Michael S. Northcott *Op. cit.* p206cf.
[345] Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.*, p41.

space.[346] I remember in my Iona travels what was said about monasticism. It was based around facing demons; the beginning of the Gospel of Mark clearly designates this axiom as a central part of the growing Christian movement. The practice of herbalism and preservation of this tradition can be witnessed as far back as prehistoric culture and in fact there is hardly a documented culture in the world that makes no insignificant mention of healing with herbs. The environmental movement gathers strength here, in relation to the preservation of certain parts of the landscape, not least its central praxis, the preservation of the wilderness. Its wholeness, its healing properties, the Romantics saw and began the poetic journey of defining in ever-greater detail the anguish and suffering of nature or its growing distance (un-wholeness) from man.

"When the stars threw down their spears, And water'd heaven with their tears, Did he smile his work to see? Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (William Blake' The Tiger' from *Songs of Experience* (1794)[347]

I tried to show the connection between sacred nature, the wilderness, and community life. (Brueggemann; McIntosh) This is apparent in the "manna" tradition. Herbalism continued to expand into the modern period, especially during the post-Columbian era when new plants were made available.[348] Even today though, one finds herbalism at the centre for environmental action for the freedom to adhere to traditional practice.[349] I have shown that evidence abounds for the physician's role that Jesus would have played under the influence of

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[346] Of course, the practice extended to convents too. Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth century Benedictine nun, wrote a medical text called *Causes and Cures*.

[347] Morris Eaves (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to William Blake Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[348] In fact Nicholas Culpeper's *The English Physician Enlarged* (1653) was incredibly popular though ridiculed by physicians for its astrological and magical elements.

[349] In response to a piece of European legislation called the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD) that will restrict the range of herbal medicine products that can be prescribed, the College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy (CPP) fought to implement the Government's decision, announced 13 January 2011, that herbal medicine practitioners are to be statutorily regulated under the Health Professions Council (HPC). Peter Conway, President, in a private correspondence said, "Herbal medicine represents the origin of

the Gnostics and the Essenes, documented in academic circles surrounding the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, despite Paul's and the Gospel's rendering of an other-worldly itinerant miracle worker, just one image of his saviour archetype. The purging of heretical elements within Christianity by Paul is akin to the "cleansing" (politicising) of the modern environmental movement today.

The message then, is intrinsic to the understanding of the role of nature to mitigate excess in society. The market had been instrumental in furthering man's pursuance for control over it. The inequality of wealth distribution, the ownership of which is confined to a very small percentage of the population, is a historical fact repeated over time immemorial. Jesus called for the re-instigation of the simple worship and freedom to control one's religious needs. In light of my claim that history repeats itself Hanson and Oakman have provided the facts that, sociologically, man is the same emotional animal now as he was two thousand years ago.

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medicine but it also has a role to play in shaping medicine's future as the wide-ranging therapeutic capacities of herbs which are increasingly appreciated and validated by research."

APPENDICES

1. Literary resources (with additions) referenced by the main authors cited within

- *Primary source material*
- *The Anthropological Perspective*
- *The Psycho-spiritual / Popular Outlook*
- *The Theological Approach*

Primary source material

Hanson and Oakman in *Palestine in the Time of Jesus,* from which much of the inspiration of this essay is derived, briefly outlines the following primary material for biblical accounts around the time of the formation of Christianity.[350] As well as the synoptic gospels, written sometime between the first Judean Revolt (66-70CE) and 90CE when Mark was being used by Matthew and Luke, they were then succeeded by John. The scholarly consensus of a 'Q' source dates to before 50CE and itself was extensively used by the Gospel writers. On the other hand Paul's letters were circulating in the 50´s CE but there is also good evidence that the Syrian origins of the Gospel of Thomas comprising of Jesus' sayings show a degree of independence from these other documents. Other source material include the Torah and New Testament writings of Paul, the Dead Sea scrolls, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, Egyptian papyri, the Mishnah, the Talmuds of Palestine and Babylon and Roman writers, including the Jewish historian **Josephus** and the Hellenized Jewish philosopher **Philo of Alexandria**. Most of Jesus ministry in Galilee happened nearly entirely in villages and the countryside among peasants, including farmers, fishers, artisans and day-labourers. A central element of his teaching was ranged towards the social structuring of power. The diversity of

material highlights a dichotomy of élite and non-élite interests, for instance the Rabbinic traditions present an idealised image of the Jerusalem Temple. Likewise the collation of the biblical canons were the products of power élites both Jewish and Christian.

Donald Hughes in *The Mediterranean: An Environmental History* in the appendices gives a good account of the ecology at the time of the Roman Empire and its subsequent decline.[351] He likewise makes reference to historians like **Seneca** in *Moral Epistles* and *Quaestiones Naturales,* **Lucretius** in *The Way Things are* (*De Natura Rerum*), **Pliny the Elder**, a naturalist, in *Natural History*, **Columella** in *De Re Rustica,* **Cicero** in *De Natura Deorum, and* **Cato the Elder** in *De Agricultura,* More recent works alluded to include **Edward Gibbon**, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, presented to King George III in 1776.[352] In it he refers to the over-militarisation and bureaucratisation of the empire in conjunction with the concurrent development of monasticism. The interesting correlation here is the observance of the rise of a spiritual movement against what could perceptibly be seen as the degradation of the environment in the face of global economics.

What follows then, is a broad literary overview of how Western writers have framed the dichotomy between the North and the South, (or West and East) in terms of various disciplines. I do this from the standpoint of a Judaeo-Christian inheritance, albeit however much religious views have influenced these writers is not the motive here, but rather their relevance to a general understanding.[353] A better division of resources may have resulted as empirical/theological, i.e. historical and sensory data as opposed to divinely revealed truth.

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350 K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, pp11-13.

351 Donald Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp196-213.

352 *Ibid*., p197.

353 Evans Pritchard, writing in 1972:14-15 and a convert to Catholicism, pointed out in his lectures on primitive religion that many leading scholars from the Enlightenment period (17th-18th centuries), in which reason and human civilisation took precedence over traditional values, had in fact reacted against their religious upbringing. These included Tylor, a Quaker, Frazer, a Prebyterian, Marret of the Church of England, Malinowski, a Catholic, whilst Durkheim, Levi-bruhl and Freud all had Jewish backgrounds. *Theories and controversies*, pp4-5. During the period of their writing they had become agnostics or atheists. He concludes by saying that primitive religion was no different to other religious faiths – an illusion.

Nevertheless, I use those categories from the authors that have influenced the bulk of this essay. I start then with an anthropological perspective.

The Anthropological Perspective[354]

It is the role of the anthropologist to study beliefs as sociological facts, not theological ones. His problems are scientific, not ontological or metaphysical. The phenomenological approach is a comparative study of such belief and rites in order to determine the latter's meaning and social consequence. They claim an agnostic methodology that forms the basis of their scholasticism. I have elsewhere written about cultural claims to land in 'Discuss the ways in which the creation of cultural landscapes can support different claims to land or territory'. (4Anth0420) In it I forward the four-fold classification system of Abramson. These are the jural dominance of mythical lands, the mythical embeddedness of legal boundaries, the dominion of mythic systems over jural lands, and the mythical embeddedness of jural practices.[355]

Allen Abramson: Mythical Land, Legal Boundaries

The West has a history of defining the landscape into perceptual categories. Allen Abramson takes an anthropological viewpoint on this in *Land, Law and Environment*. Traditionally, anthropology saw landscape as a backdrop requiring input.[356] But more recently interdisciplinary research into the humanities flags up the symbolisation of space as central to its understanding. This space is satiated with human land-relations, meanings that require the

[354] Anthropology claims to be an inclusive discipline, going so far to incorporate the natural sciences of philosophy, history, theology, classical studies and jurisprudence. At the centre of its study is anthropos, the human being. More so is the dialectical relationship between the individual and the group, the self and the "other". Modern anthropology is indebted to the great Polish ethnographer Bronislaw Malinowski. Anthropologists do not claim any one approach to the study of religion. Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction* pp1-2. For further reading see Jerry D. Moore, *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists* 2nd edition, Lanham, M.D.: Rowman Altamira, 2004.

[355] Allen Abramson (ed.) *Land, Law and Environment: Mythical Land Legal Boundaries* p17.

continuing visits of theorists. Their interpretation varies with human function, whether cognitive and experiential, or phenomenological as a significant place for identity. "The symbolic construction of enveloping space juxtaposes an ancestral hinterland and structural possibilities with a foreground of actual forms". He makes the interesting assertion that "ideal land" evolves within a context in which the conceptualised landscape may be too strongly opposed to land economy and tenure. Property and economy can be seen to interfere as "historical realities". He cautions against the imbalance of resource-orientated excess against crasser de-constructions that match landscapes to actors willy-nilly. Likewise one should be aware that landscape can also move beyond the purely cognitive and experiential when it provides for a symbolic obsession of it instead. There are plenty of examples of simply figurative and metaphorical space, like through the lens of a microscope, or a prison cell. It is no coincidence that "historical landscapes" emerged in the 16th century in the early colonial years, as a movement in which its representatives sought to give moral and aesthetic expression to its sensory forms. The arts developed around the passion for the freedom of unconfined space symbolised by its physical inaccessibility. What once used to be the monster-inhabited regions of the hinterland that threatened to consume anybody who ventured beyond the known world, now had become a sublime backdrop to free lives.[357] To note, Abramson highlights that landless anti-socials like gypsies, Jews and outlaws were always considered with moral suspicion because they were physically rootless. The Renaissance period made a science of this disenchantment and detachment, through reason and culture, what Abramson calls objectivity in theoretically premised transcendence. Lyn White also referred to it as philosophical freedom, now that it had become firmly detached from the metaphysics of conservative theologians centuries earlier.[358]

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[356] *Ibid*., pp1-4.
[357] *Ibid*., p9.
[358] White, Jr. *Medieval Religion and Technology: Collected essays*, pp85-86.

Abramson looked at the social narratives between mythical lands and jural practices, the former alludes to an ancestry whilst the latter represents the this-worldly phenomena. He referred to it as historical interplay, an articulation of land rights and rites.[359] This has been the case throughout human evolution and looked at issues concerning the estrangement of the land and urban development regarding the re-appropriation of labour.[360]

Further reading

For a modern sociological reading of place **Simone Abram, Donald V. L. Macleod, Jaqueline Waldren** (eds.) in *Tourists & Tourism – Identifying with People and Places*, 2007; and **D. Harrison, &. M. F. Price** (eds.) *People and Tourism in Fragile Environments*, 1996. For a more general anthropological view of the creation of landscapes see **E. Hirsch & M. O'Hanlon** (eds.) *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, 1995; **C. A. Tilley** *A Phenomenology of Landscape, Places, Paths and Monuments*, 1994; **and P. J. Ucko & R. Layton** (eds.) *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape: Shaping your Landscape*, 1999. For environmentalism accorded to human value systems see **T. O'Riordan** *Environmentalism*, 1976; and **K. Milton** *Environmentalism and Cultural Theory: Exploring the Role of Anthropology in Environmental Discourse*, 1996, and Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, 1983. In particular for gender roles read **Sanday** *Female Power and Male Dominance*, 1981; **Mead** *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, 1963; and Ortner "Is female to male as nature to culture?" in **M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere** (eds) *Women, Culture and Society*, 1974. For the evolution of societies see **Ian Tattersall** in *Becoming Human: Evolution and Human Uniqueness*, 1998); and **Geetz** *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1993. And for the biological impact of human ecologies refer to **Alfred W. Crosby** *Germs, Seeds & Animals: Studies in Ecological*

[359] Allen Abramson (ed.) *op. cit.*, p17.

History, 1994. Lastly, regarding body symbolism and cultural boundaries see **Mary Douglas** in *Purity and Danger*, 1966; *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology*, 1999 (1975) and **Bahtin** *Rabelais and His World*, (transl. Helene Iswolsky), 1984.

For an introduction to the NT and a perspective on agrarian culture **Dennis C. Duling and Norman Perrin** *The New Testament: Proclamation and Parenesis, Myth and History* 3rd edition, 1994. For a sociological perspective **Jerome H. Neyrey** *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, 1991; **John J. Pilch** *Hear the Word* Vol.2: *Intoducing the Cultural Context of the New Testament*, 1991; **Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh** *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* 1992; and **John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina** (eds.) *Biblical Social Values and their Meaning: A Handbook*, 1993. For a socio-scientific criticism of the Bible **John H. Elliott** *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* 2nd Edition, 1991; and **Carolyn Osiek** *What are they Saying about the Social Setting of the New Testament?* Rev. Edition, 1992. For historical geography **Michael Avi-Yonah** *The Holy Lands: From the Persian to the Arab Conquest (536 B.C.-A.D 640)* Rev. Edition, 1977); and for the archaeology of Palestine **Jerome Murphy-O'Connor** *The Holy Land: An Archaeological Guide from the Earliest Times to 1700* 3rd Edition, 1992; **Jack Finegan** *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* Rev. Edition, 1992; and **John J. Rousseau and Rami Arav** *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, 1995.

The Psycho-spiritual / Popular outlook

Fundamentally, one may refer to **Ninian Smart's** *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* for a dissection of what constitutes the religious make-up of society. One

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360 *Ibid*., p6.

should also refer to **Joseph Campbell** in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 1993 for it indubitably places the role of the saviour-type figure at the pinnacle of human evolution. In many ways this has been the role of the individual in modern society who must come to terms with the heritage of the deep collective consciousness and the unfolding of destiny before truly succeeding in placing environmentalism on the psycho-spiritual map. The hero seeks the primary motive in those causal zones of the psyche, moving beyond his local culture and drawing towards the pure, direct assimilation of archetypal images, those of ritual, mythology, and vision.[361] He goes on to say that in myth the problems and solutions are shown to be directly valid for all mankind. "Myth, properly understood, is far more powerful than fact because it operates poetically on the soul of the level of spiritual transformation".[362] The spiritual dimension of reality obviously cuts across Smart's categories of religious experience.

I include here those writers who I think, despite their religious or scientific backgrounds, provide a humanist tendency in their work. Like all of these categories the further reading is inexhaustible and I refer mainly to the publications of the cited authors. Without putting to fine a point on it, these authors contribute to what I call a humanist creationism as opposed to the term "creationism" first associated with the opposition of Christian fundamentalist towards human evolution.

Wendell Berry

One of the prolific writers of our time is Wendell Berry. In 'Christianity and the Survival of Creation' in *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 1993 and as a lifelong Baptist he is critical of the Christian failure to culturally mitigate environmental degradation. A farmer and keen advocate of organic and sustainable practice much of his inspiration is land based,

[361] Joseph Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp17-19.

commenting that one's work ought to develop from the place of one's life. He has compiled a mass of fiction and non-fiction narrative including poems and short stories. The *Long-Legged House,* (1969) 2004 is an account of his early experiences on the land and include essays like 'A Native Hill'. His religious inclinations can be grafted from other essays like the 'Burden of the Gospels' in *The Way of Ignorance and Other* Essays, 2005. He likewise calls for a land-health movement reminiscent of Leopold in much the same vein as wilderness preservation. In 2009 Berry and Wes Jackson, (*Altars of Unhewn Stone, Science and the Earth*, 1987) president of The Land Institute, published an op-ed article in The New York Times (January 4, 2009) [363] entitled 'A 50-Year Farm Bill.' addressing environmental degradation. He has been an advocate of traditional farming attitudes like those practised by the Amish. One of his seminal works is *The Collected Poems, 1957-1982*, 1985 laden as it is with biblical imagery. He is regularly appropriated to write annexes to other books. These include *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* by **Ellen F. Davis**, 2008; *God and Work: Aspects of Art and Tradition* by **Brian Keeble**, 2009; and the spiritual classic *The One-Straw Revolution* by **Masanobu Fukuoka**, 2009 which, though Eastern in its religious background, has become something of a 'bible' for modern environmentalist.

Bron Taylor

An American scholar and conservationist he coined the term "dark green religion", and in a way provides a bridge for irreligious types who refuse to get too close towards religious perceptions of nature, despite their spiritual rootedness and historical ethicality. He is critical of the recent foisting of the "greening" of certain areas of established religious traditions in favour of the phenomena that constitutes dark green religion. In this he implicates a religious

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[362] Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, p56.

sense that resembles a set of beliefs and practices as one might find in religion. In fact **Aldo Leopold's** land ethic and **James Lovelock's** Gaian hypothesis would fit easily into this framework providing both a way to live and think. Dark green religion often finds common ground with religious traditions such as paganism and shamanism, as well as philosophical belief systems such as the deep ecology of **Arne Naess**. (See *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, 1989) One may even go so far as to include **Gandhi's** concept of the *punchayat* system, self-contained villages that rely upon voluntary co-operation and based primarily on agriculture and cottage industries. (See **R. Guha** (ed.) *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*, 1997) Many dark green thinkers believe though, that only through a radical shift towards a more biocentric perspective will spirituality provide a regurgitated model for the development and stewardship of the world.[364] In fact, they claim that the deep-seated problem of the developed world lies in its inherited conventionality of religious institution.

Taylor is also known to espouse the monkey-wrenching or "ecotage" activities of Earthfirst! – a prominent activist group who work cross-continent. Loosely explained, it is the deliberate sabotage of equipment used in the exploitation of natural resources like ancient forests. This he would consider as spiritual preoccupation, for it preserves the sacral character of earth's wilderness. For further reading see 'Review Commentary: Green Apocalypticism: Understanding Disaster in the Radical Environmental Worldview', in *Society and Natural Resources*, 12, 377-386: 1999; 'Deep Ecology and its Social Philosophy: A Critique', Chapter 14 in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays on Deep Ecology*. (eds.) E. Katz. A. Light, D. Rothenberg, 2000: 269-299; *Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*,

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[363] Http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/05/opinion/05berry.html?_r=1

[364] Tom Jacobs, 'A New Genesis: Getting World Religions to Worship Ecologically', in *Culture & Society* April 21, 2009 (http://www.miller-mccune.com/culture-society/religions-to-worship-ecologically-3787/)

2010 and ‘The Religion and Politics of Earth First!’, in *The Ecologist*, 21(6), November/December, 1991: 258-266.

Further reading

For scientific analysis veering on the spiritual **James Lovelock** *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (3rd Edition), 2000; *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth Is Fighting Back - and How We Can Still Save Humanity*, 2006. In *Nature, human nature, and God*, 2002 **Ian Barbour** tackles ideas around evolutionary theory, indeterminacy, neuroscience, information theory, and artificial intelligence before asking some fundamental religious questions. For a spiritual discourse veering towards the scientific **Thomas Berry,** *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the 21st Century* New York, 2009; *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, 2009; *Dream of the Earth*, 1988 and *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*, 2006. **Michael Fox** offers a modern mystical but thoroughly religious view. Then a Dominican Catholic priest at the time of its writing but since Episcopalian, his works analyses the place of mysticism within a cosmological awareness of creation. Jesus embodied this characteristic and provided a social means of living this out. As the Christ is, true mysticism is by nature redemptive; the Cosmic Christ permeates all our actions. See *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance*, 1988; *Creation Spirituality: Liberating Gifts for the Peoples of the Earth*, 1991). For a more political discourse **Dan Cohn Sherbok,** a rabbi of Reform Judaism, a Jewish theologian and a prolific author on religion, read *The Politics of Apocalypse: the History and Influence of Christian Zionism*, 2006; *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict: a Beginner's Guide*, 2001; and (ed.) *Voices of Messianic Judaism: Confronting Critical Issues Facing a Modern Movement*, 2001. I also refer to **Alastair McIntosh** for his environmental outlook on the concept of land ownership and how tradition plays a vital part in its

conception. Sometimes spiritual, other times strongly political in its argument, much of his environmental campaigning was elicited in two books, *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope, and the Human Condition*, 2008; and *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate*, 2001. **Anni primavesi** is a systematic theologian focusing on ecological issues and a Fellow of the Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Religion, Birkbeck College, University of London. She has contributed a prolific body of literature around the central concerns of nature, God and eco-feminism. In particular she embellishes the Gaian theory forwarded by James Lovelock that views the earth as a super-organism able to regulate itself. In similar vein to Alastair McIntosh she espouses the claims of Liberation Theology. Her published material includes 'Gaia and God' in *Liberating Women: New Theological Directions,* conference papers of the Bristol Conference of European Society of Women in Theological Research, 1991; *Gaia and Climate Change: A Theology of Gift Events*, 2008; *Gaia's Gift: Earth, Ourselves and God after Copernicus*, 2003; *Sacred Gaia: Holistic Theology and Earth System Science*, 2000; *From Apocalypse to Genesis: Ecology, Feminism and Christianity*, 1991; 'Transforming the Theological Climate in Response to Climate Change: Jesus and the Mystery of Giving', in *Nature, Space and the Sacred: Transdisciplinary Perspectives*, (eds.) Sigurd Bergmann, M. Jansdottir Samuelson, H. Bedford Strohm, 2009: 19-30; 'The Preoriginal Gift—and Our Response to It', in *Ecospirit: Religion, Philosophy and the Earth*, (eds.) Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller, 2007: 217-232; 'The Recovery of Wisdom: Gaia Theory and Environmental Policy', in Spirit of the Environment, (eds.) David Cooper and Joy Palmer, 1998: 73-86. For more on feminism see **Daphne Hampson** *Theology and Feminism*, 1990; and **Ann Loades** (ed.) *Feminsit Theology: A Reader*, 1990. And for a grounding in psychological motifs see **Anthony Storr** *Jung: Selected Writings*, 1983; and **Carl Jung** *Answer to Job*, 1984.

The Theological Approach

The theological point of view is not to study religions on their own merit for it would undermine the logic of most religious positions. [365] Rather, points of comparison are sought after, whether intentional or not, and could lead to a situation of "inculturation." For example, Roman Catholic missiologists and theologians may examine African religions in order to discover the "seeds of the Gospel". This is in counterpoint to the phenomenological approach which studies phenomena that can be observed.[366] In particular I make reference here to the work of Walter Brueggemann and how land acquisition and loss is central to the formation of the concept of Israelite identity.

Alastair McIntosh: Land, Power and National identity

McIntosh concentrated many of his efforts towards addressing the social importance of preserving Scottish crofting rights. In an emotional experiential account of his struggles against corporate business, in particular the prevention of the development of a super quarry on the Isle of Harris (*Soil and Soul*), the social, economic and environmental debate is woven in what he refers to as *mythicpoesis*: a living ecology of the land preserved and metaphorically re-enacted by generations of people in spiritual symbiosis. Traditional peoples contain the seed of the past; it is their interaction over time that creates a sense of "place", providing security and land tenure. Poverty only exists as a concept after the introduction of imperialist views of materialism. At the root of this 'poverty' sits the Christian message, analogous as it is to traditional folk memories abounding in the anthropographic spread of civilisations. Though he makes occasional reference to the Gospels, a deeper theological

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[365] Fiona Blackwell, *op. cit.,* p6.

[366] *Ibid*., pp4-6. The method flounders regarding issues of subjectivity, reflexivity and textuality, rather treating the scholar as simply a fly on the wall, rather than a thinking, relating individual who is implicated in the phenomenon. The founder of the phenomenological movement was Edmund Husserl (1859-1959) born into a Jewish family, who's emphasis was on the *cogito*, or conscious mind, all the time avoiding questions concerning the identity of the mind, its authority, and its relation to language.

perspective in terms of the Fall and suffering that humanity truly endures is to be found in an earlier work. Pre-nuptial to his social activism, it is a compilation work entitled *Healing Nationhood* (Curlew Productions Kelso, 2000), one that I now address.

In an address to the Russian Academy of Science, McIntosh asserts five criteria for judging the legitimate use of land through a biblical precedent. These are *Creation, Providence, Covenant, Fall* and *Redemption.*

Creation (pp47-49)

The important biblical references here are Gen.1: 3; 8: 22; 9: 12-17 and Ps 95. The rainbow is the symbol of that ecological covenant. The land is seen as the resting place for both God and humans. The gift of the land is the reward for justice. (See Is.57: 13) Holding onto the land is contingent upon the principles of justice and faithfulness. God is recognised as the ultimate landowner and is provided as an inalienable "inheritance". The land shall not be sold forever. (Lev.25: 23) Humans are strangers and sojourners. Humankind is mandated to be "fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) but not to overfill the land.

Providence (pp49-55)

God sees no scarcity of the basic necessities of life, in fact the *abundance* of spiritual sustenance is the justice inherent in land providence. Material wealth and the idolisation of capital anger Him. It serves only to redistribute resources away from the poor. The importance text here is Exek.7: 19 and Deut.8. Nature's rate of return works on simple rather than on compound interest. Providence works in the present moment, an ecological economics as opposed to the periodic crashes of exponential growth. (Eccl.3: 1-13). Everything is done in season. As such, the Jubilee year does not reject the use of capital, entrepreneurship and market, but in fact one may refer to Islamic economics, which replaces

usury with shared ownership of profits. McIntosh goes so far to say that the Third World sovereign debt problem, had they maintained their reservations, would not have occurred with the Islamic approach. Usury is the loaning of money with interest in excess of the rate of inflation, and thus implies a discount rate. In terms of intergenerational equity, discounting steals the future of our children. God's provide-ance is expressed through the land and it surrounding elements, the divine hand as opposed to the "invisible hand" of the marketplace.

Covenant (pp55-59)

These are the bonds of friendship with God underpinning all community, a threefold relationship of God, nature and community. The people will have no other gods, nor does God want sacrifices. (See texts Is.46 and Amos 5: 21-24) Jesus' Aramaic word for money personified is 'mammon' (Matthew 6:24) and this is idolatrous. The earth belongs to the lord, and "holy ground" requires respect for its natural features. (Ex 3: 5; 20: 25-26; Josh.5: 15) Greed and war leave the ground desolate and withered, with a loss of bio-diversity. (Jer.22: 29) We are all connected like branches on the same vine of life, (Jn.15: 1-7) to his divinity. (Jn.10: 34, Ps.82: 6) Paul said we are "members one of another". (Eph.4: 25) Whatever we do to others we do to ourselves. This is the meaning of being "the Church" in the "body of Christ". (Rom.12: 4-5; 1 Cor.) The deep self is the foundation rock of community. "If you do not know yourselves then you are in poverty, and you are the poverty". (*Gospel of Thomas* 3: 13-15) McIntosh considers the word 'development' in context of right relationship, as in foetal development, a gradual unfolding, growth from within.

Fall (pp60-64)

The story of the Fall is best understood in mythological terms as a displacement from an ecological paradise into the wasteland. (Gen. 3) The Fall results from an innate condition

sometimes called “original sin”. For God to stop atrocities from happening in the world would require constant intervention either in the laws of nature or the freedom of the human soul. Spiritual evolution could not evolve if this happened continuously. God's entreaty is that we do not have to stay in that condition unredeemed. The Nimrod story in Gen.11: 4-9 shows what urbanisation does preceding the scattering of nations. Feudalisms can be seen to have an origin in Gen.47 adjoining landlessness and slavery. Later Yahweh denounces imperialism. (Deut.8: 7-10; Num.11) God warns against a king who will bring disproportionate wealth. (1 Sam.8: 10cf.) From an OT point of view, autocratic and human structures of governance are invariably compromised because of the reluctance of God to grant a king. In this sense the nations can theologically be understood as “fallen”. The most prominent signs here are warmongering, the degradation of women's social position to menial service roles and the fashion industry, and the abuse of landed power.

Redemption (pp64-69)

Human suffering is self-inflicted. God revives the earth through the remnant of human “stock” or tap-root in order to heal - “salve” the nations. Eze.28: 25-26 makes reference to this salvation and a return to the land from the Diaspora – a returning of the Garden of Eden. Sovereignty is God-given, understood in God's terms – faithfulness. The Bible depicts an historical evolution of revelation. The late prophets take a different view of the older ones, and by the time of Jesus the sword is only symbolic. (Lk.22: 51) This is in light of the acts of genocide committed by the Israelites under the wing of Yahweh. (See Joshua 6, Numbers 31 and Judges 21 in which only virgins are spared.)

In John one can see the Christian understanding of place of land in redemption as much more than territorial in which the concept of space is incorporated into the “Body of Christ”. The whole of creation is rendered holy on account of the synonymy of life and

incarnation. (1: 1-9, cf. Proverbs 8:22-36) Paul saw redemption as a reversal of the Fall. (See Rom. 8: 20-22) McIntosh saw this as a relationship of *Eros* - not restricted to its narrow sexual sense but love in all its passions. Redemption means violence that we inevitably perpetrate simply by being alive is encased in forgiveness. The Book of Revelation neatly brings together the human ecology of the Bible. Ezekiel discusses the importance of land rights for foreigners, in which the sojourners (second generation of "strangers") shall have full share of land inheritance and be treated as Israelites. (47: 21-23) The right to be present on the land is held, pre-eminently, by the poor, the widow, the orphan and the refugee.

Walter Brueggemann: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith

The movement of history follows three themes: Land, exile, and kingdom.[367] The biblical texts provide a beginning point in envisioning a human future that must be historical, covenantal and promissory, the very dimensions Israel discerned in its history with the land. The incumbent message throughout is the juxtapostiion of land as both promise and problem, through the traditions of both blessing and violence, dependant upon the disposition of the Israelite tribes from their inception from Abraham and the other Fathers.[368] The land is part and parcel with God's covenant with the people and is granted only when faith is upheld to this promise. The breaking of this promise is twinned to exile and subsequent experiences of wilderness. To be placed into the wilderness is to be cast into the land of the enemy; without promise and hope.[369] The barrenness of the land equals the lack of an heir – the missing heir of Abraham and Sarah. Such a land is beyond cultivation, it is seedless; cf. *Zera,* either "seed" or "heir". Brueggemann asserts the theological basis for the justification of Israelite history and devotes most of this book to the Jewish mental plight. The self-discernment of the

[367] Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.,* xxv.
[368] *Ibid.,* xxvii.
[369] *Ibid.,* p28.

Jewish condition is premised on the identification with the land, as a gift, obtained through political and socio-economic strife, frequently leading to war. As a metaphor for self-identity the land "continually moves back and forth between literal and symbolic intentions".[370] In fact he goes so far to say that "land is the central theme of biblical faith".

This theme is carried into the New Testament. The apocalyptic milieu of Jesus cultivates an arena of "waiting in confidence for the gift", as juxtaposed with "seizing or grasping in military assertion". Thus Jesus represents the meekness of character requisite for the fulfilment of God's promise. The enduring icons of Jewish suffering are embodied in such megalithic structures as the Wailing Wall and Masada. The message of Jesus is clear, that it is the "Haves" who must lose and the "Have-nots" who gain the Kingdom of Heaven. This rightful possession is gained through the enjoining of Jesus' suffering depicted through Johannine and Pauline usage of land imagery. Comfort only comes from blessing and mercy and the core of which is this transition from "possessed land lost" to "exiles en route to the land of promises", symbolised and actualised through the crucifixion/resurrection paradigm. The crucifixion is seen as a call to leave the old land (Mk.10: 17-22), whilst the resurrection is the call to the landless to inherit the Kingdom. This is fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah and completed in the life of Jesus, a history of Israel as gift and grasp. Brueggemann goes on to reiterate that the central gospel message is that the single, central symbol for the promise is land, characterised to some extent as a "city".

Further Reading

In regards to Christian philosophy and theology **Alasdair MacIntyre** *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 1988; and *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* 2nd Edition, 1984; **W. D.**

370 Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.*, pp2-3.

Davies *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*, 1974. Concerning religious economics see **Choudery, Masudul and Malik, Uzir** *The Foundations of Islamic Political Economy* 1992; **Max Weber** *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1976; and **Timothy Gorringe** *Capital and the Kingdom: Theological Ethics and Economic Order*, 1994. For matters of economic and political criticism of the structural violence of empire see **Walter Wink** *Unmasking the Powers*, 1986; *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, 1992; and *The Powers that be*, 1998. For matters concerning the beliefs of Liberation Theology see **Gustavo Guiterrez,** *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* Rev. Edition, 1988; *The Power of the Poor in History*, 1983; and **Paulo Freire** *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1972. **William Pollard**, physicist and priest, in particular looks at revelation and knowledge in *Chance and Providence: God's Action in a World Governed by Scientific Law*, 1958; and *Transcendence and Providence: Reflections of a Physicist and Priest*, 1986. Finally, for a Scottish background **R. O' Driscoll** (ed.) *The Celtic Consciousness*, 1982; and **William Storrar** *Scottish Identity: A Christian Vision*, 1990.

2. The Holistic Design Series

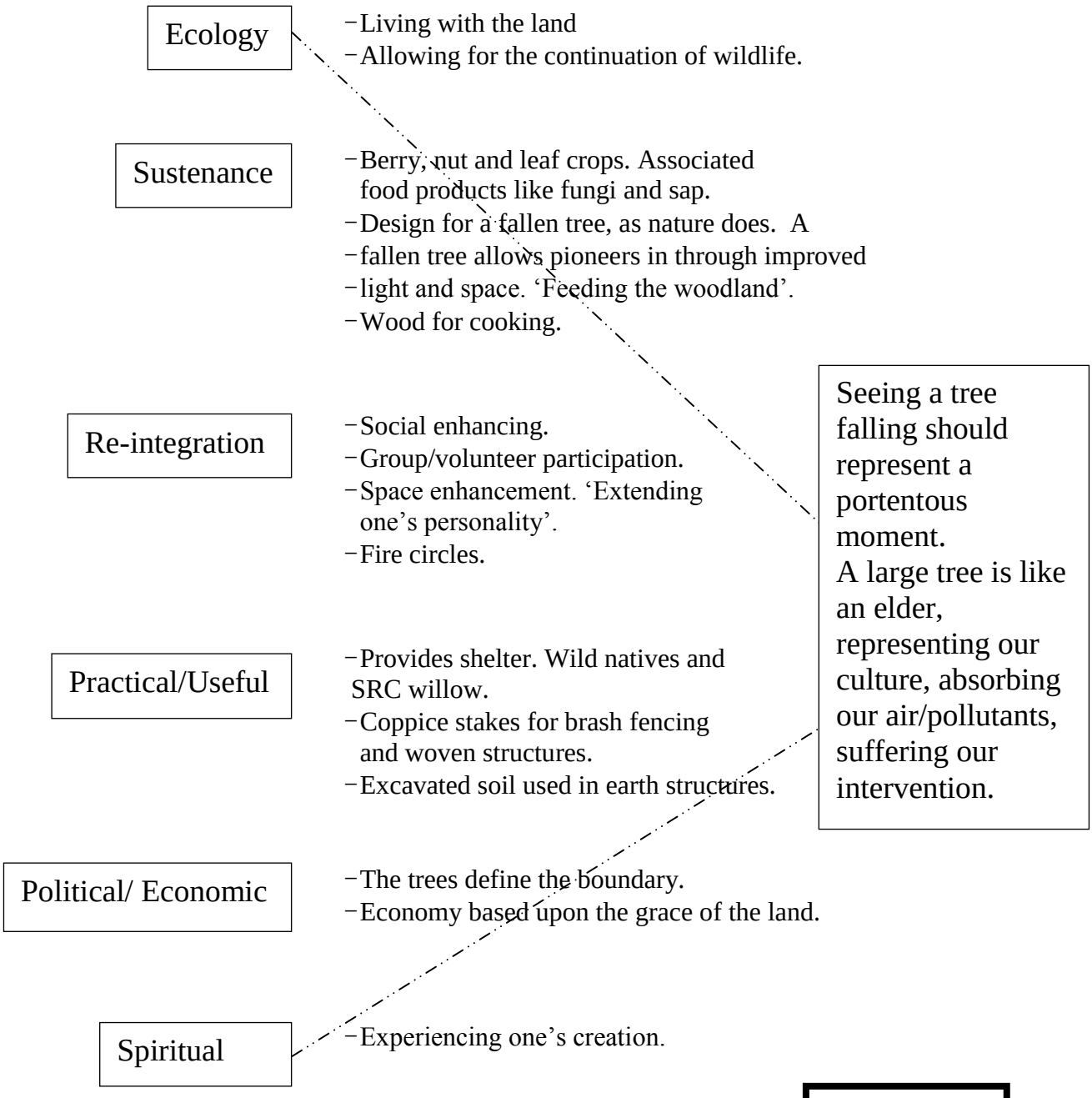

Table A2.1

When a tree falls…

When a tree falls it creates a clearing. Pioneers move in – unstable and immature. The fallen tree creates temporary shelter. If it dies it provides a home for more communities. Humans move in before the wood becomes too rotten. They cut for timber. Before the pioneers overtake the clearing they build a kiln. All the small wood is used for charcoal production; the larger for structures. Man works out the greatest value for its use. He employs another. The uprooted stump is left to nature. All in all, his economy is based upon the grace of nature. With time he realises he can replicate nature from cutting to re-growing. No part of the equation is given priority over another because he realises that if he does not replant or cut for timber the value of his wood decreases. Hence, man masters time by accelerating evolution.

Land Regeneration – The Ecological/Spiritual Imperative

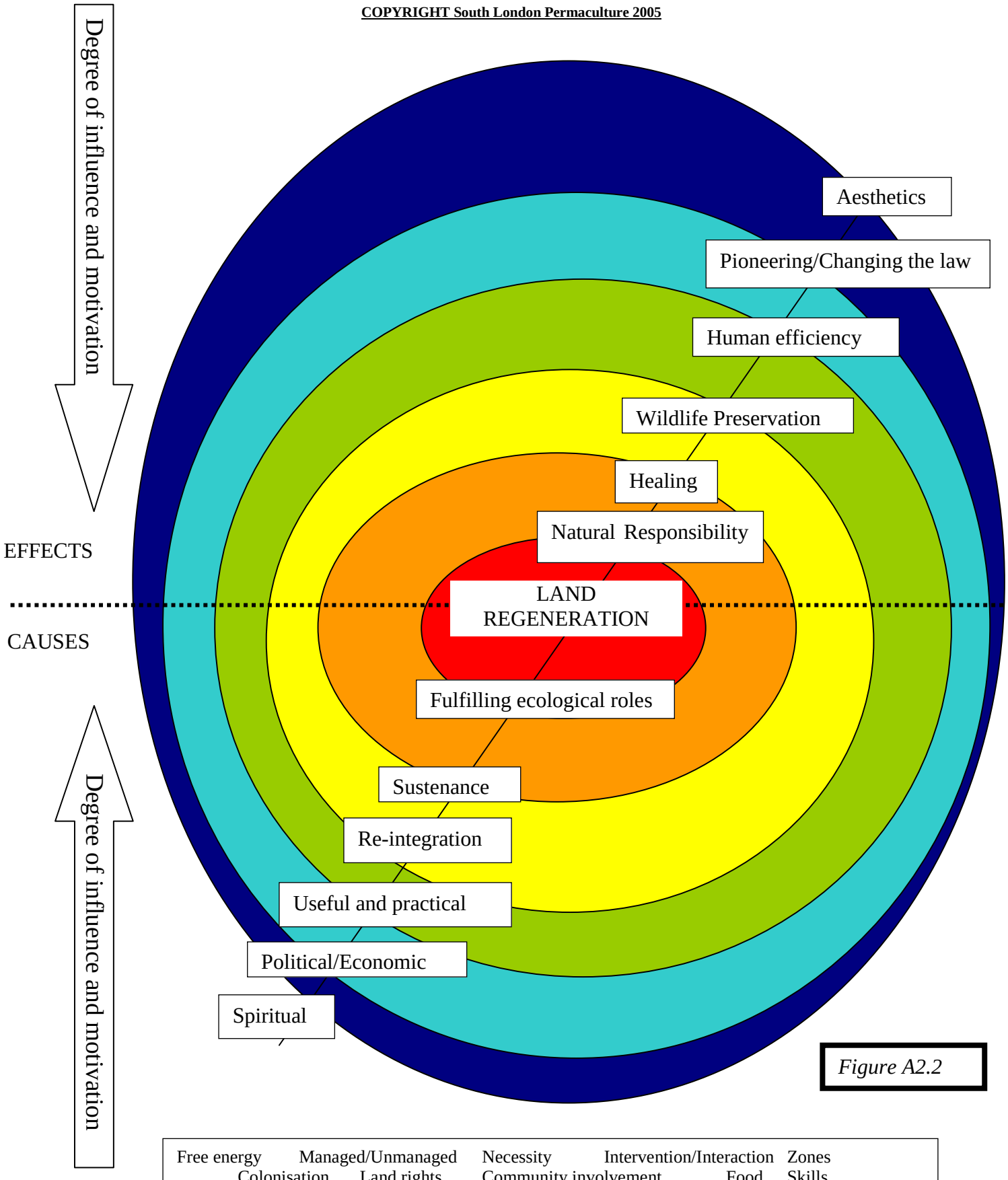

Figure A2.2

Free energy Managed/Unmanaged Necessity Intervention/Interaction Zones
Colonisation Land rights Community involvement Food Skills
Implementation Succession/Evolution Observation Heritage

BUZZ WORD BOX

The Holistic Design Series

This design tool has been inspired by my networking skills and ability to combine multiple activities into one great scheme. As such, the organic base to my thinking allows me to identify root causes, and to see their effects played out. This is in full view of the integrity of the system maintaining a holistic outlook. As such the design tool needs to be read in a wholistic fashion, and not linearly. At the hub lies the motive. Radiating outwards are the degrees of influence essential for the maintaining of the motive – its integrity. This is done in a manner that identifies the strongest influence as basic to that integrity. As one progresses further outwards the level of activity attributable to those lesser influences reduces, but it is never discounted.

The object of this tool is to provide guidance during the construction and implementation of management plans. This allows the participants to focus their attention upon the necessities whilst keeping in mind the influences at the outer edges. Of course, the number of influences can grow indefinitely; the more this happens the greater the reinforcement there is in the centre. At a later stage of development one may be tempted to move those influences around to reflect the increased activity of a particular one. This conduces to create a state of fragmentation, and is indicative of this fragmentation within the management of the system. Rather, to maintain a holistic basis, the further the influence is away from the hub then the greater the networking is required between the different aspects. This may appear to be a rigid system, but in reality it is a form of negative feedback that will prevent the management plan from overstepping its mark too rapidly. The idea behind this type of thinking is to allow a continual reinforcement of the hub. Subsequently, any intense activity happening on the outer edges will be checked and slowed down by the need to ensure balanced influence across the organic plan. Effectively, this makes the system self-regulating and immune to exterior influences that may cause damage.

3. Transcript of interview with Alastair McIntosh, Glasgow 27th August 2009 in his home.

MP: So, can I just start by saying that if we look at the modern environmental movement, 19th century, and the likes of John Muir and Henry Thoreau who lived a way to a sort of modern appreciation of wilderness for the benefit of human health, in particular they thought it as a model for human systems. Umh, since Henry David Thoreau disassociated himself from his Christian counterparts, in fact he accused them of laying waste...

AM: Who did?

MP: Henry Thoreau. It was about 18..

AM: Thoreau.

MP: Since he disassociated...

AM: Civil disobedience and...

MP: Okay, I don't know too much about him but he did accuse them of laying waste nature, the wilderness by building miles of meeting houses and box stoves.

AM: Said he would rather have met the people who didn't build the pyramids than the people who did build them.

MP: (Laugh) Do you think, do you think that this 19th century attitude exacerbates the problem of the human condition in general like for instance, Henry Thoreau saw that forest groves were more important than churches; picking buries for him was his version of the sacraments, or a sacrament, and likewise other sort of environmentalists at the time, like Leopold, saw wilderness as a context for human study for which you can gauge land health which is in sort of line with what I actually do, which is very much permaculture and looking at wilderness as an education umh... did this exacerbate the problem of the human condition in general at the time because it had these sort of these neo-pagan sentiments about it?

AM: Your specific question is what?

MP: Yes, considering that environmentalism came in the 19th century with industrialisation, and the taking over of land or the reducing of wilderness, for colonisation, the question is, was that really the right way forward to actually look at it from a non-religious perspective, to go forward with this environmental ethos?

AM: A kind of secular environmentalism?

MP: Yes, it was very secular, even though it was very spiritual at the heart...

AM: Yes, it was fairly spiritual I am not sure where it belongs to on spirituality, I can't remember that off hand, but you are suggesting that he was taking a secular perspective.

MP: In fact, it was very pagan. He was looking at wilderness as like Mother Nature, sustenance. He didn't go along the lines of regulation. He disputed the whole Christian outlook really although I don't doubt that he had some sort of religious sentiment. But it certainly was a spiritual way. He looked at it as spiritual sustenance if anything.

AM: He's in good company there because there has always been this tradition which is been very strong in the Celtic world, and I must say I don't have a lot of time for those scholars who just miss the idea of the Celtic Church. I think that the Celtic Church was simply the church of the people of the Celtic lands. And it's very clear in a lot of their writings that nature was the other book. You had the book of the bible and you had the book that was nature. You find that I've got here Olivier Clamence's wonderful book, the *Roots of Christian Mysticism* where he's looking at early patristic sources, and you've got things like Evagrious of Puntus saying, 'One of the wise men of that time went to find the holy man Anthony and asked him, Father, how can you be happy when you are so deprived of the consolation that books can bring.' Anthony replied, 'My philosopher friend, my book is the nature of creatures, and this book is always in front of me when I want to read the words of God'. So, that's just one of many examples of the book of nature in early Christianity. Jesus was doing

the same thing, ‘Consider the lilies’. So, the people you were describing were moving in a tradition. Isaac of Nineveh on page 224 in the book I have just named, ‘The humble man confronts murderous wild beasts. From the moment that they see him their savagery is tamed. They approach him as if he were their owner, nodding their heads and licking his hands and feet. They actually sense coming from him the fragrance that Adam breathed forth before the Fall when they came to him in Paradise and gave him their names’. The idea here that you get in some of the orthodox thinking. In my view there were probably a lot to be said of the early Celtic Church which was effectively orthodox, effectively very closely linked to the school of Alexandria which was Coptic Orthodox. So you get these kind of early church fathers who were intimate and that is a long standing tradition. Now if you then separate that from spirituality, then try to make a kind of worldly version of it then I think you are setting up something that becomes more difficult to defend because as soon as the mountain is no longer holy, as soon as the animals no longer have their own place in the Creation, they become vulnerable to exploitation on a scale that goes beyond seeking to live sufficiently in a sustainable way.

MP: Which is, you would agree, the road we have come down.

AM: Which is where we are at now. I mean Starhawk who is a neo-pagan thinker, feminist thinker as you probably know, she says in her book *Dreaming the Dark*, she's got this bit about once you start to measuring a tree's worth in terms of how many cubic feet of timber you are going to get out of it then you lose your sense of the intrinsic value of that tree and you are left with ecological economists and have universities running around trying to figure out how they can measure the worth of nature, and of course they never get anywhere cos they can't do it.

MP: Where we go with this conversation, I don't want to in anyway want to offend. You see I question a lot of things and I question my own suffering and the concept of suffering

within the Christian movement, and not just in the Christian movement but in other religions. So, and I'll come to that a bit more, but if I'll just go onto this next question, you'll see how that's related. I make the case that it was partly due to the military impact of the use of land by the Romans and that environmental degradation went hand in hand with some sort of social or anthropogenic extinction which is the words that, have you heard of Earthfirst! and their commentaries about monkey wrenching and why they do it? But the Jewish land ethic had been severely affected, and this is my own personal opinion, which gave rise to some sort of internal disruption and the forming of some sort of new order, which is what we were discussing downstairs, this idea when Christianity was coming up and not just Christianity but a whole wave of spiritual or heretical sects at the time. And, if we look firstly the Israelite wanderings in the desert and we see how the Mosaic law was formed and we can relate that to maybe a lack of nutrition or at least issues with food during their sojourn, and secondly with the food burden that the Romans would have effected on the peasantry to a degree, this leads to the importance of something within all religions which is communal eating, and that the early Christians took their inheritance from the Jewish dietary laws. Food deprivation was an expression of, for the Jews, of sorrow, guilt, fear and suffering which later, one can assume became codified in ethical and moral laws. So, the fact they gained their freedom through the sojourn in the desert, and Moses laid down the law then at a time when they would have been surviving.

AM: Well, those were laws that Jesus specifically repudiated. Jesus said it's not what you put in your body that matters it's what comes out of it. So he didn't seem to buy into dietary fads.

MP: This is true and in fact Christianity differed from Judaism in that respect. In fact, even when Paul came along he actually said what's important here is that we don't have to follow vegetarianism or not follow vegetarianism, we don't have to fast and not fast. What's

important is that we eat together and we don't dispute that occasion or we don't find that occasion for disputation. The coming together is the most important part of the communal thing. So, I mean, there is a lot to talk about fasting, it was strongly denounced by the sages, Jewish sages, if the life of the community was going to be effected, especially like for instance the destruction of the Second Temple, I think it was about CE70 or something like that. You know, the dispersion of the Jews and everything else, it was not ecologically or biologically sensible to fast. Everyone had to survive at that moment and so, I surmise...

AM: Jesus fasted of course, and a lot of the early Christians fasted.

MP: Yes, very much so. I think they fasted on the, was it not, 4th and 6th days of the week. You know, you have the Jewish festivals and the Day of Atonement when everyone is supposed to fast. And Christianity borrowed in to those festivals until they created their own. What I am alluding to here is that Christianity took this suffering element from Judaism and justified its own development through it as a sort of mnemonic, something that reminds them of the formulation of the law in the desert, you see. And I want to ask you, do you agree with this viewpoint that Christianity did take this suffering element and brought it on a different level? I think you have sort of alluded to it before. And secondly, is there not a link when you look at how since the post-reformation period when you get the great scientific movement and when you get an abundance of food and colonialism, is there not a link there to the rise of secularism? The fact is, that when it is difficult we come up with religious morals but when we've got an abundance of food and people are not fasting it just seems that religion takes a backdrop. And with colonialism, expansion of populations, that just suggests there is an abundance of food available or at least the potential to obtain that food. What we see in the early Christian period and the Jewish period, when the Mosaic Law was put down, was this suffering, and it is somehow connected to the inheritance from the sojourn in the desert when they had to live with frugality, when they could not grow crops all the time, when they had to

forage off wild foods. Is there not a link when religious laws are created to this moment when people are trying to survive, literally they're on edge?

AM: I am struggling slightly to get exactly where you are coming from with all this. What I'm thinking of, what you're speaking there is, let me just get the chapter. An article I did some years ago called pagan presbyterianism when we were having a protest down on the Pollockthry estate? You mentioned Earthfirst! This is a very “earthfirsty” type of issue. The Book of Numbers, chapter 11. Have a read of that. I've done a kind of take-off from it. Here, related to the protest because what's going on there, you got the people going through the wilderness feeding off *manna*. And they are all getting fed up of it and they say to Moses that they wish they were back in Egypt, for at least they had quails and watermelons to eat. So Moses and his fare[?] comes out with that famous line, “were if all God's people were prophets”. So you have this sense that it was the luxury of the food in Egypt that helped keep them in slavery and they were actually resisting Moses trying to lead them out of that. So I don't know if that helps out.

MP: But that's my point. I'm looking to see whether that sort of Mosaic heritage carried through into the early Christian period and contributed to the rise...

AM: Yes, it is not just Mosaic. You find it in many different spiritual traditions where basically the idea... So you got many different traditions. Fasting is used as a way of deepening spiritual experience. You are cut off from the outer world and you go into a different state of consciousness.

MP: I fasted for one and a half years, two to three times a week, and I fasted on fluids. And it needs spiritual guidance without a doubt otherwise you can lose the plot.

AM: I would think so. If you don't have a context that's holding you... you get into what our society would call psychotic space. Jesus maybe didn't call it that when he was up the mountain but you know, you start meeting the devil and all the rest of it.

MP: So, my relationship was with that and the rise of the modern environmental movement and secularism in particular because really, you would agree that with the agricultural revolution, and their has been a few, comes the time of the colonial wars, colonialism, and the discovery of new land and the extending of the fertile growing areas into the western hemisphere and those places, so we get this move towards wanting to break the hold of the Church on the land and on the people.

AM: Well remember, the whole idea of the Romans was that they would send out *colonia,* which was a body of militarised settlers who'd colonise the place and set up large farms - *latifundia* they called them. And they would remit back to Rome a portion of the proceeds. So you had mass agriculture being established by the Romans in places that they colonised specifically to exploit the people. And you could say that model is what we still have today.

MP: It is very interesting. When they discovered the new lands of Australia and those sorts of places as well they used to just throw the pigs out and come back a few years later sometimes and they would have bred to such great proportions that there was this protein running across the whole of the landscape. That just these techniques, and of course, that was biological, a way of manipulating the landscape before humans needed to go on there. That mentality though, the exploitation of nature, certainly I feel, gave rise to secularism and eventually the industrial revolution; their desire to continue, or to exponentially grow from that moment onwards in all directions. Okay, if now we look at the Greco-Roman background, they gave a very philosophical understanding to the nature of health. That was probably the inheritance to, for the Christians, that there was this great philosophical body of knowledge passed down through the Greeks. The basic rule of Hippocrates, who is considered the father of rational medicine, is that the opposites combat disease, for instance idleness is combated by exercise. So bear in mind that the Roman Empire was at its peak in the 1st and 2nd centuries and that it only converted to Christianity in the 4th century with

Constantine, when the Empire was diminishing and land degradation was taking its toil, there's no doubt about, there has been really important studies been done, that ecological degradation is one of the fundamental reasons why the Roman Empire started to diminish. Does it not suggest that the Christian ethos, that it's based around suffering, is in fact, quite attractive to people who are suffering?

AM: If you are going to be suffering its nice to have a framework that helps you to make meaning of it. I don't think that is the case for looking for suffering, or trying to be a martyr, and there's plenty of work needed doing in the world without having to make martyrs of ourselves, though we may find ourselves becoming martyrs in the process.

MP: Okay, my point that I was trying to make there is that I feel as though the Roman Empire was converted over to Christianity because, to a very large degree, and not just because of the growth of Christianity at the time, and it was quite prevalent across the whole landscape, rather that they had, could foresee, in a sort of implicit way, how land degradation or erosion of our landscapes will contribute to downfalls of empires. You know, everything was in God's hands, and even if you would trust in God you could not foresee the suffering that was ahead of you. So I saw that as an attractive thing for the Romans.

AM: There is a theme of linking degradation of the land to a deficit of spirituality in the people. It's very clear in some of the Old Testament prophets, particularly Ezekiel and Jeremiah who saw the land as suffering because of what human beings were doing to it. Romans in the New Testament sees the whole of creation as suffering at the hand of what humans are doing. And there are some wonderful quotes from Jeremiah especially to that effect. He saw very clearly that biodiversity was going under because of human wickedness. So it is an old, old theme that well pre-dates the Romans but it is kind of inevitable one because whenever you get a people not trying to live in a right relationship with their environment and one another, our fragile ecosystems are going to suffer.

MP: Okay. The modern scientific movement has supposedly, from an academic point of view, no direct relation to the classical Greek equivalent which sort of died out at the time of the Romans. Instead what we observe, I believe, are cycles in human nature. The Greeks and the Romans ate like the gods, they ate abundantly. During illness instead of maybe going to the gods they had this option of trying to discover a new medicine or cure. That was their way of dealing with their own illness or their own suffering. This whole pattern, for me, is anthropological. And I believe that we are not any more healthier or more ill than we are now. Let me rephrase that. There is no difference in our state of health between now and then. This is my viewpoint and the reason why I take that viewpoint is because I think the whole of human civilisation is premised on a changing diet. The fact is, we have to make our bodies adapt to this continuing change of diet in order for us to evolve and to be able to take in these new foods. And if we went back five million years when we supposedly started emerging from the forests and into the savannahs we can see the dawning of civilisation. We can see that we needed to change our diets in order to survive.

AM: There is archaeological work, anthropological work on different diets and different civilisations. When you say that you believe that you need to ground what you're saying in evidence, how long people lived for, how was that diet impacted upon, lifespan and so on.

MP: Am I not allowed to make that assumption that because cross-cultural contact, and because our bodies are not allowed to go into those harmonious spaces we find that we're always adapting to new foods. And that brings on illness.

AM: You can make whatever assumption you want but in academic work you have to be able to back it up with evidence. So if you are going to make that assumption or put that forward as a hypothesis you then have to look at what supports a view and what doesn't support it. If it's just an idea of the top of your head then it's just dreaming, which is fine but you are not likely to get very much sympathy from your examiners with it.

MP: I've got interesting people who I work with who are looking at the relationships of processed foods, for instance, with cancer.

AM: There is a big body of literature on that. Look at this book here, *The Good Scots Diet*, where she has studied the Scottish diet. What was in it? Why people ate what they did? You know, there is a whole body of literature on that kind of thing. You need to investigate. Unless you have done the primary research yourself you need to investigate.

MP: Okay, my point was, the Greeks had this rationalistic approach and rather than going to their God and saying 'God, I am suffering'. We could take the story of Job for instance, who lost hundreds and thousands of cattle and sheep, and his family, but he never lost faith in God. Or we could look at the rational viewpoint, which the Greeks gave. Which resurfaces again, I think, with the modern scientific movement, and that is, we can find a cure for our illness. And we don't need a God for it. We can just find a cure or we can try even prevent it, through medicine.

AM: Well, there is plenty of medicine around. It depends on the illness, depends on the medicine doesn't it. And if you think you find the medicine you got to ask, ‘Did the medicine cure you or was it just your body’s natural healing properties that made you feel better at that time’?

MP: There is a continuum there then , for me, the rational approach of the Greeks. And the fact is, they are asking us to go beyond this supplication to God, we don't need that, here's a medicine, here's a cure.

AM: Oh, I see, you mean they were substituting God for medicine.

MP: Yes, and even though they had their gods of medicine, their approach was how to deal with the basics on ground level. And they did that with plants, through behaviour, practice.

AM: Well you notice that Jesus didn't heal using medicine but you got to ask what was going on in Jesus' healings? Was he dealing with the neurotics in his culture and getting to

the source of what was giving them pain as a human being and tackling that? Or are we, in fact some of the early Christians would say to read these signs allegorically and so when Jesus let's the blind man see it is about learning to see spiritually. And when deaf it is about learning to inwardly. The gathering demoniac is the propensity to self-harm within all of us, when we are cut off from the source of life, in the gathering demoniac's example by colonisation, because who was it that ate pigs in that culture? It wasn't the Hebrews, it was the Romans who predominantly ate pigs. You can see that whole story is a metaphor for what colonisation does to a human being.

MP: And you refer to that as this darkness that you need to come to terms with, this psycho-spirituality, to be able to heal on a much deeper level, psychological level. You actually say, 'psychologically naïve groups are always in-fighting'.

AM: Yes, yes, very much so.

MP: So for me I want to ask you if human consciousness is premised on expectation of disaster and is it psychologically naïve to attempt to control nature?

AM: Yes, definitely. I think if you go with the mind set that you are going to control nature, you are always going to be trumped by nature in the long run. You can only short-circuit nature for so long and get a away with it. Sooner or later there will be feedback loops that catch you out. The trick of right living is to live in accordance with nature.

MP: Absolutely, and maybe the story of Job is actually saying to us, 'This is what you need to prepare for because it happens to everyone, or every empire, this disaster’.

AM: A lot of people are saying that, that we are bringing our own unravelling upon us. That this is a cyclical process. I mean I was listening to Lovelock speaking in Edinburgh last night and he said you know, we have to be careful how much we beat ourselves up about this because he uses a metaphor of us as being like a child wandering out onto a road and finding a gun, picking it up and not knowing what it was, and pulling the trigger. And it is a bit like

that the way we have related to nature. He suggested that we hadn't realised that this was going to happen in terms of the impact of CO2. Just as we see CFC's and what have you, that made the ozone hole, we didn't realise it was going to happen. It's a learning process.

MP: And Lovelock has given enough evidence to suggest that micro-organisms, microbacterias, are responsible for keeping the balance, and that balance is upset. Maybe, what we are finding is, the religious sentiment, the spirituality that evolves from that is very much a factor of the imbalance in the animal kingdom including bacterias.

AM: Oh, definitely. But I couldn't speak for the spirituality of bacteria.

MP: My point is, maybe the evolution of human consciousness is somehow linked to the way this bacteria is released through civilisation.

AM: You can certainly make a scientific argument how human civilisation, if you like want to call it that, has evolved is very closely linked to bacteria, not least pathogens.

END

4. Food and fasting in the Jewish milieu

The three major contexts for the mention of food and fasting in the NT are firstly, the breaking of the bread during communal meals (Acts 2:42; 2:46; 16:34; 20:7; 27:33-36).[371] Secondly, with food distribution and charity as this became institutionalised (6:1-6). Thirdly, concerning the problem Jewish food laws posed for the mission of the Gentiles. (10:10-16; 11:2-3; 15:19-20) Its natural corollary of fasting is also mentioned with prayer, as preparation for the 'laying on of hands' (13:2-3; 14:23), and peculiarly in the context of the Jewish conspiracy to murder Paul (23:12cf.). Authors like Rudolph Arbesmann are of the opinion that the dominant motive for Christian fasting was asceticism.[372] This could be true to a large degree since Jewish ethical behaviour was indelibly fixed into the practices of the early Jewish Christians. Although Grimm suggests that the fasting mentioned is neither emphasised nor recommended in any way here or elsewhere in Acts, nevertheless, fasting does appear common place as was praying. Grimm proposes that the event occurred pre-dawn during early morning service and so before eating. He also mentions that during Paul's conversion, (Acts 9:9) in which he went through a blinding, paralysing, psychological crisis, not drinking for three and a half days is a Catholic adaptation. She continues in saying that it is very dubious whether the experience was voluntary and by extension a signifier for the church's pre-baptismal procedures of a reflection of Paul's so-called penance. Rather the author suggests it is setting the scene for the hero to enter, hence the spiritual death and resurrection period of three days. So even though fasting was an intricate part of Jewish custom, what we are seeing here is a gentile audience and not a Jewish-Christian one, hence a Catholic anachronistic reading of the event.[373] The early Christians, were required to fast on the 4th

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371 J. Donald Hughes, *op. cit.*, p74.

372 See Rudolp Arbesmann, 'Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity' in *Traditio*, Vol.7, (1949), (1-71).

373 It is later recommended as a pre-baptismal condition by 2nd and 3rd century sources. See chapter 7 in the *Didache.*

and 6th days instead of the 2nd and 5th, i.e. Sunday is now the dominical day before communion of which all confessions of sins and disputes were settled.[374] Grimm further asserts that to understand Arbesmann's view is to see fasting as an attempt to coerce from the gods fertility or visions, especially among seers, healers and prophetic types, or may be part of the fertility cults who derive their core experiences from nature.[375] We have already made note of the reference to Gnostics like the Manicheans who upheld the primacy of ideas over matter. Most of Arbesmann's work focused on magical and prophetic sources and thus alludes to the Israelite experience. What is interesting is that he could not find any substantial evidence for fasting as an integral part of Greco-Roman religion. One must assume that the Christian religion took its main dietary strain from its Judaic inheritance, but that fasting was an exception to the rule before it later became fixed into convention. As such, Grimm pointed out that a passing of time had elapsed in order to explain the earlier rejection of food laws, and that Acts was written, not for a Jewish-Christian audience with its enthusiastic core of Judaizers, but rather a Gentile Christian church in mind.[376] In other words, the 'weak' vegetarians could still keep their rules of *kashrut* if they wanted to, for which Paul in the Epistles was indifferent about.[377]

[374] Willy Rordorf "The Didache" in The Eucharist of the Early Christians pp14-16.
[375] Veronika E. Grimm From Feasting to Fasting, the evolution of a sin: Attitudes to food in late antiquity p7; Rudolp Arbesmann "*Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity"* in *Traditio* Volume 7 1949 (1-71).
[376] *Ibid*., p85.

5. Christianity and the developing world

In Central America both racial oppression and the domination of nature are authorised by the same ideology.[378] As such any further land reforms are central to the participation of women because they have the expertise and economic prowess to remove this oppressive regime. The Central American experience is an example to moot. Through environmental degradation the role of women came to provide the stimulus for environmental action because of the increased difficulties in providing food, fuel and water, and this because of its direct bearing on the family life.[379] With this in mind Central American degradation can be understood in the light of decades of militarisation in which popular organisations that challenged élite holders of economic and political power had been repressed, in general by the US. This is an example of why the meaning of sustainable development is a historical, economic and social phenomenon. In Central America they often spring from religious commitments; Christianity must align itself with the "lowest of the low". In particular, Luke's gospel draws out Jesus' relationship with women also.[380] Mark's gospel, on the other hand, is itself male orientated, but Jesus is reminded of his missionary cause towards the marginalised.[381] (7: 24-30) Historically, economic interests are nearly always linked to religious world-views and legitimations.[382] Religion becomes entwined with conflicts relating to competing views, for instance those of pagan or liberation theologies against conservative Christians. Thus the growth of popular resistance is already embedded in cultural antagonisms.

We can follow the plight of African nations who provide ample evidence of the politico-social forces that comprise any real sustainability, echoing the earlier sentiments of Bron Taylor when he talks about the lack of awareness of true indigenous needs. In

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377 *Ibid*., p70.
378 Bron Taylor (ed.), *op. cit.*, p68.
379 *Ibid.*, pp57-58.
380 See Luke.7: 36-50 and 10: 38-42.
381 Alastair McIntosh, *Healing Nationhood*, p62.

Zimbabwe for example, then Rhodesia, peasants continually resisted the temptation to receive famine relief in exchange for labour on white farms.[383] During the 30's and 50's, as the colonial state tried to enforce removal through legislation, peasants ran over to Zambia and Mozambique or sought legal recourse in courts. The legal basis was enacted most notably through the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Husbandry Act of 1951. What evolved from this was a reassertion of people's traditional religions through their desertion from the mission churches, and eventuated the formation of what came to be known as the "independent" (indigenous) churches. These were the spirit or prophetic churches (such as the Zionist and Apostolic movements) which focused on the Holy Spirit, baptism, prophecies and faith healing, and the churches with an ideological-religious link with the state of Ethiopia (e.g. African Congregational and African Reformed churches). They drew large numbers of peasantry in direct result of legislation that changed the character of land tenure. In other words they went back to their spiritual roots.[384] The fundamental differences between the classes can be seen through the economic perspective. Peasant economy, as opposed to the upper classes, is inextricably tied in with the larger cultural and spiritual perspective where the dead are buried and in the home of the ancestors.[385] For them the dead, the living, and the unborn are all relevant to the present. Poor crops are related to the anger of the ancestral spirits.

The two examples highlight the critical issue here – the oppression of traditional peoples and their practice. One can refer to the views of Father Thomas Berry, a Catholic priest who says that the problem of dominance is rooted in the old biblical myth in which God will directly rule the world for a thousand years, with peace, harmony and justice

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382 Bron Taylor, 'Popular ecological resistance and radical environmentalism', p346.
383 Yash Tandon, *op. cit.*,, pp162-163.
384 *Ibid.*, p164.
385 *Ibid*., pp166-167.

prevailing.[386] In view of the fact that most African and South American religions are predominantly biblical, or are syncretisms of such, one can assume that the human psyche has always been party to this social evolution and that repression is somehow a common theme throughout human nature. It is precisely this that Thomas Berry is alluding to, that human destiny is to be perceived as the latest evolution in the spectacular unfolding of the universe, an evolutionary moment of conscious awakening and wonder. Creation must now be experienced as a synthesis of an emergent psychic-spiritual and material-physical reality, the process of which humans are integral to. The experience of this new vision requires abandoning the old models of 'modern' perception by "reinventing the human".[387] This is not a new idea, for it appears that Berry is emphasising the spirit of newness generally prevalent in all new religious movements.

I would further like to highlight the example of Zionist Christianity that grew out of the late 19th century urban American counterculture and which was introduced to South Africa in 1904.[388] In the US it drew most of its membership from impoverished urban communities in the industrial Midwest. Through the use of religious symbols it opposed the mainstream American economic dream premised as it was on orthodox Protestantism.[389] The Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion (CCACZ) challenged existing value systems by syncretising indigenous and modern capitalist symbols. The Tshidi of South Africa saw in it as a novel resolution to living between the impoverished worlds of rural subsistence farming, and wage labour. Social divisions and tensions were reflected in an ailing body, which became the symbol for individual health for the potential of restored social relations, and improved material conditions. Ritual was the central mechanism though which this healing is conceived. The evangelical nature of this Christianity opened up a general discourse around

386 David Kinsley, *op. cit.*, pp172-174.
387 Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* pp81-82.
388 Fiona Bowie , *op. cit.*, pp69-72.

estrangement and reclamation, domination and resistance. It welded the powers of colonialism and of objectified Tshidi "tradition" into a synthesis,[390] in much the same fashion as many other Christian denominations.

This bricolage (sic) of symbolism has very much been the spirit of the age founded within liberal movements. One sees the same motives of domination and freedom coming to light. In effect, one is witnessing the changing value systems of societies caught in the flux of technological upgrading and bourgeoisie elitism. For in nearly all cases, as with our historical precedent of the developing Roman Empire, the dissolution of environmental ethics and principles is a result of the growing urban population and the evacuation of the countryside in favour of higher liberal life values. In reference to John Hall,[391] humans are deeply unsatisfied despite having achieved the basics of food and shelter.[392] The cultural malaise that has ensued is vindicated through the production of a meaningless technocratic sophistication and a massive amount of media. He calls for a subversive attitude towards this technological mindset, one that is prophetic in form.

We may refer back to the Zionists cited above and their symbolic gestures of wearing Victorian-style clothing that starkly contrasts the normal threadbare outfits the migrant Tshidi are normally used to. Comaroff claims that the men are seeking to bridge the dialectical tension between commoditised transaction and direct and controllable social relations, or the bridge between producer and consumer. [393] (The skirt they wear blurs the western contrast of male severity and female opulence.) The Zionist style communicates an "otherness", a message all at once of deconstruction and re-creation, one which signifies not only group boundaries but magical enlightening – a source of protection of identity. It is arguable

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[389] Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance*, p177.
[390] *Ibid.,* p12.
[391] See Douglas John Hall, *The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death* Rev. Ed., Eerdmans for Commission on Stewardship, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1988.
[392] David Kinsley, *op. cit., p*p169-172.

whether the Zionist does anything to transform his material conditions, but Comaroff goes on to say that the ritual integration of colonial and traditional symbols is genuinely transformative and transcendent in experience.[394]

The widespread, phenomenal importance of Christian cultism, especially within developing countries, reflects very much the flavour of the transformative period of early Christianity. Modern Christians are calling for the revival of the existing symbolic role of the steward.[395] Christianity has been up to now uncritical of the technocratic mindset, moreover a primary sponsor of it. We have already discussed this link to the ancient past, one that has brought great benefits to the quality of living. Berry and Hall both call for a paradigm of change, a celebration of the distinctiveness of humanity and not its superiority as has been expressed in the prevailing Christian legacy.

Many contemporary Christian authors are now claiming for the removal of outdated models, which the likes of McFague say are dangerous.[396] This is not different to the spirit of the environment around the time of the Reformation, and one must ask whether we are viewing a Great Reformation period here of over 400 years, moreover a perpetual sense of new beginnings. If the secular ideology that has permeated western systems is truly responsible for the advance of unchecked exploitation of the earth, then the 'failure' of Christianity has been not to do enough, as many authors attest to. But under the circumstances one must ask whether it is the true role of Christianity to interfere with governmental and monarchical directives without itself becoming a corruption of the natural religious experience. Christianity has felt that by keeping the individual in mind it could provide an alternative for conscientious objectors of 'progress' to fall back to, not unlike the

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393 Jean Comaroff, *op. cit.*, p221.
394 *Ibid*., p228.
395 David Kinsley, *op. cit.*, p169-172.
396 See Sallie McFague, *Models of God* (1989).

true Christian spirit that gave rise to Christianity in the beginning in opposition to the status quo.

6. Is the modern environmental movement afraid to call itself a religion?

In light of my claim that history repeats itself Hanson and Oakman highlighted a number of social factors during the time of Jesus that I have indicated to have parallels today.[397] These include:

- The influence of technology over the social system in terms of its production power. (The evidence is consistent to suggest that technological determinism has contributed towards the creation of excess wealth.)
- Domestic education and religion helped in socialising children and transmitting culture. (Akin to the role of family-run education systems like home-schooling and the Waldorf schools - Steiner philosophy.)
- Domestic economy was premised on consumption. (The environmental movement seeks to develop local economies through schemes like printing local currency, and LETS – Local Exchange Trading Systems)
- Political religion enforced loyalty to the deity and thus the payment of taxes through divine law. (The Aramaic term for wealth is *mamona*[398] which subsequent environmentalists have derogated to represent the ideological 'god' of the wealthy. Thus said, the environmental movement embraces charity – a type of secular 'god' - as its surrogate *mother* and is replacing the social responsibilities that governments once held. Much of UK money comes from the National Lottery)
- Organised schools of scribes institutionalised political education. They also concerned themselves with law. (One of the main tools of information transmission and support has been the world-wide web, very much independent from government control and managed by an ever-increasing number of articulate bodies including hackers and free-loaders.)

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[397] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman , *op. cit.*, pp16-17.

- Both Hellenistic-Roman law and Judean civil law affected the lives of the peasants, the latter through divine sanction. (The environmental movement seeks to mobilise power through the European Community as well as through local representation. Early Christianity manipulated these value systems through patrilocal and inter-city memberships within the Jewish Diaspora before itself becoming institutionalised.)
- Israelite history fashioned a strong sense of the eschatological as well as the political. (The eschatological motif in environmentalism can be seen in the cry of Global Warming as a direct result of over-industrialisation.)

The impression one gets here is that through social and behavioural patterns we are continually coming to terms with the same age-old problems. What changes are its value systems accorded to the cultural conventions of the time, and these are mainly defined by élite groups. It is my opinion that only through patronage will environmentalism form the bedrock or ethical base value for political control.

Earlier in the appendix I offer a model (*The Holistic Design Series*) as regarding my personal experience of the ecological as integrated within spiritual practice. It is the creation of a mindscape for the development of the individual and how the individual fits into society. Despite my continued allusion throughout this essay of the economic basis of civilisation, actual experience for me follows the psycho-spiritual nature of existence on the thinking of McIntosh and Liberation Theology. Ultimately, questions of the nature of reality, suffering and the meaning of life are rudimentary for the social movement of any peoples, religion apart. It is necessary to draw parallels with religion in order to understand the environmental movement in terms of a social and psychological phenomenon. The environment includes both the natural world and human society. In particular one sees a vibrant strand of eco-

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[398] *Ibid*., p122.

feminism within the environmental movement that has strongly taken up the mantle of the feminine qualities of nature and its natural correlate of the independent mother. This has tended to see the development of the traditional role of women in domestic or household economics move out into the world of career management and the equality of position that they should now harbour. Hence, not long ago one could encounter the conditions not unlike that of Philo in ancient Palestine who talked of two types of state, the larger or "cities", and the smaller or "households; men for the larger (polity) and females the smaller (economy).[399] (*Special laws* 3.169; 171) They replicated their perceptions of gender in social roles, behaviours, dress, spaces, times and attitudes. Cities then, as they were during Victorian times, were cited as the main centres where change could potentially be enacted from. Hence the role of the woman had moved to the subservient nature of industrial home-life.

Women played a major role in the life of Jesus,[400] albeit much of the history was downplayed due to the conventions of a patriarchal society. Within the Catholic tradition the Virgin Mary has tended to represent the period of greatest technological and economic change mainly from the 8th century onwards.[401] The relationship of Mary to God is considered Creation in its right relationship. This representation parallels nature's 'contract' to humanity, and the latter's mastery over it for all its conventions and justifications. The shift in the perception of nature then, and hence women throughout Europe had been subtly moving into the 17th century where previously undefined roles were now being polarised between the social divisions of work and home life.[402] Even the naturalists of the 1800´s had set themselves apart from the traditions and superstitions of rural people.[403] Likewise the pre-scientific Western models frequently contained the idea of sharing genetic or hereditary

[399] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p25.
[400] Knut Schaferdiek, *op. cit.*, p67.
[401] Sarah Jane Boss, *Empress and Handmaid*, p87.
[402] Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science*, p61.
[403] Greg Garrard, *op. cit*., p114.

material, for instance blood types,[404] and this attitude continued into the social demarcations of post-industrial life. But the dialectical relationship between master and slave has played throughout the history of social reform. More often than not, one sees the gathering centres of people's homes or the kinship shared on industrial labour sites as the place where the bounding of a protected 'family' ethos or fictive kin is maintained.[405] This is very much akin to the phenomenon one sees today amongst eco-villages and the new drive for communal representation. Alistair McIntosh was quick to credit the role of women and likewise the spiritual representatives who maintained this fictive kin regarding the success of the super quarry prevention on the Isle of Harris in the Western Hebrides.[406] Family structure, including fictive kin, was likewise integral to Mediterranean culture of the first century.[407] Together the family hunts and forages. The home functions as a sacred space for the development of altruistic values and the sharing of resources.[408]

[404] Vigdis Broch-due, Ingrid Rudie & Tone Bleie (eds.), *Carved Flesh Cast Selves: Gendered symbols and Social Practices*, p12.

[405] *Made in Dagenham* is a recent film that highlighted the plight of working factory women in East London who fought for equal pay in American-owned Ford plants. After a walkout Ford were resigned to giving a pay rise. Legislation was put in place, assisted by the Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity, Barbara Wilson, under Howard Wilson, at the time, with the Equal Pay Act 1970. Most industrialised countries in the west followed suit.

[406] See http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/quarry/ending.htm and http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/quarry/lafarge-panel.htm and the book based around McIntosh´s experience with the community of Harris entitled *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power* (2004).

[407] K. C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, p20.

[408] Further stories can be extracted from the wealth of articles in magazines like Permaculture Magazine, Caduceus, Holistic Living Magazine & Positive News.

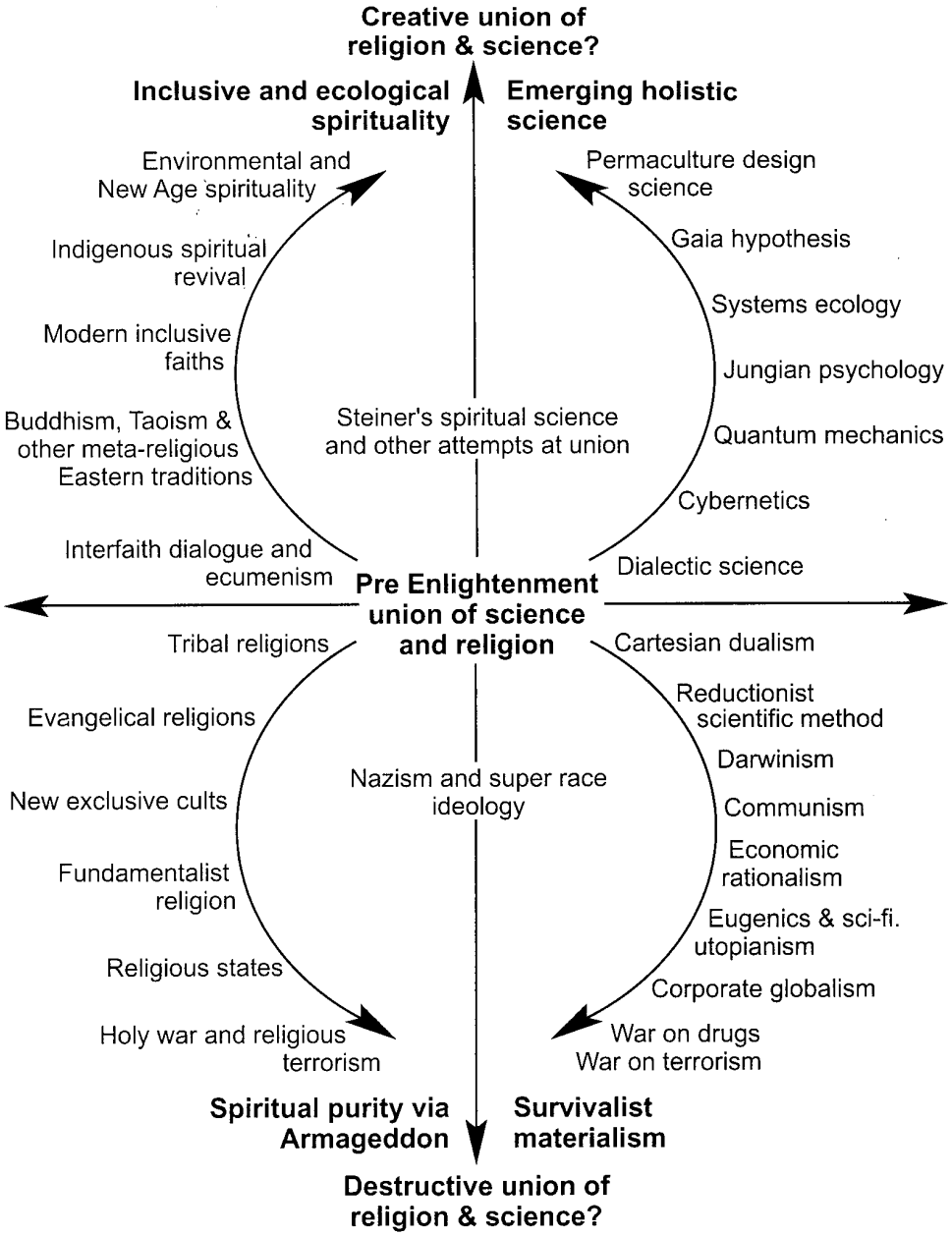

Figure A6.1. David Holmgrem's Emergent Union of Materialism and Spirituality. (*Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability* p4.) I have made references to some of the above practicing philosophies. Of course, there are many more. What's interesting to note is that Bill Mollison, co-founder of the movement, explicitly states that religious intervention of any kind is not welcome. In *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual* 2nd Ed.(Tagari: Tyalgum, Australia 1988) he promotes a pragmatic approach that omits visions or beliefs classified as spiritual or mystical. (506) Holmgrem largely does also even though he offers a model here for its relative understanding, and rather follows the system's thinking of H. T. Odum.

GEN (Global Ecovillage Network) officially represents the growing mass movement of alternative village lifestyles. The website describes it such, "Ecovillages are urban or rural communities of people, who strive to integrate a supportive social environment with a low-impact way of life. To achieve this, they integrate various aspects of ecological design, permaculture, ecological building, green production, alternative energy, community building practices, and much more".[409] It is quick to point out that ecovillages have been around for millennia. At their heart they maintain four tenets, that of community, ecological awareness, spirituality and economical self-reliance usually through the creation of their own currency. Often though, most of the root issues are founded on the accessibility of land and the equal distribution of wealth. This land is generally held in some form of trust. The proactive ethos of such a movement is apparent. *The Land's* manifesto makes a case in point.

"Access to land is not simply a threat to land owning élites – it is a threat to the religion of unlimited growth and the power structure that depends on it… Anyone who has land has access to energy, water, nourishment, shelter, healing, wisdom, ancestors and a grave."

Often, these centres of community provide temporary homes to the itinerant worker and teacher alike. They are experiments in sustainable living. Embodying the wider principles of permaculture it is not difficult to see how members of the environmental community are drawn towards a pagan spirituality because of the closer proximity to nature these centres provide, and maybe because of their dis-concertedness about the major religions.[410] Likewise the Transition Town Movement, itself an offshoot of the Permaculture movement, has grown

[409] Http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=92&Itemid=215

[410] There are a multitude of Christian religious variations that practice forms of simple living. These include the Amish, the Hutterites and the Quakers. There are also religious naturalists who espouse the concept of the interconnectivity of nature without supernaturalism.

from strength to strength with viral consistency.[411] The whole working philosophy is based upon the end of peak oil and the necessary powering down required for the assimilation of culture as we know it.[412] Rob Hopkins, the founder, is adamant that governments don't act quick enough, hence small village-size districts are empowering themselves through strategic resource pooling, including finance and labour. As the name suggests, most of its centres are situated within urban environments where the concentration of wealth is most apparent and where "power down"[413] will hit the hardest. Critical to their approach is a set of goals that need to be achieved if transition is to be as harmonious as possible. A lot of it is to do with the growing of food (dependent as it is on fossil fuel economies) and energy management. Like their ecovillage counterparts their main roles are to provide educational services and community support.

The social parallels are again apparent with ancient Palestine. By the end of the first century itinerant charismatics (similar to modern day pioneers and entrepreneurs) had been replaced by teachers (apologists) who propagated the Christian faith as the true theology/philosophy.[414] It seems the paradigm shift was not heeded by the Jewish élite who rejected Jesus. The philanthropic attitudes of these communities, both modern and ancient, reflect their social stability and solidarity. If one then is allowed to continue with the analogy we are led to believe in the resurgence of an environmental movement as contextualised in the 'apocalyptic'. (Mk. 13 cf.) "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines; this is but the beginning of the birth pangs." The Christian apologists in the wake of seeing the Temple destroyed, fulfilling as it does the prophetic message of Jesus, would continue to experience

411 See http://www.transitionnetwork.org/ for a full listing of current documented activities and projects. Transition Town Totnes is the founder´s constituency and first official town.
412 See Rob Hopkins, *The Transition Town Handbook*, (2008), especially chapters 1 to 3.
413 See *Ibid*. pp46-47 cf. for a list of projected scenarios including that of "powerdown".
414 Knut Schaferdiek, *op. cit*., p67.

centuries of Roman rule. The cultural relevance this endures is plain to see. In parallel to this milieu, Rappaport asserts the collapse of the modern world and further environmental destruction as a factor of the regulation of ecosystems in accordance with economic reference points.[415] The crux of the matter is to devise a model whereby investment pertains to values beyond that solely of an ecosystem. There are hierarchies of values, from specific lower order systems (i.e., making money, accumulating wealth, physical pleasure etc.) to generalised higher order systems (freedom, social cohesion and happiness etc.)

One may hearken to the notion that Jesus was not directly against the role of taxation but rather what had become of the central institution of the Temple. The 'banditry' was a redistribution system that benefited only the few.[416] The banks are guilty of the extraction of product and control of labour energy.[417] Hanson goes on to say that peasant religion was always *ex opere operato* (based upon the performance of sacred ritual) and so were reliant upon the priests to ensure fertility of the land.[418] Hanson furthers the idea that the temple as a "House of Prayer" exposed the possibility that it could fall under the control of the Jesus groups who inferred authority. As such Jesus' arraignment was against the establishment and hearkened to the old Israelite law of a decentralised, simple sacrificial communion with God (Exod.20:24 'an altar of earth') without the anxiety of materialism. Such a reform was characteristic of Amos and Jeremiah. And we see it today where Mehdi Hasan likens him to the left-wing activists who rallied against the banks during the financial crisis and who still pay out big bonuses.[419] The Temple then, acted as a bank as well as a warehouse. Every Judean male had to support the continuous flow of sacrifices (half a shekel or 2 denarii).[420]

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[415] Fiona Bowie , *op. cit.*, pp110-111; Roy Rappaport, *Ecology, Meaning and Religion*, p100.
[416] C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, pp155-156.
[417] *Ibid*., p126.
[418] *Ibid*., p153.
[419] Mehdi Hasan, *op. cit.*, p26 That the banks were bailed out by the tax payer, in this case the Royal Bank of Scotland, is subsidiary to the accruing third-world debt the IMF and World Bank are amassing in light of its 'development' towards a Western style economy.
[420] C. Hanson & Douglas E. Oakman, *op. cit.*, pp151-152.

The greater picture included the imperial prefects like Pilate (Jos. *Ant.* 18.60) and Florus (*War* 2.293) who extracted funds from the temple and who were in fact, auditors and overseers. Josephus' (*War* 6.335) account clearly states how rich the Temple was whilst the Jews made preparations to attack the Romans. After its destruction the Romans simply redirected the tax to Rome. Frequently unpaid debts resulted in the confiscation of land. Between the Roman and Temple taxation systems debts were ensured to increase leaving the "landless" to continue to seek recall of the hoped-for messiah.

One discovers here that non-élite religion, especially since many Jews lived far from the temple, focused around the great pilgrim festivals (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles) when communion sacrifices prevailed.[421] Pilgrimages were a strong-group experience, and despite the heavy demands it put on the peasants the solidarity celebrations found their ritual fulfilment at the temple.[422] It was at these times of joy where a different kind of redistributive economy was associated with the divine will, one that Jesus cultivated. Campbell points out that the individual is but a fraction of his society, a social construct, an organ for the beautiful festival-image of man.[423] The totality of man is in the body of society as a whole. Tribal ceremonies serve to translate the individual's life-crisis and –deeds into classic, impersonal forms. From the standpoint of the social unit, the broken-off individual is simply nothing – waste. Again, the itinerant nature of man comes to light, a social fabric that binds one through commonality, central to the sense of new beginnings. Bakhtin likened it to the universality of the carnival experience that transcends hierarchies, both social and spiritual.[424]

Again, one finds plenty of modern examples of liberated man within the festival setting, where ritual is unconsciously and consciously evoked. Despite the policing of most of the events protesters from Climate Camp and various other factions generate a sense of

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421 *Ibid*., p157.
422 *Ibid*., p154.
423 Joseph Campbell, *op. cit*., pp382-383.

freedom as often restricted areas of the countryside are now opened up for political and social interchange. It parallels the counter-urban culture that Simon Farlie referred to when, in his analysis, no matter how rich a person became, he would always be happier if he moved to the country.[425] The experience can be considered a holi-day. The combination of education, music, dance, art & craft, food and intoxication provide some important insights into some of this 'religious' behaviour. The element of prophecy (rising sea levels, global warming, land, sea and air pollution, loss of biodiversity etc.), again all things that are already prevalent, combined with what Rudolph Otto called the "numinous" experience when confronted with the holy or "wholly other", satisfy partially the requirements of religious behaviour.[426] We have already seen that Jesus was a political activist. The modern scientific grounding in most political environmentalism through such channels as the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) can be likened to the necessary mythological and doctrinal dimensions of informed doom prophesying. What Smart refers to as para-historical narrative that man must enter into.[427]

The scientific argument for the false expectation that God will be discovered remains one of the perennial difficulties that provided the basis for resistance in the 19th century to Lyell's developmental geology and Darwin's theory of natural selection[428] of animal species.[429] Religious experience though, does not require a theocentric basis, for instance the Buddhist beliefs. There are many who would shy away from the association and likewise there are many environmentalists who reject a cross-cultural analogy with religion. The

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[424] Fiona Bowie, *op. cit.*, p78; Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp26-27.
[425] S. Farlie, 'Is urbanisation a temporary phenomenon?', p29.
[426] Ninian Smart provided various dimensions that a religion should fulfil. These included the doctrinal and philosophical, the narrative and mythological, the ethical and legal, the social and institutional, the experiential and the emotional, and ritual. Without too much effort one can articulate various environmental examples of each. See Ninian Smart *Dimensions of the Sacred* (1998).
[427] N. Smart, *Secular Education and the Logic of Religion,* p104.
[428] Born 1809 – 1882 he published his *On the origin of Species* in 1859 which most people came to accept before the end of his life.
[429] John J. Compton, ´Science and God's Action in Nature´, pp35-36.

scholastic argument between an environmental and cultural determinism is an age-old quest, going back to the Greeks at least. Likewise, the ideological and materialist perceptions of the world are issues as new as they are old. But it is important to iterate, that materialism within the environmental movement fosters upon it a scientific vindication and political activism, and can outweigh any deep spiritual motivations, at least from the outside. In this light one discovers the important work of Marx who, many would say, informs the socialist views of many left-wing activists. But one should be frank, Marx was not religious. Firstly, Marx was a materialist, not an idealist. Human labour is the basis from which all ideas are formed. Regarding religious ideas he considered them illusory and dangerous and thus took a humanist view towards the betterment of society. He considered that religion was being used for the exploitation of one class over another, i.e. the 'sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world... It is the opium of the people.[430] In religion one could *realize* the human essence but first required "the demand to give up a condition that needs illusions".[431] In this vein he saw good and evil as factors of social forces, not of religion. Ultimately, the theory of history gives a scientific diagnosis of the condition of human beings, rooted as it is, in materialism. But it is man who makes religion. Religious illusion must be eliminated before true happiness can be sought. Indeed, he disregards the spirit also.

Hence it may be worth making a comparative model between Marxism and other movements. Coming as he did during the social upheavals in Europe, by which he was influenced by German classical philosophy of Hegel for the theory of history, an economic theory rooted in British political economists, and French revolutionary theory, he concluded that human beings do affect change in history but only through materially-generated ideas. The terms historical materialism or dialectical materialism were foisted upon him afterwards. Philosophical criticism he considered vain though. It was the practical application of human

[430] Marx, 'Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', pp.41cf.

activity that establishes the reality, power and reason of the perceived material world.[432] He was a realist and a reformist, by which he advocated the need for religious freedom as well as the requirement to attend to one's bodily motivations.[433] Aware of the threat of totalitarianism, and under the constraints that capitalism imposes upon the free world, freedom meant environmental freedom – freedom *to,* not freedom *from.* Freedom from the constraints of others was a delusion although political emancipation he is quoted as saying was a great step forward.

One shouldn't doubt then that Marx had his interpretation for the oppressive means by which labour is exploited towards a bourgeoisie society. In fact, the Jesus milieu can be adequately explained through his ideas of capitalism - the alienated essence of human interaction was reflected in the market place between the relationships of commodities.[434] He referred to it as fetishism: a social relation existing between products. Capitalism was based on the exploitation of labour in which the worker is forced to sell his time for the price of the necessities of life. In this analogical light one can understand why the Jewish peasantry resorted back to their priests and ancestors in view of Jesus accusations of 'banditry' directed towards them. The cultural similarity then, between Marx and Jesus was their call for reform from the capitalist system but under different contexts. Their experience of oppression was practically identical – an appreciation of the physical world and the requirement for solidarity to keep the wheels of economic existence turning, as in the French *environner* – "to turn around", whilst leaving people to freely explore their personal values.

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[431] *Ibid*., p35.
[432] Marx, *op. cit.,* pp41-42; Frederich Engels, 'On Historical Materialism', pp51, 243.
[433] *Ibid*., p36
[434] Thomas Sowell, *op. cit.,* p34; (See *Capital* Vol.1 p297).

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