



## **Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World in Flux**

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# Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World in Flux

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For many years, ecologists and the environmentalists who looked to ecology for authority depicted a dichotomy between a pristine, stable nature and disruptive human activity. Most contemporary ecologists, however, conceive of nature as undergoing continual change and find that "flux of nature" is a more accurate and fruitful metaphor than "balance of nature."

The contributors to this volume address how this new paradigm fits into the broader history of ecological science and the cultural history of the West and, in particular, how environmental ethics and ecotheology should respond to it. Their discussions ask us to reconsider the intellectual foundations on which theories of human responsibility to nature are built. The provisional answer that develops throughout the book is to reintegrate scientific understanding of nature and human values, two realms of thought severed by intellectual and cultural forces during the last two centuries. Religious reflection and practice point the way toward a new humility in making the tough decisions and trade-offs that will always characterize environmental management.

"Ecology has experienced a major paradigm shift over the last half of the twentieth century. This shift requires major rethinking of the relation of religion and environmental ethics to ecology because our scientific understanding of the nature side of that relationship has changed. This book is the first, to my knowledge, that is meeting this challenge head on and it is doing so in an exemplary way." —J. Baird Callicott, University of North Texas

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