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“Religion and Animals”

The possibilities and problems of “religion and animals” can be seen in the following comparison. In 1994, the Catholic Church proclaimed,

Animals, like plants and inanimate things, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present and future humanity.

Contrast this assertion with the following from the popular *Metta Sutta* recited by millions of Buddhists every day:

Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbounded mind towards all beings, and loving kindness towards all the world.

Religion is a notoriously complex area of human existence. Nevertheless, it can be said, quite simply, that the record of some religious institutions in defending animals is one of abject failure, often driven by extraordinary arrogance and ignorance. Yet at other times religious believers have lived out their faith in ways that have been fully in defense of nonhuman lives.

This more positive view has, across place and time, been common. Engagement with lives outside our species has produced for some religious believers an understanding that other animals are the bringers of blessings into the world. Some believers have also held that some nonhuman animals are persons in every sense that humans are persons, and even ancestors, family, clan members or separate nations. Life forms outside the human species have regularly engaged humans’ imagination at multiple levels, and thus often energized religious sensibilities dramatically.

Because of this, one does not have to look far to uncover positive connections between some forms of religion and concerns for nonhuman animals. The links between these two are, in fact, unfathomably ancient. Our remote ancestors were fascinated with nonhuman lives, and the origins of human dance, musical instruments, art, and even a sense of the sacred have been tied directly to the fascination that our ancestors exhibited regarding the neighboring, nonhuman members of the earth community.

But the prevalence of dismissive views in religious circles cannot be denied. Views like that of the Catholic Catechism which are anchored in a radical subordination of nonhumans to humans—what Mary Midgley called the “absolute dismissal” of nonhuman animals now tragically prevalent in most modern industrialized countries—remain very common in religious circles today. Historically, there has been a link between religious traditions’ willingness to demean nonhuman animals and the totality of modern secular societies’ subordination of nonhuman animals’ lives to human profits, leisure, and “progress.” (see Waldau 2001; Sorabji 1993)

So fairness and balance in approaching this subject will require any explorer of “religion and animals” to acknowledge that, even if a preoccupation with other animals is an ancient theme in religious traditions, it has not been a prominent part of ethical discussion in modern religious institutions or in academic circles where religion is studied. Those who have championed the cause of nonhuman animals around the world since the resurgence of protective intentions and actions in the 1970s have only rarely consulted religious authorities when seeking communal support for increased animal protection. And religious authorities haven’t often sought to participate in debates over how to defend wildlife, ensure that food animals are not mistreated, minimize harm to research animals, or honor the special place of companion (nonhuman) animals in humans’ lives. The reluctance of animal advocates to seek the help of religious institutions and authorities alone says much about how “in defense of animals” modern religious traditions have been, or might be, in the world today.

I shall begin by considering what various religions have claimed about other animals. To what extent have religious traditions have been guilty of what Richard Ryder called “speciesism” - the view that any and all human animals, but *no nonhuman* animals, should get fundamental moral protections? Speciesism makes membership in the human species the criterion of belonging within our moral circle. And to what extent do religious traditions provide resources and support for those seeking to defend animals?

If we consider what five major religious traditions (these are sometimes referred to as the “world religions”) have claimed about “animals,” it becomes clear that some religious positions serve well to defend nonhuman animals, while others offend profoundly.

Hinduism, which is best understood as a complex of diverse subtraditions, offers an immense range of views about the living beings who share our ecological community. Two general beliefs dominate how these Hindu subtraditions think of humans’ relationship to the earth’s other animals. First, humans are clearly recognized to be in a continuum with other life; second, humans are nonetheless considered to be the paradigm of what biological life *should* be. One thus commonly finds within Hindu sources claims that the status “human” is above the status of any other animal.

Both the continuum notion and the separation emphasis are part of the Hindus’ belief in reincarnation, which asserts that any living being's current position in the cycle of life is a deserved position determined by the strict law of *karma*. This famous notion, which Hindus understand to reflect the eternal law of the universe, claims that all living beings, human and nonhuman alike, are born and reborn into stations in life determined by their past deeds. This view, which clearly implies that the universe has a fundamental moral structure, works out in ways that subordinate and otherwise demean nonhuman animals. Nonhuman animals, which by definition haven’t acted in prior lives in ways that surmount their inferior nonhuman status, are denizens of a corrupt, lesser realm. Achieving human status means one has in past lives acted well. Humans who in this life

act immorally are, according to Hindu thinking, destined to be reborn as a nonhuman animal, a demeaned status thought of as particularly unhappy compared to human life.

These two beliefs—humans' connection, humans' superiority—have resulted in tensions in Hindu views of other animals. A negative set of views, often used to justify dominance or harsh treatment, flows from the claims that earth's numerous nonhuman animals are inferior to any human. A competing, positive set of views flows from the continuum belief, for other animals, like humans, have souls and thus are worthy of ethical considerations (for example, the notion of non-harming, or *ahimsa*, applies to them).

On the positive side of attitudes toward nonhuman animals is the tradition's remarkable claim that other animals should not be killed. Many passages in the Hindu scriptures exhort believers to treat other animals as they would their own children. And central religious texts hold that the earth was created for both humans and nonhumans. These texts allow many contemporary Hindus to argue that all lives have their own interests, their own value, and thus a right to existence. Hence, daily life in India, especially at the village level, provides many examples of coexistence with other animals, the best known example of which is the sacred cow.

The special treatment of some nonhuman animals suggests that Hinduism is not classically speciesist, for not all nonhumans are excluded from the moral circle. Relatedly, not all humans were necessarily included, for the inequalities existing within human society (often referred to as the caste system) were also justified as the direct result of good or bad deeds performed in former lives.

Beyond the special obligations to all living beings found in the Hindu tradition, one finds close associations of many Hindu deities with specific animal forms. The deities Rama and Krishna are believed to have reincarnated as, respectively, a monkey and a cow. Ganesh, an elephant-headed god, and Hanuman, the monkey god, have long been worshipped widely in India. These close associations provide another basis on which Hindu believers can act in defense of certain nonhuman animals.

Hinduism's earliest forms were intimately associated with animal sacrifice, which dominated the ritual life of the early tradition. Around 500 BCE, this practice was challenged by Buddhists and Jains as cruel and unethical. This challenge had a great effect on the later Hindu views of the morality of intentionally sacrificing other animals, and *ahimsa*, the historically important emphasis on nonviolence, has now become a central feature of the tradition.

Buddhist views of nonhuman animals are not unlike Hindu views because both share the background cultural assumptions that characterize religions born in India. Buddhists thus also believe that all animals, human and otherwise, are fellow voyagers in the same process of lives interconnected by reincarnation. In Buddhist scriptures and practices, the teaching of compassion has often led to expressions of unequivocal concern for other living beings. This is one reason that both Buddhists and literature purporting to describe religious traditions generally often have claimed that Buddhism takes a kind, sympathetic view toward nonhuman lives. This is an important half-truth, for concern for other animals is often a very visible feature of the Buddhist tradition.

Such concerns are matched, however, by a complicating feature. The tradition also carries an overall negative view of other animals' existence and abilities relative to those of members of the human species. For example, a consistent disparagement of other animals appears in documents from the earliest stages of the tradition. Buddhist denunciations of other forms of life are closely allied with the coarse grouping of all nonhuman animals into a single realm. Under the hierarchical assumptions that dominated the Indian subcontinent, this realm was thought of as below the human realm. Hence, if a being is born as *any* kind of animal other than a human it is, in a very important sense, thought of negatively, for such a low birth means that the being in earlier lives did not meet the lofty goals that would allow that being to be born a human. Not unexpectedly, other animals' worlds are dismissed as unhappy places—the Buddha says, “so many are the anguishes of animal birth.”

Birth at a “subhuman” level in the Buddhist hierarchy, then, is a direct result of less than ideal conduct in earlier lives. And a corollary of this dismissal of nonhuman animals as lower is that such lives are regularly described by Buddhists as so simple relative to humans that their lives are easily understood by the qualitatively superior human capacity for moral and intellectual thinking. In other words, we can understand their lives, and thereby know that they would be happier if they were human. Another feature of Buddhist scriptures is that other animals are often viewed as pests in competition with elevated humans. These factors and others produce negative descriptions of other animals in the Buddhist scriptures.

As with Hinduism, negative views of other animals are moderated by central ethical commitments that, by any measure (modern or ancient), provide important defenses to other animals. The special commitment known in Buddhist scriptures as the First Precept commits each Buddhist to refrain from killing any life form. A vegetarian ideal is recognized in some portions of the tradition as well. There is also a special commitment in the Mahayana tradition known as the bodhisattva’s vow by which a Buddha-to-be refrains from entering *nirvana* until all beings are saved. This special vow reflects the prominence of the tradition’s deep concern for beings outside the human species.

This strong ethical commitment to the value of other animals’ lives keeps the Buddhist engagement with other animals from being classically speciesist even though one finds in Buddhism a pervasive dismissal of other animals that is related to the tradition’s heavy investment in hierarchical thinking. What makes this seem peculiar to modern activists who have developed their own defenses of animals is that, despite Buddhism’s interest in individual animals as valued beings who should not be killed, the tradition has never emphasized seeing other animals in terms of *their* realities. The upshot is that many Buddhist claims about other animals exhibit the features of misleading caricature because they are premised on a dismissive prejudgment about possibilities of nonhuman animals’ lives. In a scientific or analytical sense, Buddhists’ views of nonhuman lives are under-determined by careful engagement with observable realities of the animals’ actual lives, and over-determined by an ideology of human superiority.

The Abrahamic traditions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—also share common assumptions about nonhuman animals, although these are in important respects very different from the assumptions that undergird Hindu and Buddhist views of nonhuman animals. On the whole, the views of this family of religious traditions are, on issues involving nonhuman lives, dominated by a speciesist approach to deciding just which lives should be seen as within our moral circle. These Abrahamic traditions thus are, particularly in their mainline interpretations, characterized by a recurring assertion that the divine creator specially elected humans and designed the earth primarily for our benefit rather than for the benefit of all forms of life. This human-centeredness has manifested itself regularly in a tendency to justify practices that harm other animals.

But just as religion in general isn't easy to pin down with a simple judgment of either "pro-animal" or "anti-animal," so individual religious traditions are typically characterized by co-existing contradictory attitudes. The human-centeredness of the Abrahamic traditions is moderated at critical points by fundamental insights about the relevance of nonhuman lives to our ethical abilities. Thus, at least some part of each of these traditions asserts that there are moral dimensions to other animals' lives such that there should be limits on humans' instrumental uses of other animals.

In **Judaism**, views of nonhuman animals are not simple for other reasons as well, including the fact that the Hebrew Bible contains several different ways of thinking about the earth's other animals in relation to the human community. One strain of the Hebrew scriptures, which has been called its realistic, this-worldly version, focuses on victory over other animals, while another, more idealized approach envisions peace with and between wild animals. Of these two visions, the first is more prominent in that humans' interests are characteristically seen in Judaism as far more important than the interests of any nonhuman animals. Philo, the first century Jewish historian, employed an image of a continuous war by nonhuman animals against humankind. This image reflects a negative view of the animals not under humans' control, which is matched by a positive view of domesticated animals. There is some irony in this view, for valuing domesticated animals

alone is, of course, merely a form of covert human-centeredness. There is further irony as well in the notion that wild animals are evil, since a common biblical theme is that the disorder in God's creation stems from wrongs committed not by nonhuman animals but by Adam and Eve and, later, an unfaithful Israel.

More positive is the competing notion that other animals were created by a God who is proud of them and feeds them each day. Other animals, then, can be seen quite positively as examples of right order living under God's reign in great contrast to sinful humans whom God must constantly discipline. This more positive notion is often symbolized by the idea that creation has a genuine and abiding goodness because God created it, a belief that underlies the recurring claim in the opening chapter of *Genesis* that God saw creation as "good."

Early Judaism features many protections of the welfare of some nonhuman animals (for example, Exodus 22–23 and 34, Leviticus 22 and 25, and Deuteronomy between 14 and 26). These undeniable protections are limited, however, to primarily (1) the welfare of humans' own domesticated animals, and (2) restrictions on the killing of the few animals which could be sacrificed. Some have also argued that the practice of animal sacrifice benefited nonhuman animals in general (limiting, for example, the total number of animals that could be killed). But the Jewish tradition's practice of animal sacrifice raises, as does all religious sacrifice of nonhuman animals, complex issues. Such sacrificial rituals were thought to relieve humans of impurity generated by humans' violations of moral rules or purity taboos. The obvious question arises, of course, as to why any *nonhumans* suffered on the basis of *human* wrongs. Religious traditions that permit sacrifice of individual animals for such purposes rely on the reasoning that human purity is more important than the nonhuman lives of the sacrificial victims. The question of why only animals useful and pleasing to humans were chosen for sacrifice also begs further inquiry.

The Jewish tradition, particularly by virtue of the body of traditional Jewish law that concerns itself with the suffering of other animals and animal welfare in general (known

as *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, literally, sympathy for life), can claim that, like the best of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, it clearly recognized the ethical aspects of defending nonhuman animals' interests, and that such care is mandated by the core values and insights of the tradition. So even when humans are conceived in the Jewish tradition as separate from the rest of life, there remains an important recognition of a sense of connection. The human-centeredness remains, of course, and subjects the tradition to criticisms along the line of speciesism, but the breadth of positive generalizations about living beings and the number of specific animals mentioned suggest that the early Hebrews noticed and appreciated the extraordinary diversity and interconnectedness of human and nonhuman beings.

Christianity inherited the Hebrew vision that all humans are made in the image of God and have been given dominion over the earth. Early Christians in the formative stages of the tradition also borrowed from the Greek cultural tradition. In important ways the mainline Christian tradition narrowed the Hebrew side of its heritage by playing down the animal-friendly features of the Hebrews' attitudes while at the same time foregrounding the anti-animal aspects of the Greeks' vision that were tied to a special evaluation of humans' rationality. Some early proponents of Christianity, including Origen and Augustine of Hippo, exaggerated humans' distance from other animals. The result over time was a Christian amalgam in which certain obvious connections to nonhuman animals were radically subordinated, as when the mainline Christian tradition claimed that humans are so superior to the rest of creation that humans' morality rightfully excludes other animals' interests when they are in conflict with even minor human interests.

A consequence of this emphasis has been that prominent subtraditions within Christianity have exhibited the persistent refusal to examine the relevance of other animals' actual realities so characteristic of speciesism. An example of this is Pope Pius IX's refusal in the 19th Century to allow establishment of a society for the protection of animals in Rome, when he said to the English antivivisectionist Anna Kingsford, "Madame, humankind has no duties to the animals."

There are, of course, voices within the Christian tradition that have sounded the inherently ethical themes of compassion for and co-existence with other animals. St. Francis and Albert Schweitzer are well known examples, but many others exist. In recent years, the theologian Andrew Linzey has claimed that it is the essence of Christian spirituality to carry out duties of care toward other animals.

While **Islam** also reflects the Abrahamic traditions' emphasis on humans as the centerpiece of the created universe, this influential tradition in various ways nurtures the competing moral insight that nonhuman animals' lives demand recognition by humans. Thus, in Islam tension exists between mainline claims that other animals have been placed on earth solely for the benefit of humans (see, for example, *Qur'an* 5:4, 16:5-8; 22:28; 22:36; 23:21; 36:71-3; and 40:79), and those claims that reflect various ways in which Muslims have recognized that other animals have their own importance as Allah's creatures. For example, Muslims clearly understand nonhuman animals to have souls. *Qur'an* 6:38 also admonishes that other animals have their own communities, and Mohammed himself commented, "Whoever is kind to the creatures of Allah, is kind to himself." Mohammed also compared the doing of good or bad deeds to other animals to similar acts done to humans. *Qur'an* 17:44 notes that nonhuman animals and the rest of nature are in continuous praise of Allah, although humans may not be able to understand this. The commentator Ibn Taymiyah argued regarding the *Qur'an* verses which state that Allah created the world to serve humanity, "In considering all these verses it must be remembered that Allah in His wisdom created these creatures for reasons other than serving man, for in these verses He only explains the benefits of these creatures [to man]." There are, then, important traditions within Islam by which possible arrogance by humans—and speciesism—can be checked.

As in the past with Judaism and Hinduism, the practice of ritualized slaughter of animals for food had a central place early in the tradition's development. Unlike Judaism and most of Hinduism, however, animal sacrifice is still a major part of Islamic practice. A principal example occurs at the end of *Ramadan*, the traditional month of fasting, when

animals are slaughtered for a celebratory feast (the meat is often distributed to the poor). This practice reflects the basic belief that humans are the steward of Allah, which is one version of the claim that other animals, even if not on earth solely for human use, are subordinate to humans and in special instances ordained for humans' use. But even if it remains the case that humans are, in the Islamic vision, the living beings that most truly matter, ethical sensibilities regarding other animals are still given a place of respect. For example, the sacrificial practice includes rules that were originally intended to make the killing as humane as possible. Thus, the tradition provides recognition of the view that other animals have an integrity or inherent value of their own, even when the standard Abrahamic interpretation of humans as the centerpiece of creation is maintained.

Pervasiveness of the Animal Presence Outside the World Religions. The views mentioned above only begin to touch upon the range of possibilities that one finds within religious traditions on the place of nonhuman living beings in humans' lives. The lifeways or totality of daily life and practices as impacted by rituals and beliefs of many kinds of various indigenous peoples contain examples of humans' ability to develop respectful relationships with many kinds of nonhuman living beings. Neihardt begins his famous *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* with observations about sharing and kinship with other animals: "It is the story of all life that is holy and is good to tell, and of us two-leggeds sharing in it with the four-leggeds and the wings of the air and all green things; for these are children of one mother and their father is one Spirit."

Many diverse forms of contemporary nature-oriented spirituality, which tend to be decentralized and to give primacy to individual experience, emphasize nonhuman animals. Communications with specific kinds of animals (often mammals or birds known to be highly social and intelligent, such as dolphins or ravens) are frequently found in these nature-oriented spiritualities, all of which reflect deep concerns for and connections with nonhuman animals as fellow beings and even persons not unlike humans. Some respected members of contemporary science communities (for example, the primatologist

Jane Goodall and the cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff) emphasize the relevance of rigorous empirical study of animals to humans' spiritual quests.

Making Religion More Animal-Friendly

The story of religion and animals is thus a mixed story. But even if careful study of religion and animals can offer prospective defenses of nonhuman animals, the existing literature remains surprisingly one-dimensional. For example, entire books that purport to address a religious tradition's views of "animals" fail to refer in any way to the realities of the animals allegedly being discussed. This is ironic given that much more accurate information has been developed about our nonhuman cousins in the last four decades. These shortcomings reveal that ethical anthropocentrism continues to dominate much of our culture, as when mere images of other animals or those nonhuman animals which have been domesticated animals remain the principal focus because they are, misleadingly, held out as representative or the paradigm of *all* nonhuman lives. Since ethical anthropocentrism in the form of speciesism is also a defining feature of contemporary legal systems, business values, mainline economic theory, government policy decisions and educational philosophies and curricula, it will surprise no one that major religious institutions continue to promote this narrow view.

Some special challenges for supporters and critics of religion on the issue of nonhuman animals include the role of customary views and symbols, the special place of ethical claims in religion, and prevailing practices regarding nonhuman animals.

Identifying the role of inherited perspectives—the influence of inherited conceptions causes many religious believers' perspectives on nonhuman animals to be over-determined by something other than a careful engagement with the animals themselves. Inherited preconceptions often take the form of dismissive generalizations found in those documents held to be "revealed." Too often, one-dimensional sketches of a few local animals have operated as a definitive assessment of *all* nonhuman animals' abilities and moral significance. At other times, inaccurate stories, even when positive, obscure the

actual realities of the local nonhuman animals. Custom and tradition have all too often underwritten inflexible claims about other animals, frustrating believers who wish to engage readily available, empirically-based evidence that contradicts, in letter or spirit, their religion's inherited views.

Animal images that work as symbols in religious art, writing, dance and oral traditions are only sometimes connected to the animals portrayed. Western scholars have often failed to comprehend other cultures' animal symbols because they have assumed that other cultures read nonhuman animals in the dismissive manner of the western intellectual tradition. Such coarse analytic methods have resulted in serious underestimation of earlier cultures' sophistication regarding nonhuman animals. Caution, then, is critically important in studying animal images, which sometimes work primarily, even exclusively, to convey some feature of human complexity rather than any information about the nonhuman beings whose images are being employed.

Ethical concerns have long been central to religious traditions. As the brief review of religious belief above suggests, humans' ability to exercise concerns for "others" has historically included both humans and nonhumans.

Treatment of nonhuman animals is a critical element in assessing any religious tradition's views of other animals. Accounts of the actual, day-to-day treatment of other living beings reveal much about the deepest values in a religious tradition. Brutal treatment of cattle in the daily world outside a temple where worshippers pay homage to an idol in the shape of a bull or cow would suggest that, on the whole, the religion involved does not respect the harmed animals. And kind treatment of bulls and cows in daily matters, even when there are no images of these animals in the local people's rituals, would suggest something more positive. Which of these two religious communities would we say truly valued the cattle?

As carriers of views of the world around us, religious traditions are ancient educators. They profoundly affect the formation of cultural, ethical, social, ecological, intellectual

and political ideas. In this role, religious traditions quite naturally have had a major role in transmitting views of nonhuman animals from generation to generation. This transmission role affects virtually everyone's basic ideas about these beings' natures, as well as their place in, or exclusion from, our communities of concern. An essential task in the study of religion and animals is to find the special roles that religious traditions play in developing or retarding views of the life around us.

Since the death of Augustine of Hippo almost 1600 years ago, the vast majority of scholarship in the western intellectual tradition has gone forward on the assumption that humans are the only animals with intellectual ability, emotions, social complexity, and personality development. This dismissal of nonhuman animals, which remains a centerpiece in today's educational institutions, has been challenged by the rich information developed in modern life sciences. The vibrant debates in modern science regarding the specific abilities of nonhuman animals can be used to frame a peculiar irony. We still talk in our schools of "humans and animals," rather than using the far more scientific "humans and nonhumans" or "humans and other animals." But outside academia and even within some religious traditions, many believers have not adhered to the broad dismissal of nonhuman animals characteristic of the western cultural and intellectual traditions. The best known examples are the Jains, Buddhists, and many indigenous tradition believers who clearly treat other living beings as morally and religiously significant beings.

Thus even as mainline religious institutions have participated in dismissals of nonhuman animals from the agenda of "religious ethics," ethical concerns for nonhuman animals' welfare have continued to have a place in many religious believers' lives. This fact makes it misleading to suggest that all religious believers have dismissed nonhuman animals in the manner of the mainline western intellectual and theological traditions that remain dominant today. Even if anthropocentric biases continue to dominate many modern religious institutions' official pronouncements, then, there remains vast potential for emergence of more informed and open-minded treatment of nonhuman animals in the doctrines, rituals, experiences, ethics, myths, social realities, and ecological perspectives

of religious believers. It is quite possible that when a clearer picture of religion and animals is drawn, it will be a rich tapestry of alternatives for interacting with the earth's nonhuman lives.

This potential remains largely unrealized, of course, for it remains overwhelmingly true today that mainline religious institutions have left unchallenged virtually all practices of modern industrialized societies that are harmful to nonhuman animals. This failure arguably violates the ancient consensus which originated in all religious traditions that cruelty to other beings by humans is to be avoided whenever possible.

Religions, especially as they are ancient and enduring cultural and ethical traditions, have often been individual believers' primary source for answers to fundamental questions like, "Which living beings really should matter to me?" and "Who and what should be within my community of concern?" As such, religion has had profound impacts on countless humans' actions affecting the other, nonhuman living beings that live within and without our communities. Since religions so characteristically govern day-to-day actions involving our "neighbors," religions will continue to have an obvious role in answering questions about whether we are, or can be, a moral species.

This means that religion generally and specific communities of faith can be challenged with some simple, common sense questions. What place will religions give to discoveries about nonhuman animals that come in the future? How might mainline religious institutions respond to their own subtraditions that become fully informed about other animals' realities and humans' current treatment and uses of other animals? Could individual believers or subtraditions prompt mainline traditions to respond to the ethics of contemporary practices such as factory farming and decimation of wildlife? These questions drive at a simple question that challenges both religious and secular outlooks—how can humans, whether within or without religion, see nonhuman animals better?

Because religious institutions have so much influence in cultures across the earth—worldwide, only about one-seventh of people count themselves as non-religious—

religions have within their grasp an important leadership role regarding our relationship to the world around us. An increasing number of religious and non-religious humans have echoed some form of Thomas Berry's insight that "we cannot be truly ourselves in any adequate manner without all our companion beings throughout the earth. This larger community constitutes our greater self." Whether believers, churches and religious institutions will respond to this challenge remains an unanswered question.

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