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### Publisher’s Description

A prominent scientist and scholar documents and explains the thoughts, actions, and legacies of spiritual ecology’s pioneers from ancient times to the present, demonstrating how the movement may offer the last chance to restore a healthy relationship between humankind and nature.

Secular approaches to the environmental crisis have certainly made substantial inroads since the first Earth Day in 1970. Yet, the crisis not only persists, but is getting worse. Happily, there is an additional approach developing—spiritual ecology. Drawing on the wisdom of centuries and a wealth of different traditions, spiritual ecology can generate the profound transformations that are required if ecosanity is to be restored.

An internet search for “Spiritual Ecology” and related terms like “Religion and Nature” and “Religion and Ecology” reveals tens of millions of websites. *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution* offers an intellectual history of this far-reaching movement. Arranged chronologically, it samples major developments in the thoughts and actions of both historic and contemporary pioneers, ranging from the Buddha and St. Francis of Assisi to Wangari Maathai’s Green Belt Movement and James Cameron’s 2010 epic film Avatar.

This foundational book is unique in that it provides a historical, cross-cultural context for understanding and advancing the ongoing spiritual ecology revolution, considering indigenous and Asian religious traditions as well as Western ones. Most chapters focus on a single pioneer, illuminating historical context and his/her legacy, while also connecting that legacy to broader concerns. Coverage includes topics as diverse as Henry David Thoreau and the Green Patriarch Bartholomew’s decades-long promotion of environmentalism as a sacred duty for more than 250 million members of the Orthodox Church worldwide.

#### Features

* Clear, concise, and captivating essays on well-known, as well as little-known, pioneers in spiritual ecology
* Chapter-long treatment of each individual’s contributions, allowing for in-depth coverage
* An extensive resource guide, including films and websites
* An appendix listing approximately 100 pioneers in spiritual ecology

#### Highlights

* Reveals the little-recognized but extensive initiatives at the interface of religion/spirituality and ecology, the environment, and environmentalism
* Traces the historical development of spiritual ecology from many centuries ago to the present
* Highlights the continuing legacy of key pioneers of spiritual ecology
* Counters critics of spiritual ecology and related matters

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### Cover

The image displayed on the front cover of this book is from the Ta Prohm (pronounced ta proh-me), one of the spectacular ancient temples in the famous city of Angkor in the northeast of present day Cambodia. Founded by god-king Jayavarman II, Angkor was the center of the Khmer empire from the 9th to the 15th century. It was a Hindu religious complex with about 100 temples, the most famous being Angkor Wat originally devoted to the Hindu god Vishnu. Angkor Wat was designed as a symbolic model of the universe in the traditional cosmology of Hinduism. The temples of the city of Angkor were appropriated by Buddhism in the 11th century.

Angkor was the culmination of some 1,500 years of historical development. A population of a million people was associated with this site extending over 100 square miles, the largest population concentration in the world at the time. It was sustained by an extensive system of wet rice production with natural irrigation from seasonal fluctuations in the flow of water from the great lake of Tonle Sap. The Khmer empire flourished while Europe was in the Dark Ages, and Angkor remains the world’s largest religious complex.

Construction of Ta Prohm by thousands of laborers was initiated in the late 12th century by the King Jayavarman VII (1181-1218), the last of the great kings of Angkor. It was originally known as Rajavihara (royal monastery of the king). It was intended to transfer merit to the king’s dying mother. The temple occupied about 2.5 acres while the associated settlements covered about 148 acres. The latter included over 3,000 villages and 79,000 people. Subsequently the temple was enlarged by Indravarman II. The cover photo on the book includes the lower trunk and roots of the ancient giant trees associated with Ta Prohm, silk-cotton from the genus *Ceiba* and strangler fig from the genus *Ficus*.

The temples of Angkor became a Yatra, a pilgrimage site for centuries for people throughout much of Southeast Asia. However, it was sacked by Thais in 1431 and by 1432 almost entirely abandoned. During more than four centuries the tropical rainforest gradually recovered and essentially obscured the site. Until recently, most of the stone ruins of Ta Prohm remained embraced by the luxuriant plant growth of the forest. It was initially left that way by French archaeologists and others to show how most of Angkor appeared when this “lost city in the jungle” was discovered in the 19th century. Other sites were more exposed by clearing most of the vegetation.

The decline and fall of the Khmer empire may be explained by a combination of factors, but environmental degradation was an important one and maybe the ultimate one. As Udom Hong (2007) argues: “While it was centuries of conflict with neighboring kingdoms that eventually drove the Khmer Empire into decline, the root cause of the fall of this ancient civilization can be attributed to a gradual degradation in forest, water, and soil resources.”

Angkor was discovered in 1858 and subsequently publicized worldwide by the French explorer and naturalist Henri Mouhot. Restoration began in 1908 and has continued to this day, except during periods of civil strife in the 1970s and 1980s. Famous as a sacred place of awesome religious architecture and art as well as a pilgrimage and meditation site, Angkor was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992. (For a visual tour of Angkor and other remarkable sacred sites of Cambodia, Bali, and Java, see the exquisite documentary film titled Prajna Earth: Journey into Sacred Nature by John Bush).

While the cover photo from Ta Prohm is amenable to various interpretations, for the present book it reflects the connection between spirituality and ecology, the surprising fragility and rapid decline of a great civilization even though it endured for centuries, and the ultimate resilience of nature. In the long-term, the idea that humans can dominate nature is simply a delusion; instead, a far more powerful nature inevitably dominates humans. The resilience of nature is the subject of a captivating book by Alan Weisman titled *The World Without Us*. Grounded in science, he imagines the processes of the recovery of nature if the human species were to become extinct.

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### Motivation

Why did I invest a decade in researching and writing this particular book? The simple answer is out of dire necessity. As an ecological anthropologist for more than four decades I have engaged in researching, publishing, and teaching about the place of humans in nature, often in historical perspective. This work has been grounded in my university studies in geology and anthropology which encompassed courses in biology, ecology, and environmentalism as well.

On the basis of this background and experience I have regrettably come to the sad conclusion that *secular approaches* to reducing, if not resolving, environmental crises from the local to the global levels are vitally necessary, indeed indispensable, but *have proven insufficient*. Often they merely treat superficial symptoms rather than underlying causes. Usually they lack the big and long-term picture. This is not to diminish the diverse multitude of positive initiatives implemented since Earth Day on April 22, 1970, only to recognize that collectively they have been insufficient to really turn things around for the better.

*A far more profound re-thinking, re-feeling, and re-visioning of the place of humans in nature is required*, if the human species is to survive and flourish, and if the degradation of our home planet Earth is to be halted or at least markedly reduced and a greater degree of ecosanity restored. This far more profound concern and the ensuing action can only come from the application of the collective wisdom of humanity in the form of the rich multitude of diverse religious and spiritual traditions of the world. Fortunately, this is actually happening in a variety of ways and levels as this book demonstrates. The only question is whether this will be enough soon enough in order to avoid the impending global catastrophe for humanity and the biosphere. The trends and patterns of the extreme weather events of recent years throughout the world are a dire warning, and it is likely to get much worse in coming years and decades.

The movement I identify as *spiritual ecology has foundations that are deep and substantial, its momentum is accelerating and cumulative, and its ramifications and implications are indeed revolutionary*. This revolution does not have a single leader and it is not violent. My book is an attempt to sample the intellectual history of this quiet revolution and the far reaching practical consequences and significance of it. As the endorsements from prominent scholars and scientists demonstrate, my view is not by any means idiosyncratic.

There is much more than just idealistic hope here. However, only coming decades will reveal whether or not that hope is actually realized with any degree of success, assuming that our species survives that long and honors its self designation as Homo sapiens, the knowing species. I am very pessimistic in the short-term, but guardedly optimistic in the long-term, in light of more than two million years of human biological, cultural, and mental evolution.

### Revolution

#### Revolution?

The phenomenon of spiritual ecology is a revolution in the sense of a movement with growing momentum leading toward a profound transformation with far reaching consequences. Joanna Macy and others refer to this as “The Great Turning” (see Chapter 14). Two tables in this book itemize the specific transformations that are needed to restore ecosanity in the world, if the multitude of diverse environmental problems is to be reduced significantly, and if a global environmental catastrophe is to be averted (see Table 14.1 on pp.109-110, and Table 18.1 on p. 141). Either at least a substantial portion of humankind changes voluntarily for the better in the ways that it relates to nature, or change will be forced on it at a far higher cost and with vastly more suffering. Ultimately, there are only two choices: either continued ecocide, or restoring ecosanity. The fictional movie Avatar disturbingly illustrates such matters, as does in the real world the case of Tibet since the horrors of the military invasion and belligerent occupation and colonization by the Chinese (see Chapters 18 and 21, respectively).

While some individuals may question whether the movement here called spiritual ecology is large enough to be accurately characterized as a revolution, this book samples its substantial scale, diversity, momentum, and effectiveness in a variety of particular cases. One case discussed, for example, is the Green Belt Movement initiated by Wangari Maathai (Chapter 16). However, only in coming decades will history demonstrate the extent of this transformation, its ramifications, and its effectiveness.

The Spiritual Ecology Revolution is diffuse; it has no single center or leader. It is also quiet because it is not widely recognized and it does not involve violence. However, it challenges the very foundation of industrialism, and especially the rampant and rapacious variety of capitalism, with their pivotal fallacy that unlimited growth is possible on a limited base. That base includes not only land and natural resources, most of the latter non-renewable such as fossil fuels, but also the ability of ecosystems and the planet as a whole to absorb pollution and other anthropogenic stresses such as greenhouse gasses. Continuing to operate on the basis of this fallacy would inevitably prove suicidal for the human species as a whole and terribly destructive for its home planet.

This revolution is neither new nor rapid, it has deep roots extending back many centuries to the radical thoughts and actions of the Buddha and Saint Francis of Assisi, among many others (see Chapters 5 and 6, respectively). The Spiritual Ecology Revolution is not happening overnight, just as the Neolithic or Agricultural Revolution did not emerge suddenly. Yet with the obvious reality of global climate change, as proven by the recent unprecedented increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, melting of ice sheets and mountain glaciers, and so on, within decades the Spiritual Ecology Revolution may accelerate markedly in response. Quick fixes through technological applications, government regulations, and other secular initiatives are only treating the superficial symptoms of ecocide, not really facing, let alone effectively dealing with, the root causes. Decades of secular approaches have proven insufficient, even though necessary and with some significant successes.

The above is not idiosyncratic by any means, but reflects a growing convergence of thought from a multitude of diverse sources.\* The present book documents this revolution and many of the revolutionaries who have contributed to it in the past as well as those who are doing so today (see Appendix, pp. 205-206). Many of these individuals have experienced their own personal revolution, a radical transformation as a result of one or more extraordinary experiences in nature. Indeed, much of the hope for the restoration of ecosanity lies in nature’s absolute necessity, overwhelming power, awesome inspiration, and remarkable resilience. Intimate experience in nature has the potential to generate the fundamental re-thinking, re-feeling, and re-visioning of our place in nature that is needed for ecosanity.

\*For some of these sources, among others, see the following entries in the bibliography of the present book: Best and Nocella 2006, Bourne 2008, Foster, et al., 2010, Hawken 2007, Korten 2006, Leslie 1996, Macy and Johnstone 2012, McKibben 2010, Robinson 1994, Speth 2008, and Wilson 2003. Also, see “New” under “Supplemental Information” in this website.

Because this Revolution is also spiritual, as in Spiritual Ecology, some notes on the subject of Spirituality are relevant here too.

#### Spirituality?

Spirituality means different things to different people. Lloyd Burton’s (2002, 21) conception is especially useful: “… spirituality refers to that realm of human experience characterized by various mixtures of three qualities. First, spiritual experience is either non-rational or extra-rational in nature; it is a way of knowing that is not accessible exclusively through calculative thought— although the rational process may well bring one to its doorway. Second, such experience is transcendent: it involves a sense of moving beyond the rationally constructed boundaries of the self. Third, such experience is unitive, involving a sense of unity with existence and forces underlying its continuing creation.” (For an especially useful discussion of the distinction between religion and spirituality see Taylor 1991a, 175-178).

Spirituality is undeniably an elemental and often pivotal manifestation of human nature; even atheists, agnostics, and secular humanists may be spiritual (Sponsel 2012, 149-154). Spirituality is far more inclusive than religion, encompassing individual as well as organizational ideas and actions. A survey of 14,527 new students in 136 colleges and universities in the United States of America (USA) during 2003-2010, revealed that the majority were spiritual, but not necessarily religious (UCLA Higher Education Research Institute 2010). Another extensive survey by the Pew Research Center on “America’s Changing Religious Landscape” concludes that since the last project of its kind in 2007, the number of religiously unaffiliated adults has increased by about 19 million. By now there are around 56 million religiously unaffiliated adults in the United States, a group more numerous than either Catholics or mainline Protestants (Smith 2015). These two surveys highlight one reason why it is important to consider not only religion, but also spirituality (cf., Chang and Boyd 2011, Gottlieb 2012, Speck and Hoppe 2007).

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### Endorsements

“This is a subject that should have been documented long ago–this wise and careful book fills an important gap, and does it with real power.”  
- Bill McKibben, author *Eaarth*

“This book is a tour de force. No one has attempted to bring together such a wide range of people and movements under the rubric of Spiritual Ecology. The result is deeply engaging for scholars and activists alike. Sponsel has given us a gem.”  
- Mary Evelyn Tucker, Forum on Religion and Ecology,Yale University

“Sponsel, a noted scholar of ecological anthropology, traces a broad, ecumenical “religion of nature” from deep roots in the past to modern advanced thinkers. He argues persuasively that we would not have an environmental crisis today if we treated the earth with respect and reverence. The book offers a fascinating tour through the spiritual landscape, and its extensive notes give readers a rich guide to further reading and reflection.”  
- Donald Worster, author of *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (2008)

“*Spiritual Ecology* is essential reading today, when most of the world seems swept up by the economic dimensions of the environment. Providing a welcome antidote to the current materialistic approach, Leslie Sponsel’s keen reminder of the spiritual component of nature is both timely and a reminder that the most effective reasons for conservation come from the heart, not from the wallet.”  
- Jeffrey A. McNeely, Senior Science Advisor, InternationalUnion for Conservation of Nature

“Leslie Sponsel’s new book is an excellent guide to spiritual ecology. It is much more: it is an evocation of spiritual ecology—its forms, its dynamic development, and its promise for the contemporary world. Dr. Sponsel, a leading authority on this field, provides a historical overview of the development of ecological and environmental visions in religion from earliest times to the present. He surveys major religions, and, in particular detail, modern writers who have developed new philosophical understandings of religion-environment relationships. This book serves both as a wonderful introduction to the field and an inspiring essay on the basic tenets, values, and goals of spiritual ecology.”  
- Eugene N. Anderson, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of California Riverside

“I am delighted with this inspiring panoramic introduction to the remarkable people who have personally contributed to the on-going “quiet revolution” that will help solve our contemporary problems of conflict, poverty, and environmental degradation. This source book could only have been produced by an anthropologist with firsthand experience with life in the tribal world and in the ancient great civilization cultural traditions of South andSoutheast Asia. This is an absolute treasure trove of cross-cultural ideas and sources for beliefs and practices that respond constructively to global environmental problems and related social justice issues. I immediately went to the library and the Internet to learn even more about particular organizations and people. As an anthropologist who has been concerned with indigenous people and the environment for many years, I am especially pleased with how sensitively Sponsel treats the “ecologically noble savage” issue, and the well-deserved importance he gives to animist beliefs generally.”  
- John H. Bodley,Washington State University

“At a moment in history when political and technological solutions to the environmental crisis has been shown to have their limits, Leslie Sponsel has compiled a wonderful collection of essays on a spiritual approach to ecology. Fundamentally re-envisioning the relationship between the human and nature, *Spiritual Ecology* draws on the wisdom and practical insights of global spiritual traditions from antiquity to the present. This is a foundational text that includes inspirational classics as well as critical essays that explore how a spiritual ecology can deeply inform our debates about our relationship to our planet.”  
- Duncan Williams, School of Religion,University of Southern California

“Humans possess an inherent inclination to find meaning and purpose through their relation to the world beyond themselves, to what we call nature. This marvelous and informative book explores this need from its roots in tribal cultures through its expression and distortion in the modern era. It is only recently that people have come to believe human progress and civilization means transforming and transcending our evolutionary roots in the natural world. This book importantly explores and leads the way toward a new movement, “spiritual ecology,” bringing us back to our spiritual roots in nature.”  
- Stephen R. Kellert, Yale University Schoolof Forestry and Environmental Studies

“As Sponsel so ably demonstrates, there has always been a dimension of environmentalist thought that is founded on the understanding, explicit or implicit, that nature is sacred. As activists and policy makers seek ways of averting environmental disaster, the time is overdue for this mode of thought to enter the mainstream. This much needed book provides the kind of understanding that might help it to do so.”  
- Kay Milton, Professor Emerita of Anthropology, Queen’s University Belfast, Ireland

“In a world where religious beliefs are too often seen as the source of deadly tension and violent conflict, Leslie Sponsel’s *Spiritual Ecology* offers a helpful and healing contrary view. Aptly subtitled, *A Quiet Revolution*, this provocative collection of essays serves as key resource and guide to the global sources of inspiration, thought, and action that collectively constitute a life-sustaining path for humanity.”  
- Barbara Rose Johnston, Senior Research Fellow, Center for Political Ecology

“Awareness that the natural world is our essential ground of being, to be revered as sacred, goes back to the dawn of the human journey. Today this awareness returns in the growing recognition that we cannot fully face or adequately respond to what our species is doing to the biosphere without a spiritual apprehension of our non-separateness from it. That is the quiet revolution to which Leslie Sponsel’s *Spiritual Ecology* brings a fresh and fascinating overview. To the unfolding history it provides, this lean and lovely book takes the archetypal form of Tree, letting us follow–from roots to branches, leaves and fruit–the organic emergence of our native wisdom.” Joanna Macy, Ph.D., author, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess we’re in Without Going Crazy.*

“Sponsel beautifully integrates the different dimensions of spiritual ecology: theology, morality, social movement, and personal experience; and he does so with a fine eye to its global and multicultural nature. This always clear and often moving book deserves wide readership and serious attention.”  
- Roger S. Gottlieb, Professor of Philosophy, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, author of *A Greener Faith and Engaging Voices*.

“Leslie Sponsel’s “*Spiritual Ecology*” is a great guide to the wide landscape of the environmental movement. The book brings together the scientific, philosophical, political and religious aspects of environmentalism. If you want to see a bigger picture of the multi-dimensional view of sustainability and spirituality, then this is the book for you; it is informative, educative and evocative.”  
- Satish Kumar, Editor-in-Chief, Resurgence magazine

“Spiritual Ecology is a must read for anyone interested in having harmonious and peaceful relationships with (M)other Nature. As we rewild our hearts we must feel the deep interconnections that exist between ourselves and other beings and diverse and magnificent landscapes. The quiet revolution must begin and end in our heart. We suffer the indignities to which we subject animals and Earth and everyone benefits when we openly and widely express dignity, respect, kindness, compassion, peace, and love.”  
- Marc Bekoff, University of Colorado; author of *The Emotional Lives of Animals, Wild Justice*, and *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons For Expanding Our Compassion Footprint*.

“Whether one agrees or disagrees with the themes or theses presented within this book, it is bound to become one of the foundational texts in the spiritual ecology movement. It is written in a dramatic manner with personal insights from ethnographic research along with details regarding the main personalities, both religious and secular, who have contributed to this movement.”  
- Raymond Scupin, Director, Center for International and Global Studies, Lindenwood University.

#### Awards

* Winner in the Science category at the annual Green Book Festival, San Francisco, CA, May 17, 2014

### Quotes

*For Contemplation: Quotes extracted from book.*

“Mystical experience of nature can be of particular relevance to our troubled age, bringing deeper into our consciousness and emotions the logic that nature sustains humanity as humanity must, in turn, sustain nature. Rationality alone, however, cannot be our guide in the task of restoring our environment. A spiritual connection to nature must inspire the emotional commitment that is the yin, complementing the yang of intellectual understanding.”  
- Carl von Essen

“Trees are extraordinary revelations of the spirit in nature. And, given the multitude of ways that trees and their products benefit and enrich human culture, they are an especially appropriate symbol of the interdependence of spirit and nature.”  
- Steven C. Rockefeller and John Elder

“If we reconstructed human spirituality painstakingly, we would end up with a mangnificent tree whose branches go in so many directions, yet all trying to touch the heavens.”  
- Henryk Skolimowski

“Animists are people who recognize that the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human, and that life is always loved in relationship with others. Animism is lived out in various ways that are all about learning to act respectfully (carefully and constructively) toward and among other persons.”  
- Graham Harvey

“For Indigenous peoples, land cannot be owned, bought, or sold. She does not belong to us, we belong to her. We are born out of this land; we spend our lives on this land as her guests; and after death we go back to that same land. . . . Although Indigenous peoples around the world vary widely in their customs, traditions, rituals, languages, and so on, land is considered by all as the center of their universe, a parent, a giver of life, the core of our cultures, rituals, and traditions.”  
- Nomalungelo I. Goduka

“Nature is seen by humans through a screen of beliefs, knowledge, and purposes, and it is in terms of their images of nature, rather than of the actual structure of nature, that they act. Yet, it is upon nature itself that they do act, and it is nature itself that acts upon them, nurturing or destroying them.”  
- Roy A. Rappaport

“With its philosophical insight into the interconnectedness and thoroughgoing interdependence of all conditioned things, with its thesis that happiness is to be found through the restraint of desire in a life of contentment rather than through the proliferation of desire, with its goal of enlightenment through renunciation and contemplation and its ethic of non-injury and boundless loving-kindness for all beings, Buddhism provides all the essential elements for a relationship to the natural world characterized by respect, care, and compassion.”  
- Bhikkhu Bodi

“May all be well and secure,  
May all beings be happy!  
Whatever living creatures there be,  
Without exception, weak or strong,  
Long, huge or middle-sized,  
Or short, minute or bulky,  
Whether visible or invisible,  
And those living far or near,  
The born and those seeking birth,  
May all beings be happy!”  
- Metta Sutta

“Scientists tell us that we have enough technology to save our planet. . . . Yet we don’t take advantage of this new technology. . . . The technological has to work hand-in-hand with the spiritual. Our spiritual life is the element that can bring about the energies of peace, calm, brotherhood, understanding, and compassion. Without that, our planet doesn’t stand a chance.”  
- Thich Nhat Hahn

“There is no question that Francis was in advance of his age, as he anticipated all that is liberal and sympathetic in modern times: the love of nature, the love of animals, the sense of social compassion, the sense of the spiritual dangers of affluence.”  
- Henryk Skolimowski

“. . . the wellspring for the passion that drove public speech and action in behalf of the environment was in large part religious and ethical. Environmentalism, in short, had become one version of nature religion in the lingering shadow of American transcendentalism.”  
- Catherine L. Albanese

“Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine trees. Their sermons on the mountains go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish.”  
- John Muir

“For what lies inside the human being is the whole spiritual cosmos in condensed form. In our inner organism we have an image of the entire cosmos.”  
- Rudolf Steiner

“But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. . . . Does the tree then have consciousness, similar to our own? I have no experience of that. But thinking that you have brought this off in your own case, must you again divide the indivisible? What I encounter is neither the soul of a tree nor a dryad, but the tree itself.”  
- Martin Buber

“ . . . the upsurge of Spirit is the only plausible way to stop the ecological destruction of our planet. Even people who have no interest in a communal solution to the distortions in our lives will have to face up [to] this ecological reality. Unless we transform our relationship with nature, we will destroy the preconditions for human life on this planet.”  
- Rabbi Michael Lerner

“Both our present science and our present technology are so tinctured with orthodox Christian arrogance toward nature that no solution for our ecologic crisis can be expected from them alone. Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. We must rethink and refeel our nature and destiny.”  
- Lynn White, Jr.

“… how to view man’s relationship to the environment is one of the great moral problems of our time.”  
- K. S. Shrader-Frechete

“Humanity may destroy the possibilities for life on earth unless the freedom and power that we have acquired are channeled in new creative directions by a spiritual awareness and moral commitment that transcend nationalism, racism, sexism, religious sectarianism, anthropocentrism, and the dualism between human culture and nature. This is the great issue for the 1990s and the twenty-first century.”  
- Steven C. Rockefeller and John C. Elder

“The present urgency is to begin thinking within the context of the whole planet, the integral earth community with all its human and other-than-human components.”  
- Thomas Berry

“What I really believe is the only hopeful relation between our life and the whole of life is one of reverence and respect and of feeling at one with it. The other attitude which is the one our society is based on is devastating and it is killing the earth and it is killing us too.”  
- William Stanley Merwin

“On the last day of the world I would want to plant a tree.”  
- William Stanley Merwin

“The central purpose of the Work that Reconnects is to help people uncover and experience their innate connections with each other and with the systemic, self-healing powers of the web of life, so that they may be enlivened and motivated to play their part in creating a sustainable civilization.”  
- Joanna Macy

“… the ecological problem of our times demands a radical reevaluation of how we see the entire world; it demands a different interpretation of matter and the world, a new attitude of humankind toward nature, and a new understanding of how we acquire and make use of our material goods.”  
- His All Holiness, Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch.

“It gradually became clear that the Green Belt Movement’s work with communities to repair the degraded environment could not be done effectively without participants embracing a set of core spiritual values.”  
- Wangari Maathai

“We still have time to fix this [ecocrisis] and we still have time to make it better, but really what is needed here is that the human race needs to wake up and look forward with the sense that we’ve got to change the way we live. . . . . What we have to do is to transform ourselves yet again into something that has never existed on this planet before, which is a kind of techno-indigenous people. . . . . We will use high technology and science to provide us with the energy we need, but they’ll be sustainable solutions. Nature is not our enemy, it is our sustenance and we need it, and we need nature healthy for us to be healthy and to survive long-term, and that’s the realization we have to come to and that’s the next stage in evolution that we have to reach.”  
- James Cameron of Avatar film

“Learn well, then we will see if your insanity can be cured.”  
- Neytiri’s mother admonishes Jake in the film Avatar

“We must learn to reverence and hold in awe the sacredness of the earth as our beloved community and household rather than view it merely as the backdrop or setting for self-contained, self-regarding human enterprises. Deeply rooted religious sensibilities and commitment are required.”  
- Donald A. Crosby

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.”  
- Albert Einstein

“To reenchant nature is not merely to gain a new perspective for its integrity and well-being; it is to throw open the doors to a deeper level of existence.”  
- Alister E. McGrath

“It is my dream that the entire Tibetan plateau should become a free refuge where humanity and nature can live in peace and in harmonious balance. It would be a place where people from all over the world could come to seek the true meaning of peace within themselves, away from the tensions and pressures of much of the rest of the world.”  
- His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama ofTibet

“No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal chage in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions.”  
- Aldo Leopold

“We live in all things. All things live in us. . . . We are grateful. We rejoice in all life.” excerpt from “A Prayer of Gratitude” of Earth Ministry

### Reviews

“… the author demonstrates the existence and universality of spiritual ecology and makes an appeal for its cultivation.”  
- Kammer, C.L., 2013 (April), CHOICE 50(8):1480.

“This is a valuable and challenging work that deserves wide reading and consideration.”  
- Anderson, Eugene N., 2013 (April), Current Anthropology 54(2):245-247.

“In fact, what qualifies as spiritual ecology for Sponsel is quite wide-ranging and encompasses actions, motives, and attitudes… .Whenever spiritual ecology solutions to environmental problems are shown to work, I am fully ready to accept them.”  
- Vayda, Andrew P., 2014, “Book Review: Leslie E. Sponsel: Spiritual Ecology, A Quiet Revolution,” Human Ecology 42(2):347–348.  
- Sponsel, Leslie E., 2014 (October), “Reply to Vayda’s Review,” Human Ecology 42(5):801-802.  
- Vayda, Andrew P., 2014, “Against Spiritual Ecology: Reply to Sponsel’s Comments,” Human Ecology 42(5):803–805.

“This is a wide-ranging and impressively informed book…. The book brings into comparative focus a splendid collection of spiritually inspired persons and movements whose exemplary ideas, convictions, and actions have significant bearing on the field of environmental thought and action…. his is a hopeful book….”  
- Crosby, Donald A., 2014, “Book Review: Leslie E. Sponsel: Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution,” Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture 8(4):511-513.

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* Christie, Douglas E., 2013, *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 429.
* Grim, John, and Mary Evelyn Tucker, 2014, *Ecology and Religion*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, pp. ix, 208, 214, 256.

### Word Map of Spiritual Ecology

## Footer

### Concept

Spiritual ecology is a complex. diverse, and dynamic arena at the interfaces of religions and spiritualities on the one hand and on the other environments, ecologies, and environmentalisms with intellectual, spiritual, and practical components.

### Book

Drawing on the wisdom of centuries and a wealth of different traditions, spiritual ecology can generate the profound transformations that are required if ecosanity is to be restored.

### Author

Author documents and explains the thoughts, actions, and legacies of spiritual ecology's pioneers from ancient times to the present, demonstrating how the movement may offer the last chance to restore a healthy relationship between humankind and nature.

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