



Caring for Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis

Max Oelschlaeger

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Many environmentalists believe that religion has been a major contributor to our ecological crisis, for Judeo-Christians have been taught that they have dominion over the earth and so do not consider themselves part of a biotic community. In this book a philosopher of environmental ethics acknowledges that religion may contribute to environmental problems but argues that religion can also play an important role in solving these problems - that religion can provide an ethical context that will help people to become sensitive to the environment and to elect leaders who are genuinely responsive to the ecological crisis. Examining a broad range of Western religious traditions - from conservative Christianity and orthodox Judaism to Goddess feminism and nature religion - Max Oelschlaeger provides a sociolinguistic analysis of their creation stories and finds environmentally positive aspects in each of them. He asserts that religious discourse in the public arena can offer a way for such environmental issues as biodiversity, pollution, and population to be addressed outside the realm of special-interest politics. And he urges local churches to make "caring for creation" a theme for worship in their services; the majority of Americans, says Oelschlaeger, will discover an environmental ethic only through their religious faith.

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