

A look at the New Cosmology

- Westerners generally imagined God as transcendent to creation, as illustrated
- We saw ourselves as separate from, and above, the rest of nature
- We believed that we lived on a planet that we were to be stewards of



- What was important was our relationship to God and to other human beings
- The earth is where we lived – it was not an integral part of things
- The earth and the universe were totally material



- Western economics, law and ethics function out of this reality
- Morality is concerned with human behaviour only towards God and each other. Treatment of the earth has not generally been considered a moral issue
- Corporations can legally poison air, water and soil, forests and species can be obliterated because our morality and laws are human-centered rather than life-centered

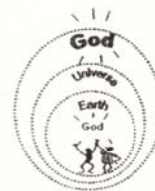
The New Cosmology

- Sees God as intimately revealed in the diversity of creation – yet infinitely more than the whole of creation
- Humans are recognised as an integral part of Earth, not superior to it
- The "our" in "our relationship to God" is the entire community of life, rather than humans in isolation
- The universe reveals God



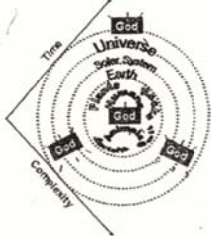
The New Cosmology

- God is acknowledged to be embodied in creation rather than totally separate from it
- We are deceived if we think that we can love God and honour God's holiness without loving others (humans and non-humans) and honouring the holiness of nature



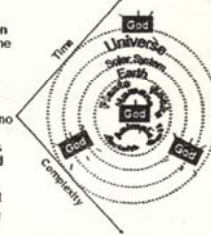
The New Cosmology

- Understands that everything is changing
- We are part of a Time-developmental universe
- As time continues, creation becomes more complex and more capable of realising its inner, spiritual potential
- God is seen as both Transcendent and Immanent



The New Cosmology

- Everything that makes up Earth is seen as a revelation of God and necessary for the healthy functioning of the universe
- Humans have no existence outside of the ecological cycles of Earth. Earth has no existence outside of the universe. The universe has no existence outside of God
- Everything is totally inter-related and inter-dependent
- The universe has a spiritual dimension as well as a material one



Another difference between these cosmologies is the way each understands the organisation of creation. The diagram which follows is an example of what is sometimes referred to as the Western hierarchy of value

The Old Cosmology

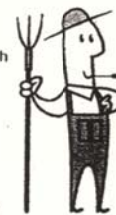
- Most in the Western world learned to see the value of things in an unchanging, patriarchal and hierarchial way. God was Father; men were superior to women; male children were more important than female children; animals were above plants; plants were above insects, worms, and bacteria; and at the bottom of the pyramid were the inanimate rocks and elements of Earth. We believed that this was the way God set things up in the beginning and intended that they remain
- Most Western institutions assume this perspective (we have been rarely conscious of it).

The Old Cosmology

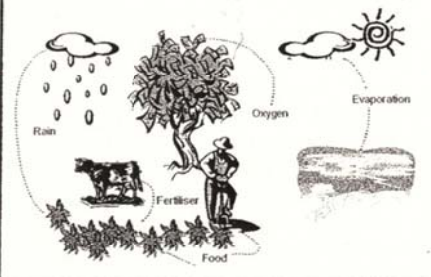


The Old Cosmology

- In the old cosmology we may have perceived an individual human being (farmer) as illustrated. This is a misleading abstraction – there is no such thing as an isolated human being – except in our imagination
- Any human being exists only as a member of the wider community of life, air, water and soil
- To see ourselves separate from the rest of nature is no longer valid or viable



The New Cosmology: A Truer Image



The New Cosmology

- ☛ We are each an integral member of the entire life community
- ☛ We are neither stewards nor caretakers – nor anything else that assumes we are separate from nature
- ☛ We have no existence apart from the living earth
- ☛ We are the Earth

The New Cosmology

We are the self-conscious and spiritually aware organisation of *elements of the earth*.

- ☛ We are totally dependent upon the health of the wider community of life for our own health
- ☛ Our own destiny as individuals or as species and the destiny of the earth are identical
- ☛ What we do to Earth, we do to ourselves

Adapted from Earthspirit - Michael Dowd
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