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## From Ecology to Spirituality and Social Justice<sup>(1)</sup>

John Coates

### Abstract

*Many social workers, and individuals from all walks of life, are deeply concerned about the environment and the problems created by pollution, habitat destruction, and the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources, to name a few. The motivation to take part in action to protect the environment rests on many and varied factors including opposition to local destruction and concern for our species' survival. For many people environmental action has contributed to a deepening of their appreciation of the interdependence of all things; this experience can expand toward a deeper sense of one's connectedness to Earth, and to everyone and everything on it. This sense of connectedness provides a spiritual foundation for strong convictions in support of ecological and social justice. Concern for the environment expands toward a holistic conception of the relationship of people and nature, and can be a foundation for action against all forms of exploitation.*

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### Introduction

The more deeply I search for the roots of the global environmental crisis, the more I'm convinced that it is the outer manifestation of an inner crisis that is, for the lack of a better word, spiritual.

Al Gore (1992, 98)

In recent years efforts have been made to encourage social workers and social work students to become more sensitive to the relationship between people and the natural environment (for example, Besthorn, 2000; Coates, 2003; Hoff & McNutt, 1994). The goals of these efforts are to have social workers who are both environmentally aware and able to link environmental problems to the kinds of issues with which social workers deal. Considerable evidence points out that, if current patterns of environmental destruction continue, the quality of life as we have come to know it and our day-to-day social interactions, will change (see Berry, 1988; Daly & Cobb, 1989; Meadows, Meadows, Randers and Behrens, 1972).

This paper argues that involvement in, and reflection on, activities to protect the environment can lead to a shift in world view. In the author's experience, the more deeply he has explored environmental issues, the more he has brought into question the foundational beliefs of our profession and society. Such a shift can be fundamentally spiritual<sup>[2]</sup> as it draws into question our relationship with nature, the role of humans on the planet, and what is of ultimate value. The transition from a modern to holistic and inclusive world view, can be a spiritual transformation<sup>[3]</sup> that opens social workers to a deeper understanding not only of environmental justice, but also of social justice. For social workers this awareness of interdependence can expand the scope of social work practice.

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## Environmental Destruction is a Societal Crisis

Few people in our society today are unfamiliar with concerns regarding, what generally is known as, the environmental crisis.<sup>[4]</sup> Individuals from all walks of life, including social workers, have heard about, for example, the decimation of Canada's East Coast Cod fishery, the decline of Pacific and Atlantic wild Salmon, climate change, air pollution, contaminated drinking water, habitat destruction, and the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources, to name a few. This awareness has led to global efforts such as the Kyoto Protocol, and local community action to address the consequences or the causes of ecological destruction. For example, St. Thomas University (2003) recently established, as have several other North American universities, an advisory committee on "matters relating to the implementation and maintenance of environmentally-sensitive choices in the management of the University's resources." However, in Canada and I suspect in the USA, initiatives to preserve the environment or to combat environmental decline, have not garnered widespread support. The reason for this rests, I think, on the reality that environmental destruction, just like social injustice, is a societal problem stemming directly from the values and beliefs (modernism) that are inherent in the structure of modern society.

The world view of modernism facilitates consumerism, materialism, anthropocentrism and the exploitation of people and nature (see Berry, 1988; Spretnak, 1997). While modernist values have enabled humans to gain considerable autonomy as individuals and as a species, this has taken place at the expense of both human integration with the rest of nature and the viability of Earth's creative processes. "This detachment is like a 'virtual reality' where people have the impression they are living in a 'real' world when in fact it is totally synthetic and isolated" (Coates 2003, p. 93).

Edward Goldsmith (1998) supports this conclusion when he argues that in modern society, all the benefits – what is considered real wealth – are human made. He states that "to maximize all benefits and hence our welfare and our wealth, we must maximize development or progress" (1998, pp. xi-xii). Within such a belief system nature is but a context for the human, a background for the more important human events, a provider of resources, and is without innate value. Nature can be used and destroyed as humans devour or pollute increasing amounts of natural resources as we turn them into products for trade (benefits). Within modernism it makes sense to clear-cut a forest if one can earn more interest from the money invested from the sale of the timber than from sustainable logging practices (Rees in Suzuki, 1999); it is normal to dump toxic effluent into a river or the atmosphere if it increases a product's marketability; it is normal to pay poverty level wages and for people to work in sweat-shops if such practices enhance profits.

This reduction of almost everything to commodity relations (Polanyi, 1957) includes human relationships. For example, almost every government and large business has established departments of human resources. Goldsmith argues that what we see as normal is a system that is "totally aberrant and destructive" (1998, p. xv). He argues that just as an abandoned child who is forced to survive on the streets of a large city accepts that living in alleys and sewers and surviving by prostitution and theft is normal. so also do modern humans see as normal polluted rivers, air pollution, poverty, and watching violence in films and games (1998, p. xii). So pervasive is this system that most of us "moderns" see the emphasis on progress and growth and the related ecological and social exploitation as normal, as expected and beyond question (such is the nature of paradigms - see Barker, 1990; Kuhn, 1970). Modern society places almost divine value on economic growth, progress, and the need for an ever-expanding gross-domestic product (GDP). Both nature and people are seen primarily as commodities – as resources with monetary value.

As a result, the world order is governed by the primacy of accumulation, and supports the removal of barriers to trade and the political monoculture of capitalistic democracy (Korten, 1995, 1999). The offspring of this ideology include the exploitation of people and the environment, an increased gap between the rich and the poor, an increase in low-income employment opportunities, and a decline in the state's compassion for those who are disadvantaged (see Chossudovsky, 1998; Latouche, 1993).

In the absence of a holistic and inclusive framework, modern society and the social work profession have not been able to see that the root of exploitation is modernism and the industrial process that adheres to the mistaken belief that abundance will solve the problem of want (and of all other problems as well).

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## The Political is Personal

The motivation to take part in action to protect the environment rests on many and varied factors.<sup>[5]</sup> However, a major reason for a lack of widespread commitment toward environmental action stems from the modernist understanding of nature. Nature is regarded primarily “as the embodiment of resources for exploitation, management, restoration and visitation.” (Keefe, 2003, p. 2). Nature is seen as a location for human activity, an element to be brought under human control, and as a resource for human production. In modern society, nature is seen as “other.” Dualistic thinking (see Coates, 2003; Spretnak, 1997) which leads to a disregard for the impact of human activity on nature and the tendency to treat all things, both human and non-human, as commodities, is one of the primary forces that contributes to ecological and human exploitation.

Technology, consumerism and materialism have certainly led to many benefits, especially for people in economically privileged countries (see Chossudovsky, 1998). However, they appear to have become ends in themselves, as society has become so embedded in modernity that we have been unable to step back from it, evaluate it and critique it. “Modernity acts as an ‘ideological prosthesis’ (Livingston, 1994) standing in the way of our unity with nature and supporting a belief in our superiority over it” (Coates, 2003, p. 58). For many people individual identity becomes a “commodity identity” (Keefe, 2003) void of concern for the larger environment and the impact of one’s lifestyle on others. As a result, many people have limited perspectives on life’s purpose and what is of ultimate value. For example, many young people see their life path as simply getting an education to secure a good job, so they can make lots of money, so they can buy more things (see Swimme, 1997).

While the society at large and the majority of its citizens have not yet fully recognized the significance and pervasiveness of dualistic thinking, many people are coming to the realization that what happens outside mirrors the thinking on the inside. The political is certainly personal (see Bricker-Jenkins & Hooymann, 1986). If we look carefully and critically at the environmental crisis and seek out its causes, we can see that the root of the crisis is situated in the values and beliefs of modern society which have made everything a commodity and rendered economic worth to be the primary, and often sole, source of value (Clark, 1989). The patterns of exploitation that impoverish the Earth and create the environmental crisis can, be seen as the same patterns, values and beliefs which contribute to the exploitation of people. If ecological and social justice are to be attained, humanity requires what Berry (1988) refers to as a “new story,” perhaps even a “radical re-storying” (Kenyon & Randall, 1997), that can eliminate the dualism and exploitation inherent in modern society.

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## **Transition: Toward a Holistic World View**

When people become involved in action to protect the environment, and begin to reflect on this activity, they begin to challenge the values and beliefs of modernism. This challenge is the beginning of a transition of world views (see Harris & Morrison, 2003), from the dualistic, anthropocentric, and materialist world view of modernism to a world view in which “all in nature” is seen to have value, each in its own right. Within this holistic world view, humans act on their awareness and concerns about the impact of their behaviour. The separation of people from nature, people from each other, and people from the transcendent (however understood), are seen to be false dichotomies. In a similar way we begin to see the inappropriateness of the right of certain humans to dominate and make subservient both nature and other people. This transition toward a holistic conception of the relationship of people and nature toward a world view in which humans and the rest of nature are seen as interdependent and intimately connected is of such significance that it can be, at its roots, a spiritual transformation. To seriously confront environmental problems is to challenge deeply held societal and personal beliefs – our world view. The modern person is challenged to shake off our what Macy (1989) refers to as the “false self-concept” and “mistaken identity” which have us seeing ourselves as possessive, competitive individualists, quite separate from each other and the Earth. When people confront their sense of identity and sources of meaning, deeply spiritual questioning frequently follows. This perspective transformation (Mezirow 1978) is a transition through which humans break free of a sense of superiority and separateness.

This consciousness reflects a deeper sense of our connectedness to Earth, and to everyone and everything on it. This growing awareness of the interdependence of all things challenges individualism and anthropocentrism, and can lead to a new understanding of human/Earth relationships and of the role of the human on the planet. The awareness of everything being connected and of everything being part of the creativity<sup>[6]</sup> of Earth’s evolution, can be a spiritual awakening that can provide a foundation for action against all forms of exploitation.

This “experience of profound interconnectedness with all life” (Macy, 1990) occurs when a personal sense of identity transcends separateness and self-interest, and becomes synonymous with the well-being of all life. People become empowered “to be partners in the unfolding prosperity and generosity of Earth’s creative

process" (Coates, 2003, p. 63). This cosmology calls humans to a new role that is in "solidarity with all other creatures of the earth" (McFague, 1993) and to seek what Berry identifies as "mutually enhancing human-earth relationships" (1988 p. xiii). The transition can be understood as an awakening to our interconnectedness with all things, to what Naess (1989) refers as "ever-widening identification," and what Homer-Dixon (2001) expresses as a "species-wide sense of humanity." It is an identity in which humans see themselves, along with all other life forms, as integral to Earth and as part of the Earth's unfolding.

However, consumerism, materialism, domination, and economism, for example, are so embedded in our culture that they are adhered to with "religious fervour" (Swimme, 1997, p. 12). Swimme argues that to move forward humans will require a "larger, vaster, and deeper context – a deeper cosmology" (1997, p. 12). An intense sense of personal connectedness can motivate people to seek an escape from consumerism's powerful hold. If large numbers of people come to the conclusion that we, along with all plants and animals, all mountains and rivers, are on a one-of-a-kind, terminal, creative journey – if we regard the Earth to be a sacred [7] place – then might we have the insight and passion required to treat the Earth and all of its inhabitants as fellow participants in the journey of life.

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## Steps toward Transformation

The transformation, however, from a dualistic to a holistic world view involves "a profound change of mind and heart" (O'Murchu 1997, p. 26): a shift from human-centred to Earth-centred, from individualism to individuality-in-community. The transition involves a shift in our thinking and in the internalized collection of stories/memories/symbols and their meanings. If we take this change seriously it is important, first of all, to challenge our sense of superiority and arrogance which sees humankind in control of and superior to other species. The modernist story of progress, technology and economic growth (along with exploitation, centralization and imperialism), supports ecological destruction and social injustice. No alternative is possible within its economic and materialist limitations. The drive toward development, along with attitudes of superiority, forestalls the realization of a long-term solution.

Secondly, we are challenged to discover how people can achieve fulfilment in the context of a healthy and thriving Earth. The understanding required to support Earth on its creative journey can stem from our ability to reject the self-centred competitiveness of modernity, and to identify one's own well-being with the well-being, growth and fulfilment of all other people and all of creation. Such an understanding led Livingston (1994) to conclude that ecological destruction is a failure in self-development.

When a person develops holistic thinking and explores relationships and interdependencies, he/she quickly realizes the interconnectedness of all things; this leads to a questioning of the interconnections in one's own life. A sense of personal responsibility emerges when we begin to question not only the role of humans and our society but also the personal role that each of us plays. The consciousness of unity and interdependence can manifest itself in our reasoning, but, as Naess (1989) points out, it shows itself primarily in our ethics - our responsibility for our conduct toward others. Clark (1989), Earley (1997), Griffin, (1990), O'Murchu (1997), and Spretnak (1997) point out that many of the personal attributes required in the transition can be understood as the consequence of spiritual development. These attributes include compassion and empathy for people who are different from ourselves, the loss of a self-serving and self-interested individualism, a willingness to act for the common good, and identification with all of nature, all of humankind and Earth itself. As a result, superficial human wants would not necessarily be seen as superior to, and may be seen as subservient to, the needs of other species.

The transition is advanced through learning about exploitation, and acting against ecological and social injustices. At a societal level we begin to understand that injustice involves not only such things as large industrial pollution and disasters, but it is also connected to inequality arising from international trade agreements, international finance, agricultural practices, and lifestyle. At yet another level, we begin to understand how very small yet complex interactions have impacts of enormous proportions. For example, research reveals that a deficiency of folic acid (Picard, 2003) or the presence of trace elements of toxins (Colborn, Dumanoski & Myers 1997) at certain moments in fetal development can cause severe and life-long defects in people and other animals.

The transformation or shift is realized when we feel discomfort in response to the abuse of the Earth and of people - e.g., loss of a fishery, extinction, homelessness and famine. What was a commodity identity has shifted toward what Earley (1997), Elgin (2000) and Hubbard (1998) called "global consciousness," an awareness in which our well-being is tied to the well-being of all. We no longer view ourselves as separated, isolated beings. Human fulfilment is not limited to our own self-actualization (though this is indeed part of the process); it expands beyond self to incorporate a compassion for the needs of all people and species on

Earth. It can lead to a conscious participation in the personal and communal struggle to live in the knowledge of our "common connection with the community of life" (Elgin 2000, p. 114).

Wholeness and coherence is one's own life and relationships are essential foundations of both individual freedom and coherence of society. ...When we are spiritually whole and experience the caring support of community, thrift and concern for the well-being of the whole become natural parts of a full and disciplined life. One of the greatest challenges is to re-create caring communities that nurture our wholeness.

David Korten (1999, 146)

Such a deeply ecological spirituality can be understood to be the realization or experience of a connectedness to all things; and a sense of awe and wonder at the spectacular diversity, complexity and creativity that exist in the life-forms and geology of the planet. It involves a world-view which not only values all life forms and all of Earth, but sees humans as but one of the many species which have equal claims to existence and to fulfillment. A spirituality rooted in ecology incorporates an inclusiveness and interdependence that leads humans to challenge both the commodification of everything, and the foundational assumptions of modernism. It leads us to re-examine human identity, the relationship of humans to the rest of nature and most fundamentally, the role of the human in Earth's evolution.

An "authentic global spirituality will also have a profound sense of the divine consciousness that informs every species and every atom of the earth and universe" (Mische 1982/1998, p. 8). Elgin captures this reality as he states "when humanity consciously recognizes itself as a single community with responsibilities to the rest of life, both present and future, we will cross the threshold to a new level of maturity and a new culture and consciousness will begin to grow in the world" (2000, p. 131). This consciousness can lead to a search for sustainable economic and social practices and, in developed countries in particular, to an awareness of the need for voluntary limits on consumption and personal wants due to the needs of others and the Earth (Earley, 1997; Macy, 1990; Naess, 1989). Humans can find meaning as we transcend ourselves in response to the larger issues which history places before us.

A global consciousness that incorporates the well-being of Earth and of present and future generations, is inherent in traditional indigenous world-views: for example, the emphasis on harmony, wholeness, connectedness and balance, to name a few (see Four Worlds Development Project, 1982; Hart, 2002). Such perspectives offer a wealth of understanding and practices which can become part of what Hubbard (1998) refers to as a "life enhancing global society" and what Macy and Brown (1998) refer to as a "life-sustaining society."<sup>[8]</sup>

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## Social Work

While there are notable exceptions (for example, Berger & Kelly, 1993; Besthorn, 1997, 2000; Coates, 2003; Hoff & McNutt, 1994), the social work profession overall has been absent from environmental discourse. Social workers commonly view social problems as quite distinct from environmental ones, and few social workers are in the front lines of environmental education, protest, or research. Large numbers of social workers, like most people in our culture, focus on human nature and social interaction which are seen to be quite separate from nature which is benign background for human concern and activity. As a result, the profession has generally ignored the physical environment. Many professions and industries share this lack of consideration as "western Eurasian" societies (Diamond, 1997) are embedded in the modern story complete with its beliefs of progress, individualism, dualism, domination, technology and materialism.

Social work developed within and functions within modernity, and has been constrained by its assumptions and boundaries. Professional ethics and conceptions of humanitarianism and human fulfillment for example, are defined within modernity. "Humanitarianism is operationalized as compassion for those who fall by the wayside of industrial progress, equality is viewed as an equal distribution of wealth, and personal fulfillment is seen to equal success with regards to ones' acquisitions and status in industrial society" (Coates, 2003, p. 58). While structural, feminist and anti-oppressive approaches have attempted to deal with some of the problems which are endemic to modern society, they have largely focussed on the unequal distribution of money, status and power. For the most part, however, these positive developments have taken place without serious critique of the parameters of the world view within which social work functions.

Social work's narrow, human-centred understanding of environment (see Besthorn, 1997; Coates, 2003) has led the profession to use ecological metaphors while seeing the environment as almost exclusively social.

Social work has lacked a deeper, more inclusive framework with which one can step back and critically analyze what is taking place in society and our professional lives. As a result, social work might be called a “domesticated profession” (Coates 2003) which has been dependent on modern society for its existence and, in turn, has been limited by the roles and definitions it has been assigned.

Lacking a holistic and inclusive framework the profession has not been able to see that it is the characteristics of modernism - consumerism, materialism, anthropocentrism along with the industrial process itself - that reinforces misplaced confidence that abundance will benefit everyone. The search for long-term resolution of ecological and social injustice points to the need to move to a broader and more encompassing level of analysis. Such a level can be found in a global consciousness nurtured by a holistic and inclusive spirituality.

A more holistic conception of human/Earth relationships, provides an alternative path for social work and all of humanity. Several writers who have explored alternatives to modernism from a variety of perspectives, such as evolution (Sahtouris, 1989, 1995; Swimme & Berry, 1992), anthropology (Eisler, 1987), philosophy (Naess, 1989), sociology (Clark, 1989), theology (McFague, 1993), spirituality (O’Murchu, 1998; Spretnak, 1997), eco-feminism (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plant, 1989), and futurists (Hubbard, 1998; Milbrath, 1989), have arrived at a fundamental shift in values and beliefs. These alternative perspectives may provide social work with critical insight into its values and beliefs, as well as potential areas and directions for practice.

Within a foundation that stresses the unity and connectedness of all things, social work practice can begin to operate from an underpinning quite different from modernity, which “has been incapable of establishing human-environment relations that would guarantee our future on the planet” (Tester, 1994). When we see ourselves as living in a sacred place, respect for our community and ecosystems become central features in all aspects of social work.

Within this global consciousness many social work interventions can be expanded and utilized (see for example, Global Alliance for Deep Ecological Social Work). The direction of social work shifts from that of fitting in with modernity to one of sustainability, and participation in the creativity of Earth. Inclusion, interdependence, and cooperation in community enriching activities (see Naess, 1989) become central, as living becomes more celebratory, less isolating and material. The manner in which individuals carry out their lives and interact with others, as well as how social workers carry out their professional work, become essential aspects of individual and social transformation. Issues of well-being, participation and equality – long-standing concerns of radical and structural social work – rise in importance as social justice incorporates environmental justice. The well-being of each person is dependent on the well-being of others.

Such a foundation places importance on three general professional social work activities. The first of these is helping people to see all life as sacred and to see the importance of personal choices and actions. Empowerment, education and consciousness raising are essential interventions to overcome powerlessness. People can be helped to recognize their skills and talents, along with their contributions and responsibilities to community (both social and ecological). More specific activities include:

1. Supporting personal and communal empowerment through which people see themselves as competent and capable of impacting their environment (see Saleeby, 1997; Dominelli, 1997).
2. Learning about the impact of personal behaviours and choices (lifestyle) on our health and the health of the ecosystems in which we live.
3. Modelling in our families, work and community, a culture of sustainability (for example, by walking rather than driving, buying local and fair-trade products, and taking David Suzuki’s “Nature Challenge” (Suzuki, 2003).
4. Choosing behaviours that reduce the tendency toward violence.

A second general activity that should be emphasized is taking a significant role in developing social structures that support the well-being of all life. This includes, for example:

1. Working to ensure that people have sufficient resources to meet their basic needs.
2. Supporting local organizations which work toward local control of local organizations for local benefit (such as community supported agriculture, community gardens, credit unions and co-ops).
3. Establishing and preserving “green space,” parks, and wildlife reserves that give priority to sustainability over profit.
4. Supporting community initiatives that promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

A third general activity to note is challenging those structures that block individual and communal well-being. This includes:

1. Resistance and "holding actions" (Macy & Brown, 1998) through which people boycott businesses that, for example, produce weapons, fail to support fair trade or whose practices exploit workers or endanger the environment.
2. Conducting research, writing reports and supporting protests and letter writing to government officials in efforts to bring about policies and legislation promoting social and environmental justice.
3. Protesting international trade agreements that jeopardize the ability of governments to implement social and environmental legislation; and 4. lobbying all levels of governments to insist that all household, municipal and industrial sewage be effectively treated.

Social work is in a solid position for it to assume a substantial role in the movement to bring about not only social justice but Berry's "mutually enhancing human-earth relationships" (1988, p. xiii). The profession has an understanding of human suffering and community breakdown, a history of individual and community interventions, and progressive critiques of social policy (for example, Mullaly, 1997; Pulkingham & Ternowetsky, 1996). However, to proceed toward a more active role in the movement toward sustainability, social work must progress beyond both focussing its critique primarily on the social, and advocating only for adjustments and improvements to industrial-growth and market-dominated social structures. For example, in its educational and scholarly activity, social work can expose and challenge the foundational values and beliefs of modernity's industrial growth imperative and present an alternative. Such an alternative perspective, values the interdependence of all things and the need for human actions to enrich and sustain, rather than be destructive toward, life on Earth.

The opportunity exists for humanity to assume a positive role in Earth's creative evolution. However, the potential to create a more hopeful future requires a willingness on our part to see and act as persons intimately connected with all life. A major challenge is to shift our source of meaning and ultimate value away from the individualism of consumerism and materialism, toward the community of life. This transition is one of such magnitude that, to be sustained, it requires a deep spiritual foundation through which we not only identify the roots of so much suffering and destruction, but also the alternatives that can lead people to act in support of the "not yet but possible future" (Mische 1982/1998, p. 13). When humans see themselves, all creatures, and Earth in its entirety, as sacred, we can become conscious participants in the transformation toward ecological and social justice. Social work can play a visionary role as it brings this potential to the attention of society.

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## Endnotes

[1]. This manuscript is based on a presentation made at the Second Annual Canadian Conference on Spirituality and Social Work, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, June 4-5, 2003. Parts of this paper are adapted from Coates, J., (2003) *Ecology and Social Work: Toward a New Paradigm*, Halifax: Fernwood Press. The author wishes thank Brian Ouellette, and the journal reviewers, for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[2]. Spirituality is seen as integral to being human; it is the quest for meaning and purpose, to understand what is of ultimate value. It is different from religion which is seen as the structures built around certain beliefs and values. Religion can be a means of spiritual expression and experience.

[3]. This paper focuses on a spirituality that is inclusive rather than exclusive (Baum, 2003). This author writes from a deeply ecological spirituality, but other writers have come to similar conclusions from Aboriginal spirituality (Hart, 2002), feminism (Macy & Brown, 1998; Plant, 1989) and economics (Hawken, 1993).

[4]. The environmental crisis occurs as levels of consumption and pollution exceed the Earth's capacity to replenish and renew.

[5]. Motivations include survivalist fear arising from concern regarding the impact that habitat destruction and pollution have on people, and a desire to preserve the beauty of nature or to conserve resources for human use (see Eckersley, 1992).

[6]. This view sees the creative energy which informs the Universe as present in all things. It is pantheistic as opposed to a concept of the divine as totally separate from nature, or of the divine as existing only in nature (pantheism).

[7]. Sacred as used here can be understood as related to your spiritual nature. It may also be seen as an expression of the will of the divine, however this is understood. This evolutionary journey has been considered a sacred process: as "cosmic revelation" (Teasdale, 1991), the "primary scripture" (Berry 1988), and the "revelation of the Ultimate Truth" (Griffiths, 1982).

[8]. In contrast to the "Industrial Growth Society," Macy and Brown (1998) see a "Life-sustaining Society" as one which "operates within the "carrying capacity" of its life-support system, regional and planetary, both in the resources it consumes and the waste it produces." (16).

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John Coates, PhD is an Associate Professor at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, NB, Canada.  
Email [jcoates@stu.ca](mailto:jcoates@stu.ca)

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