

First the Gathering of Matter in Explosive Densities: preaching that nurtures ecologically responsible lives¹

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I begin with a poem that introduces the theme of this paper:

First the Wind upon the Water

First the wind upon the water
as the formless sea is stirred,
then the source and core of being
speaks the potent primal word:

Let there be light, let there be sky,
let there be land and living things,
each according to its kind
having fins or hoofs or wings.
Let the multitude of images
in all your creatures shine
with the hidden, holy likeness
of the one who is divine.

First the gathering of matter
in explosive densities
whose compacted masses scatter
through the vast immensities:

Then waves of light that strike the earth
and rains and winds and thunderstorms
turn the dust we share with stars
to a host of living forms.
Thus the generating processes
of atoms, suns and cells
waken that same sense of wonder
that the ancient Scripture tells.

First the wind upon the water,
first the starry cosmic flame,
then the word of the creator
working in the human frame:

Let there be love, let there be grace,

let health and peace and justice rise,
 let your science feed your faith
 and your knowledge make you wise.
 Center all your aims and purposes
 in what this world displays:
 that the source and core of being
 calls for everlasting praise.²

The poem was commissioned by a church that had installed a new stained glass window. It featured images of the cosmos: the big bang and explosions of supernovas were interwoven with images drawn from the creation stories in Genesis. It was a congregation with many scientific thinkers. They did not take Genesis literally, but they had a great appreciation for its theopoetic depth. They interpreted the creation stories as myths expressing important insights about the meaning and purpose of life. They commissioned me to provide an anthem text, to be set by a composer, that their choir could sing at the dedication of the window. The commission clearly stated the anthem must blend the Genesis creation myths with the theory of the big bang and the way life evolved on this planet.

I begin with this poem and the story behind it because I want to provide a positive example of a religious community that celebrates a scientifically informed faith. For unless a community of faith welcomes science it will in many cases not be ready for preaching that nurtures ecologically responsible lives.

My goal in this paper is to present a number of practical strategies for developing preaching that is congruent with contemporary understandings of the cosmos and the desperate need for eco-justice on planet earth. I am taking the word “preaching” here in the broadest sense: it includes creating and delivering sermons, but it also embraces giving witness to the Divine, through hymns, prayers and other acts of worship.

I am a theologian, a poet and a flutist, not a scientist, but I have a great love for science. In recent years I have been impressed by how science has demonstrated the interconnectivity of the universe: “[Humanity] is . . . related inextricably to all reality, known and unknowable . . . plankton, a shimmering phosphorescence on the sea and the spinning planets and an expanding universe, all bound together by the elastic string of time. It is advisable to look from the tide pool to the stars and then back to the tide pool again.”³

That is a quotation from John Steinbeck cited approvingly by the astrophysicist Martin Rees in his book: Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe. Steinbeck captures the sense of wonder that I experience in learning about the physical nature of things. I draw on modern science not to prove the validity of faith and religious practice, but to develop a theopoetic idiom that celebrates new insights and understandings about the nature of the material world. and demonstrates how they enlighten and expand the meaning and ethical implications of faith.

The term “theopoetic” comes from the theologian Amos Wilder (1895-1993).⁴ Wilder coined the term “theopoetic” to describe imaginative, theological language that is congruent with how we picture and understand the material world, realizing that our understanding has kept changing over time. We need a theopoetic language for preaching, that employs the insights of science to enlighten and expand the landscape of the heart, especially the visionary imagination of faith. If we lack this theopoetic idiom, our preaching on the eco-crisis may be too limited to a recital of the facts and the needs for action. Scientific facts and why and how we need to act do belong in sermons. I do not question that for a moment. But merely on their own bare facts do not motivate people to act. To quote from an earlier conference presentation by Laurel Kearns: “People do not change their lives for a pie chart but they do for a story.”⁵ What moves them is when the scientific facts engage the meaning, the passion, the visionary power that lie at the core of a vital faith. As Larry Rasmussen has put the matter: “Religion is no substitute for science. Yet few people will die for data. Even warnings replete with mounds of data fail to change minds and hearts. Something which speaks to our yearning to our patterns of death and rebirth. Some such power as this needs to join with science.”⁶

For me that power is the theopoetic idiom of religious faith. As a preacher and religious poet who loves science and who loves the deeply biblical traditions in which I have been raised, I am aware of the enormous imaginative energies that are required to create a new theopoetic idiom of science and faith for our time. For example, I think of how utterly different my cosmology is from that of the ancient psalmists who write about the “foundations” of the earth and the “firmament” of the heavens. The word “firmament” in Hebrew means literally a strip of beaten metal. The firmament was thought to hold back the waters above the heavens so they would not flood the earth.

Instead of a firmament and a stable cosmos, astrophysics describes an incomprehensible vastness spanning billions of light years and still expanding. We human creatures live on a little whirling, watered stone, that Michael Benson, in his book, *Far Out: A Space-Time Chronicle*, describes as “this miniscule mote of oxygenated, irrigated Earth.”⁷ The difference between ancient and contemporary cosmologies gives rise in me to a completely different theopoetic. I love the splendor of the words of the psalmist: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” (Psalm 19: 1, KJV, the translation I learned as a child) But I live in a different cosmos. The image of “this miniscule mote of oxygenated, irrigated Earth” awakens in me a new theo-poetic expression for hymnody:

How Miniscule This Planet

How miniscule this planet
 amidst the stars and night:
 a mote that floats in vastness,
 mere dust that catches light,
 yet, God, you count of value –
 of boundless, precious worth –

all creatures who inhabit
this tiny, mite-sized earth.

Together faith and science
extend what we can see
and amplify our wonder
at all you bring to be:
how energy and matter
have coalesced in space
as consciousness and meaning,
and hearts that yearn for grace,

And from that wonder blossoms
a wonder that exceeds
the reach of human dreaming
for meeting earth's deep needs:
the Christ in whom all matter,
all energies cohere,
is born upon this planet
and dwelling with us here.

By Christ we are connected
to every shining star,
to every atom spinning,
to all the things that are,
and to your very being,
around, below, above,
suffusing each dimension
with light and life and love.

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In this hymn I attempt to model in a highly compressed theopoetic form a strategy that preachers need to take in addressing issues of eco-justice: namely, to draw upon both science and faith in order to expand and enlighten the landscape of the heart. The hymn employs the theological affirmations of incarnation and the cosmic Christ while expanding and enlightening their meaning by placing them in a universe infinitely greater than that of the original biblical writers. The Bible is not abandoned or diminished, but the meaning of its revelation is enlarged. Holding together science and faith we discover anew what our ancestors in the faith affirmed: "There is always more light to break forth from the Word of God."

More light is exactly what the landscape of the heart can always use. By "landscape of the heart," I mean that core of meaning, passion and visionary power that religion has tapped into across the centuries, sometimes for good, sometimes for ill.

Thomas Berry understood the power religion has for engaging the best and worst capacities of the believing heart. Berry writes that in transforming the relationship between human beings and planet earth we need to remember: “Only religious forces can move human consciousness at the depth needed. Only religious forces can sustain the effort that will be required over the long period of time during which adjustment must be made.”⁸ To be honest, those religious forces can easily be commandeered for purposes exactly the opposite of working for eco-justice, and they often are commandeered by appeals to the Bible and tradition that attempt to refute scientific studies of toxicity, climate, biodiversity loss. Because of the powerful way religion shapes the landscape of the heart, we need homiletical strategies for engaging that landscape in ways that call on tradition while presenting the scientific evidence for environmental destruction. I believe these strategies can help us create sermons, prayers and hymns that nurture ecologically responsible lives on “this miniscule mote of oxygenated, irrigated Earth.”

When I use the word “tradition” in naming these strategies I mean the constellation of scripture, religious symbols and practices, history and thought that give identity and purpose to the community that is formed by them.

Here are three strategies, I will discuss:

1. Identify those parts of the tradition that are congruent with the ecological values of respect for the whole planet and all its creatures
2. Correct misreadings of the tradition that have hidden its positive ecological values
3. Realize how the tradition, especially the Bible, points beyond itself and opens us to new truth and insight

In the discussion that follows, I will be drawing heavily on a recent monograph by John Holbert, a professor of homiletics at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. His work is entitled: *Preaching Creation: The Environment and the Pulpit*.⁹ Although Holbert does not name the strategies I have listed, they are implicit in his work, and I could not have named them so clearly without him.

All of these strategies can help to feed a theopoetic idiom that enlightens and expands the landscape of the heart with the insights of science and the values of eco-justice.

Strategy 1: Identify those parts of the tradition that are congruent with the ecological values of respect for the whole planet and all its creatures.

There are significant portions of the tradition that are not anthropocentric. They do not assume humanity to be the central and crowning achievement of creation. Instead, they place humanity in the broader context of all earth’s creatures and material elements. For centuries there have been theopoetic expressions of a

holistic and holy relationship between creation, God, and humanity. This ecologically sensitive theopoetic of the church is manifest in certain psalms from the Bible and hymns from the church. Although they assume a very different model of the cosmos from our own, they reveal wisdom that is congruent with our scientific understanding of the interconnectivity of the ecological web. Here are two of my favorite examples from the Psalms.

²¹The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

²²When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens.

²³People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening.

²⁴O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great.

²⁶There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. (Psalm 104: 21-26)

I am struck by the fact that the one group shown praying in these lines is not humanity, but the lions that “roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.” Indeed, human beings and their daily routines are not granted any special status by the psalmist. They are nothing less but also nothing more than the lions and the whales, and the multitude of other animals that inhabit the entire psalm. To use the terms of Thomas Berry, the psalm is “biocentric” rather than “anthropocentric.” The psalm embodies what Berry describes as “the realization that humans form a single community with all the other living beings that exist upon the earth.”¹⁰

The writer of Psalm 148 extends that single community to the elements of the weather, the topography of the land and the plants that grow on it:

*Fire and hail, snow and mist,
storms, winds,
mountains, hills,
fruit trees and cedars,
wild beasts and tame,
snakes and birds,
princes, judges,
rulers, subjects,
men, women,
old and young,
praise, praise the holy,
this name beyond all names. (Psalm 148: 8-13, ICEL)*

I love the continuous flow from the natural world to our human world and its hierarchies of governance and power: *snakes and birds* are followed immediately by *princes and judges, rulers, subjects*. Holbert observes that in this psalm: “No longer is [the non-human world] merely our playground, a backdrop in front of which the human drama is played out. We can see ourselves as part of the immense drama of God’s vast cosmos, all created to praise the maker. . .”¹¹

There are also places in western hymnody, where the holistic spirit of these psalms manifests itself. I think especially of St. Francis of Assisi and his hymn of 1225 “All Creatures of Our God and King.” The title itself is revealing, instead of “All *people*,” we sing “All *creatures*.” In Assisi’s poem the sun and moon, the wind, water and fire and mother earth herself, take center stage in the first four stanzas. In Assisi’s vision, the elements of the world are more than material objects. They are subjects whom the poet addresses directly.

*Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice*

Assisi, writing eight centuries before the environmental movement, embodies what John Cobb writes: “The universe must be understood as a communion of subjects, and the story of its rise and development must be told in these terms.”¹²

In Assisi’s hymn the exhortation to human beings does not come until the fifth stanza, as if to remind us: long before you human creatures arrived on the scene, sun and moon, wind and water and fire were already here praising God. And in case we failed to get the point, the fifth stanza tells us to “take our **part**” in the chorus of praise that is already sounding from the primary elements and heavenly bodies. In Assisi’s hymn we are not soloists. We are members of a choir. We have a part, not a grand aria.

Assisi creates a theopoetic language that can reach the landscape of the heart. He models for us how we can preach in ways that nurture ecologically responsible lives. Assisi gives us a theopoetic language that nurtures a posture of being that respects all the elements of the universe. His hymn is a theopoetic expression that holds every element of the universe to be precious.

This holistic, interrelated understanding of creation is also strikingly present in some New Testament passages. For example in Romans 8: 22-23, Paul states that “the whole creation” groans along with us, waiting for God’s future revelation. Nature shares with us the deepest yearnings of our hearts. We are prayer partners with nature! What do you think our prayer partners, the whales, the porpoises, the sharks, the fish, the squid, the octopuses, the algae, the coral reefs –what do you think they are praying in their ocean home that is now slimed with oil and stifled with toxins? Notice here how once again our ecological concern enlightens and expands the landscape of the heart of faith. We no longer think of prayer as confined either to our personal interior life or our interpersonal relationships.

Prayer now extends into a relationship with all of creation and that awakens us to our moral responsibility to our prayer partners. For when we pray with others we come to realize that at the very core of our being we are interconnected, and to mistreat them as objects is to violate the sacred nature of prayer.

Another striking New Testament example of the holistic, interrelated understanding of creation that we found earlier in the Psalms and St. Francis is the Christ hymn in Colossians 1: 15-20. The hymn celebrates the cosmic Christ:

*all things have been created through him and for him . . .
and in him all things hold together.*

The opening verses about the cosmological dimensions of Christ's being frame the conclusion of the hymn about the crucifixion:

*Through [Christ] God was pleased
to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through
the blood of his cross. Col. 1: 20*

Usually when preachers preach about the cross or the blood of the cross, they speak about the meaning of Christ's death for the individual believer. But according to this hymn, that is far too constricted an interpretation of the cross. The biblical hymnist does not sing "God was pleased to reconcile to himself all human beings" but "God was pleased to reconcile to himself *all things*, whether on earth or in heaven." The cosmic Christ brings cosmic reconciliation. Therefore, if we claim to be followers of Christ, we must follow Christ in the work of cosmic reconciliation, in the work of restoring the right relationship between the elemental materiality of the biosphere, and all the forms it takes as soil and water, plant and animal, air and mineral. Yet again notice how our ecological concern enlightens and expands the landscape of the heart of faith. In this case it helps us reclaim a theme that is already present in the Colossian hymn but that too often has been ignored or buried by received interpretations – which brings us to our second major homiletical strategy:

Correct misreadings of the tradition that have hidden its positive ecological values.

Every preacher brings to the Bible as a whole and to particular biblical texts certain presuppositions, many of them based on traditional readings that have taken root in the landscape of the heart. This is the case not only for preachers, but also for congregations. Thus, John Holbert makes a distinction between the way the scriptures "have been read" and the fact "that the theme of creation is far more prominent in the Bible than has usually been recognized."¹³ Holbert observes that the predominant reading of the Bible presents it "as a story of human sin and salvation,

the 'historical' activity of 'God with us [human beings].'"¹⁴ Without denying the insights of that traditional reading, Holbert demonstrates how the traditional reading often buries the positive ecological values of particular scriptural texts.

Let us consider two examples of Holbert's uncovering the positive ecological values of a text that have been lost in translation. Genesis 2:15 reads in the New Revised Standard Version *The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.* Holbert offers an alternative rendering: *The Lord God took the 'adam and placed it in the garden of Eden to serve it and protect it.* Holbert then observes: "When we translate the [Hebrew] verb 'till' or 'cultivate,' we imply directly that nature always serves us; it has no intrinsic value. . . when I say my role is to 'serve and protect' what God has made, I say that nature/creation can set the agenda of my action, that I can act *with* it, on its behalf, rather than *on* it, because of my determined needs. Let us no longer speak of ourselves as stewards of creation. Let us say rather that we are partners with creation."¹⁵

The shift from tilling to serving the garden is a theopoetic transformation of how we understand our relationship to creation. The crops still have to go in, but now, as partners with creation, we seek

*to sow without abusing
the soil where life is grown,
to reap without our bruising
this sunlit mossy stone.*¹⁶

In the later part of his book, Holbert turns to the New Testament, giving substantial attention to the Gospel of John and in particular one of its most famous passages, John 3: 16-17: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.* After acknowledging that some scholars do not find John congenial to the values of eco-justice, Holbert then turns to the work of Vicky Balabanski who offers an extensive analysis of the word "cosmos" which is translated in NRSV as "world." After studying Balabanski's work, Holbert concurs with her that "there is no objective reason" to reject that the meaning of "cosmos" in John 3: 16-17 is "the totality of creation." "When read like this, the classical understanding of the incarnation, 'God with us,' must be extended to 'God with the totality of creation.'"¹⁷ Holbert sees what radical implications this reading has for the theopoetic idiom of the church. He goes so far as to suggest that we need to rewrite the incarnational portion of the Nicene Creed so it reads: "For the salvation of the totality of creation, including us, [Christ] came down from heaven."¹⁸ Holbert is not being impious or clever. He is writing out of a deep conviction that "Until we can enshrine these biblical ideas into our publicly stated claims of faith, our conversion to lovers of and workers for the natural order cannot be made real."¹⁹

I believe that Holbert is very close to the nerve of the problem we face in preaching about the ecological crisis. When we try to do so, we discover that far

more is involved than simply getting straight the scientific facts and the why and how of reforming how we live, as essential as those matters are. What we discover is we are up against an intellectual/spiritual split in our consciousness, something that the British theologian and mystery writer, Dorothy Sayers, wrote about, years before we became keenly aware of the planet's precarious situation. Sayers writes: "Our minds are not infinite; and as the volume of the world's knowledge increases, we tend more and more to confine ourselves, each to his special sphere of interest and to the specialized metaphor belonging to it. The analytic bias of the last three centuries has immensely encouraged this tendency, and it is now very difficult for the artist to speak the language of the theologian or the scientist the language of either. But the attempt must be made, and there are signs everywhere that the human mind is once more beginning to move towards a synthesis of experience."²⁰

Let me give a small example of what Sayers describes as "the move toward a synthesis of experience." Over the last twenty five years I have been commissioned by churches, schools, universities and choral societies to provide texts that incorporate modern science while resonating with the spiritual depth of religious tradition. One example will have to suffice.

Several years ago a Unitarian church commissioned me to write a hymn celebrating their 100th anniversary. They wanted a hymn of praise that was resonant with tradition but fully cognizant of modern scientific thought, and that did not "over-define" God since there was a wide range of belief in their congregation. In short they wanted what Dorothy Sayers describes as "a synthesis of experience," the same synthesis that I find in John Holbert's work, and the same synthesis that is required for preaching that nurtures ecologically responsible lives. The hymn:

Each breath is borrowed air,
not ours to keep and own,
and all our breaths as one declare
what wisdom long has known:

*to live is to receive
and answer back with praise
to what our minds cannot conceive:
the source of all our days.*

The sea flows in our veins.
The dust of stars is spun
to form the coiled, encoded skeins
by which our cells are run:

to live is to receive. . .

From earth and sea and dust
arise yet greater things,
the wonders born of love and trust,

a grateful heart that sings:

to live is to receive. . .

And when our death draws near
and tries to dim our song,
our parting breath will make it clear
to whom we still belong:

*to live is to receive. . .*²¹

My father always told me, “If you borrow something, be sure you return it in excellent condition.” What about our borrowed air? Will it be in excellent condition for those who borrow it after we are gone? “Borrowed air” is an example of developing our theopoetic idiom to reach into the landscape of the heart and nurture ecologically responsible lives.

I turn now to strategy 3: Realize how the tradition, especially the Bible, points beyond itself and opens us to new truth and insight.

As enthusiastically as Holbert works to affirm those places in scripture that can nurture “our conversion to [being] lovers of and workers for the natural order,” he also acknowledges the limitations of the Bible: “We should always remember that not everything the Bible says may be ultimately helpful as we consider God’s creation.”²² I want to go even further than that, and point out it is unbiblical to limit ourselves to the Bible. Here is how Marjorie Hudson, a Master of Divinity student puts the matter in the novella, The Parable of Ten Preachers: “Before there was a Bible, there was God. If we can’t find in the Bible what we need in a sermon, the Bible teaches God is loving enough to help us find it somewhere else. That is what I like best about the Bible; it is not as limited as the people who want to limit God to the Bible. The Bible keeps pointing beyond itself to stars, to mountains, to rivers, to wind and flame, to Jesus, who [won’t stay put in a grave] or between the covers of any book. So if you want to be biblical, you have to get outside the Bible in the same way the Bible gets outside itself.”²³

I believe Marjorie Hudson stands on very firm ground. The prologue to the Gospel of John does not begin: In the beginning was the Bible, and the Bible was God . . . and the Bible became flesh. No. The prologue begins: “In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was God . . . and the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us.” Our English translation of Logos as “word” does not begin to capture the full etymological richness behind the Greek, including allusions to the figure of Wisdom and her role in the process of creation. Therefore some times the way to create sermons that nurture ecologically responsible lives is to get outside the Bible and to return to the primal experience of wonder and astonishment brought on by contemplating the facts of physical existence. For the state of wonder and astonishment is the womb of both science and faith. Thomas Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker demonstrate this in their book and film Journey of the Universe.

I will take just one small passage from their work and then preach a snippet of a sermon that works with their insights. “The expanding universe was causing matter to move apart from the tiny seed point of its beginning. Gravity was drawing some of this matter back together again. . . This double process is wonderfully reminiscent of life, of the movement of breath and of blood. Our lungs expand and contract. Our heart expands and contracts.”²⁴

I have read that the human heart is about the size of our fist and that on the average it beats one-hundred thousand times a day. Make a fist with your right or left hand and start opening and closing it as if the fist were your heart beating to push the blood through your arteries and veins. [I wait in silence, opening and closing my fist for about 15 seconds while the congregation is doing the same.]

Getting tired yet? Don't stop. This is your heart! [I stop working my fist to indicate the congregation can stop after all.]

If a heart beats one-hundred thousand times a day, that means in a week it beats seven-hundred thousand times. In ten weeks: seven million times. And if we multiply ten weeks by five we realize that in fifty weeks our heart beats thirty-five-million times. But we still have two weeks to go to reach a year, and we have not allowed for all the times we went jogging or chased our cat or dog. So in round figures our hearts beat forty-million times a year. That means by the time we are ten, our hearts have beat four-hundred million times. By the time we are twenty: eight-hundred million times. By the time we are thirty, ONE BILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND times! I am well past TWO BILLION FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND heart beats. What about you?

I have a simple question: have you ever gotten a bill for all these heart beats?

I have never received a notice saying: “Mr. Troeger, you are sixty-seven years in arrears on your heart beat charges. Pay up now or we are shutting off service.”

To exist is grace. To exist is a gift. And to know this in the landscape of the heart is to be filled with holy wonder, the holy wonder that brings to birth preaching that nurtures ecologically responsible lives.

¹ Originally delivered as a presentation for the “Summer Symposium: Religion and Environmental Stewardship” at Yale Divinity School, June 5-7, 2012.

² Thomas H. Troeger, *Borrowed Light: Hymn texts, prayers, and poems*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 37. In *Borrowed Light*, the last four lines of the second stanza read: “Let the complemental images/of men and women shine/with that whole and perfect likeness/of the one who is divine.” But I have now revised the poetry to honor the variety of human sexualities and to provide a less anthropocentric understanding of the world of creatures.

³ John Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* as quoted in Martin Rees, *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*, New York: Basic Books, 2000, p. 1.

⁴ Amos Niven Wilder. *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imaginatioon*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

⁵ Laurel Kearns, speaking as part of a panel on “Responses to Climate Change” at the “Summer Symposium: Religion and Environmental Stewardship” at Yale Divinity School, June 5-7, 2012. I believe she was quoting from someone else’s article.

⁶ Larry Rasmussen “New Wineskins for New Wine” a presentation for the “Summer Symposium: Religion and Environmental Stewardship” at Yale Divinity School, June 5-7, 2012. I typed the quotation as Rasmussen spoke and may not have gotten it down perfectly.

⁷ Michael Benson, *Far Out: A Space-Time Chronicle*, New York: Abrams, 2010, p. 11

⁸ Thomas Berry. *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009.

⁹ Eugene, Oregon, Cascade Books, 2011.

¹⁰ Berry, 44 and 45

¹¹ Holbert, 24-25

¹² Berry, xi. Cobb is describing Thomas Berry’s thought in his preface to *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*.

¹³ Holbert, 74.

¹⁴ Holbert 73-74.

¹⁵ Holbert, 17.

¹⁶ Thomas H. Troeger, *Above the Moon Earth Rises: Hymn texts, anthems, and poems for a new creation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 2.

¹⁷ Holbert, 81.

¹⁸ Holbert, 82.

¹⁹ Holbert, 82.

²⁰ Sayers, pp. 30-31.

²¹ Troeger, *Above the Moon Earth Rises*, 8.

²² Holbert, 78.

²³ Thomas H. Troeger, *The Parable of Ten Preachers*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992, 43-44

²⁴ Brian Thomas Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Journey of the Universe*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011, 6-7.