

# DANIEL QUINN

March 12, 1993

Dear Michael:

I must confess that I was very far from flattered by your description of Ishmael as "Thomas Berry in a gorilla suit." In fact, my views and Berry's are incompatible in fundamental ways, as he would doubtless tell you himself. This will become more evident in the book I'm working on now, called Providence, which I hope to finish this spring and to see in print in 1994 or early 1995.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Quinn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



# St. Paul's United Church of Christ

301 - 307 S. Main St.  
Woodsfield, OH 43793  
614-472-0365

Rev. Michael Dowd, Pastor  
614-472-0606

March 18, 1993

Daniel Quinn  
1901 Cresthaven  
Austin, TX 78704

Dear Daniel,

Thank you for the "Two Fables From the Book of Nahash." I enjoyed them both. I'd love to know the story behind the name "The Hard Rain Press." I like it.

Please forgive me for insulting you by suggesting that, at times, your character, Ishmael, sounded like "Thomas Berry in a gorilla suit." It was a careless, inappropriate, and (as you point out) inaccurate remark. I can certainly understand how you would be far from flattered by such a stupid and seemingly reductionistic comment. I'm sorry. In my opinion, your book is fabulous in its own right. Really! I hope that it sells far and wide and, more importantly still, that it significantly helps to transform Western civilization. I think it may...in time. I expect it to be a bestseller in the alternative market for many years to come.

As you have no doubt surmised, I believe that Thomas Berry is one of the foremost thinkers of our day. But far from reducing your work to being merely a parroting of his, what I *meant* to say (as an attempted high compliment) was that, in Ishmael, you communicate some of the ideas Tom has been trying to communicate for years better than anyone else, including Tom himself!

In your note to me you said, "my views and Berry's are incompatible in fundamental ways, as he would doubtless tell you himself." When I asked Tom about this he said that, although he was not yet familiar with your book, many people mentioned it favorably to him. He said he would get a copy, read it, and then get back to me.

Dan, I'd be curious to know how, specifically, you see your views and Tom Berry's as being fundamentally incompatible. The enclosed essay of mine, "The Big Picture," is essentially a popularization of Tom's work. I'd be honored to receive your honest criticisms of it. Because, however your views may differ from Tom's, these differences do not come through very clearly in Ishmael (which is fast becoming a very hot item among many of us who follow Berry's thought, and who identify with the long range, deep ecology/new cosmology/Gaian spirituality movements.)

In any event, thank you for your honest note. May Life richly bless you and Rennie, your other relationships, and your work on Providence.

Sincerely,



Michael Dowd

PS.

- If Rennie has not already done so, please send me whatever materials you have that would help me promote Ishmael when I travel to speak and do workshops.

- I wrote "The Big Picture" before reading your book. That is why Ishmael is not listed as a resource. In all future writings of mine, (including an updated version of "The Big Picture" that I'd like to publish as a booklet,) Ishmael will be listed as a "must read" resource. Please feel free to suggest any other resources you think might be appropriate or helpful for me to include. (Also, assuming that you are familiar with at least some of the works I reference, I'd love to know which of these you find helpful and which you do not, if you'd care to share this with me.)