



FALL BOOKS

Into paradigm shift of sin, salvation,

**EARTHSPiRiT:
A HANDBOOK FOR NURTURING
AN ECOLOGICAL CHRISTIANITY**

By Michael Dowd
Twenty-Third Publications, 117 pages,
\$7.95 paperback

**GEO-JUSTICE:
A PREFERENTIAL OPTION
FOR THE EARTH**

By James Conlon
Resources Publications, Inc., (160 East Virginia St.,
#290, San Jose, CA 95112), 159 pages,
no price given

By JANE BLEWETT

Christians are finally awakening to the fact that the devastation of our home planet is an ecological tragedy and carries immense implications for their religious journeying, for their sense of who God is and what the human venture is all about. Thomas Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* opened many to an awareness of the "new cosmology," the new sacred origin "story" that locates the human within the vast, awesome, 15-billion-year journey of the universe and in the heart of the total community of all life.

Now, there is a hunger for more, to explore further, make connections with the "old story," give the "new" a ring of familiarity. Michael Dowd's little book is just such an effort, drawing on biblical Christianity and linking it very consciously with the new cosmology. It is a remarkable work, six chapters simply and clearly written, taking the reader gently by the hand through familiar religious categories into the new paradigm.

Briefly but in a helpful way he addresses what the shift in consciousness entails and why it is critical at this juncture in history. He discusses sin; salvation; evan-

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gelism; heaven and hell; the kingdom of God, which he calls the "reign of reality"; other religions; Jesus as the way, truth and life. The Bible is treated with great reverence but opened out in perceptive ways to demonstrate its relevance in an age that understands the origins of the universe and the place of the human in a vastly different way from the writers of the sacred texts.

Dowd draws heavily on the thoughts of others, quoting extensively throughout the book. He makes no apologies for this since his purpose is not a "major work of original thinking," but rather a handbook with "as concise an introduction (for Christians) to the new cosmology as possible." The last chapter is an excellent annotated bibliography, and every chapter concludes with questions for discussion. At a popular level, Dowd has made a major contribution that many will welcome.

James Conlon's book also probes the

"new story" but enters the discussion from a different perspective. In naming his book, **Geo-Justice: A Preferential Option for the Earth**, he locates himself within the justice and peace community and makes his case within that context, its language and categories. His geojustice has three interlocking components: global, local and psychosocial. Working within these three arenas, Conlon develops his analysis and broadened definition of justice.

As one example of how the three interact, Conlon gives the case of the rubber workers in the Amazon rain forests. At first, they became concerned about the forests because their own livelihood was at stake, but gradually they joined forces with a global effort to save a precious resource. In this process, they themselves developed a deeper understanding of their own human potential and community power. Each component affected and was affected by the other.

"Geo-Justice," Conlon states, "becomes an operative vision for creating harmony and balance on the earth, in our community and within ourselves." His claim is that passion and compassion for the earth in our times brings new energy to the work of healing the planet and of addressing the psychic, social and global oppression

If we humans discover and honor our rightful place within the unfolding life of the earth, there is every reason to trust the future.

of our world.

Throughout the book, Conlon draws on his own life experience, his many years of community organizing under Saul Alinsky, his justice and peace work, his teaching at Matthew Fox's Institute in Culture