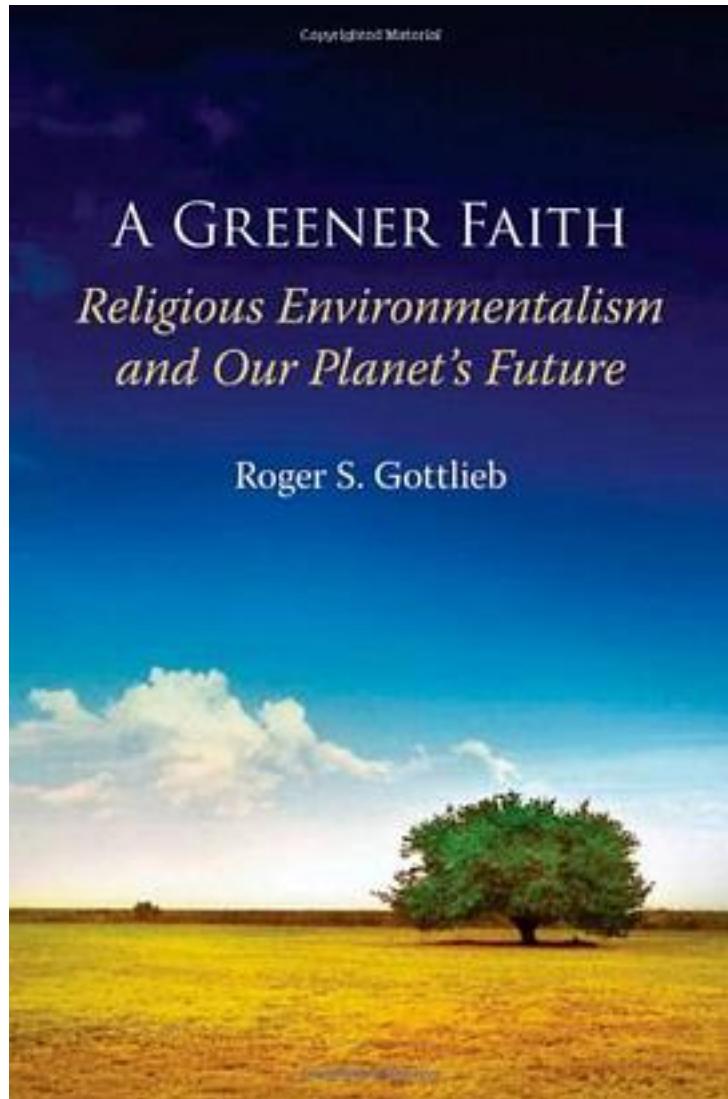


# Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future



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In a time of darkening environmental prospects, frightening religious fundamentalism, and moribund liberalism, the remarkable and historically unprecedented rise of religious environmentalism is a profound source of hope. Theologians are recovering marginalized nature-honoring elements of traditional religions and forging bold new theologies connecting devotion to God and spiritual truth with love for God's creation and care for the Earth. Further, these innovative ideas are giving rise to far-reaching political action. The successes and significance of religious environmentalism are manifest in statements by leaders of virtually all the world's religions, in new and 'green' forms of prayer and ritual, in comprehensive religiously motivated criticisms of modern society's economy, politics, and culture, and in solid contributions to real world environmental struggles. A Greener Faith chronicles the promises of this critically important movement, illuminating its fundamental ideas, describing the work of its leading prophets, and detailing its important contributions to a global environmentalism. Gottlieb shows that when religion engages in environmental action the customary boundaries of "religious issues" in political life are decisively broken. Asserting that environmental degradation is not only a health danger, economic catastrophe, and aesthetic blight, but also is sacrilegious, sinful and an offense against God catapults religions directly into questions of social policy, economic and moral priorities, and the overall direction of secular society. Gottlieb contends that a religious perspective applied to the Earth provides the environmental movement with a uniquely appropriate way to voice its passion and hope. In a striking new fusion, the religious presence in environmental politics blurs distinctions between religion and politics, theology and social activism. Equally important, it helps develop a world-making political agenda that transcends the limited interests of one or another social special interest group. Environmentalism, Gottlieb shows, is not simply interest group politics applied to forests and toxic incinerators. Rather, the movement offers a comprehensive vision of what human beings are and how we should treat each other and the rest of life.

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