

Earthing our Spirituality: What Role for Contemplation in an Age of Planetary Crisis?

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Introduction

Spirituality asks “how shall we live?” according to the values we cherish most deeply. How can our ancient stories, ethics, beliefs, rituals, hopes and dreams inspire and frame the daily practice of living? How could they shape a consistent pattern, a whole - maybe not a tidy whole, as the ragged, chaotic edges of human emotions and lived relationships prohibit such tidiness – but a narrative of integrity and faithfulness? Otto Steggink, a Dutch writer on spirituality, explained that spirituality has never been without context,¹ – and the diverse range of Christian spiritualities have arisen over the centuries in response to a set of political, cultural and religious factors: this is most clear, in the origins of monastic orders and communities both lay and religious. Our own context in the 21st century is defined by an ecological crisis of enormous proportions, especially given the gravity of the consequences of climate change. So Christian spirituality is now challenged to re-think its foundations, in a context where life may not be sustainable for many more decades.

Even if the climate change sceptics and deniers become ever more vociferous, (I would have expected that, anyway!) and the IPCC have admitted that certain factors have been exaggerated, (for example, the speed at which the ice is melting in Antarctica), or even mistaken, the effects of climate change are already experienced as life-threatening for humanity and the non-human creation on a vast scale, mostly in the poor southern hemisphere. Put in the context of the current anxiety over economic recession and its social effects, the greed of banks, unemployment and continuing casualties in Afghanistan, concern about climate change has been pushed into the background, remaining at a lower level in the hierarchy of our concerns, except for the committed few. A recent poll in the US put concern for global warming as priority number 20!

Yet, Christian identity is linked profoundly with caring for creation and with the groaning of creation (Romans 8): at the very least, the crisis asks us to factor justice for the earth into as a major part of our spiritual values and lifestyle, and further, to ask ourselves how the spiritual tradition could possibly have overlooked such a fundamental dimension. If it has overlooked such a factor, how usable is the tradition for an earth-friendly spirituality?

First, I look at how Jewish and Christian traditions coped with ecological disaster in the past, then what it meant to them theologically; within my search for reconciliation with the earth, I will explore the alienation process from it, before, inspired by Thomas Merton, proposing an spirituality of contemplation, or, as I call here, eco-mystical spirituality of which prophetic justice is a strong part.

1. Alienation from the earth in Jewish and Christian traditions.

On a casual glance, it seems that the texts of Christian and Jewish traditions are no strangers to ecological threats. The assertion of the creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2, “And God saw that it was good” was made in a context where poor farmers found it difficult to make a living from the land. The text reminds them of the goodness of the creation, creation as blessing, diversity as giftedness, and God’s gratuitous goodness.

But if we look at the overwhelming, terrifying disaster of the Flood, witnessed to also in the Koran, in early Sumerian mythology, in the epic of Gilgamesh as well as Chinese mythology,

is the possibility of earth not surviving such a major disaster being hinted at? And thus a link with the current predicament? Historical evidence raises doubts over the comparison: contemporary geologists believe that a universal flood covering every bit of the world's surface would have been impossible *after* humankind first appeared on the earth. Although extensive flooding often took place in the low-lying alluvial plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, excavations have not been able to reveal that one flood was more disastrous than another. Archaeology does suggest that extended flooding at one time did cover continents; yet dating indicates that all such occurrences stopped before the appearance of human beings. So, is the message of the text not so much the historicity of the flood, but more what it tells us about God's relationship with humanity? (Are there parallels with Haiti?)

Destruction through flooding, a worsening threat in many regions of the world at the moment due to climate change, is not the only basis of comparison with the experience of our ancestors. Overpopulation of areas with scarce resources was also an experience. Remember Abraham journeying with Lot into the Negeb?

And Lot, who went with Abram also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. (Genesis 13.5-7).

We are told that an acceptable solution was agreed, and Lot journeyed east to the Jordan valley, Abraham remaining in the land of Canaan. Yes, of course contemporary contexts are considerably more complex. Yet the basic struggle of poor herdsmen or farmers, seeking water and fodder for flocks and crops in harsh climatic conditions does not change. The habits of ancient Biblical nomads with their herds, always seeking water sources is paralleled by the Bedouin today in Palestine, (whose lives are increasingly troubled by the political context) and I have experienced the same phenomenon in Rajasthan, (as part of my involvement in *Wells for India*). Seasonal migration is a well-known practice in many water-stressed countries where people depend on animals for a livelihood. A picture I have shows a shepherd with his flock near Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan. He is a Gujar, a tribal group descended from the biblical Syrians and will migrate annually to the Punjab, a thousand miles away, returning in time for the monsoon. But more important than the **fact** of ecological disasters, desertification, crop failure and famine, is the interpretation of these events and their theological significance and how they impact on lived spirituality.

2. The Earth is the Lord's - and its fullness thereof.

The prophetic message is direct and simple: ecological disaster is related to human sinfulness:

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants;
For they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes,
Broken the everlasting covenant.
Therefore a curse devours the earth,
And its inhabitants suffer for their guilt. (Is.24.5-6)

Correspondingly, returning to the Lord will be followed by a flourishing of the land, with flowers and trees blossoming in the desert, water bursting out in the desert, all a manifestation of Divine glory (Is. 35 – a paraphrase). Many prophetic texts allude to the Messianic vision (for example, Is.11) where earth, human and all creatures will be caught up into a vision of God's shalom and flourishing. Jewish tradition speaks of this occurring at the

coming of the Messiah. For now there is law, *halakkah*. But whether or not the Jubilee laws (Leviticus 19) prescribing respect for the limits of the land, were ever put into practice, what is precious in this tradition is, first,

- A recognition that the land has limits; overstepping these brings ecological ruin;
- God's law, God's will, purpose, (whatever metaphor is used) for creation involves respecting ecological principles of interconnectedness of land and people: this demands justice and adherence to ethical principles inclusive of this.
- God's presence in creation is dynamic and all-pervading. Wounding the earth is ravaging the Divine face present in creation.

3. Broken Connections

As many writers have pointed out, whatever the positive features there are in the past, ours is an ambiguous heritage. The cosmic promise of Scripture has largely been lost and we are finding it very difficult to reclaim a positive legacy. Paul Santmire, in *The Travail of Nature*,² considers that, apart from a few figures, like (surprisingly), Augustine, Francis of Assisi and Hildegard of Bingen, (and in a later book he includes Celtic saints), texts of Christian tradition- because of the way we have read them- have contributed to our alienation and not our healing.

Historical, philosophical, cultural and theological factors have all combined in this blockage, this turn from the earth. The environment has become the background to human endeavour, to be used and regrettably, abused. As Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote about *Binsey Poplars*:

Even where we mean to mend her, we end her
when we hew or delve...³

If we were to select one factor from hundreds, it would be the anthropocentric and dualistic mindset that has maintained human superiority over the earth, and kept in place a disastrous instrumental individualism, that continues to justify myopic decisions about energy, transport, food choices and the privatizing of water. With this turn away from the earth – that occurred in stages⁴ - is entwined a spiritual dimension and a deeply spiritual crisis, *one that is frequently disguised as economic*. This is because one project has always dominated, and still continues to dominate - the economic system of global capitalism, a project that has a fascinating and almost bewitching effect on us. The reason for asserting that the crisis we face is at heart a spiritual one, is that capitalism can be called a new religion in its idolatry of money. The jury is still out as to whether our current economic crisis will transform the values that capitalism nurtured. Through the pursuit of money capitalism hijacked our imaginations and desires. In the north and west we became addicts and attempted to export these addictions to the rest of the world. The corporate persuaders told us there was no space to stand outside the process. In psycho-spiritual terms, what has been so destructive is that because our imaginations were in thrall to the capitalist project, aspirations of fulfilment were cheapened and vulgarised, and mutuality and intimacy became commodified. Remember “Because you're worth it!”? Instead of yearning for the infinite and experience of the sacred, an insatiable, endless grasping for some new consumer good was substituted. To maintain itself, the system had to continue to feed us with insatiable desires for the next brand of trainer, TV or car. Ecological principles like sustainability, scarcity of resources, making something last, biodegradability, never entered the picture. Thomas Berry – and it might have been Merton speaking - called this a

deep cultural pathology ... When the power of ecstasy is subverted into destructive channels, then, as in the Roman world, we are in a disastrous situation.⁵

Our question has to be, whether Christian spirituality, from being a private affair to get to heaven, privileging soul over body, now become holistic, ecologically inspired and community-owned? And what form will this take?

4. A New Flowering of our Roots

After a slow beginning, all faiths are taking the ecological crisis seriously, some more effectively than others. We can all point to definitive doctrinal statements as well as evocative appeals, like the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech last October (2009) to Operation Noah, where he saw us as invited to a transformation of individual and social goals that will bring us closer to the reality of interdependent life in a variegated world". Or Pope Benedict's declaration on Peace Sunday, January 2010, that if we want peace, "work for Creation."

Let us focus on Rowan Williams's word "transformation, "or as I call it, "transfiguration." Isn't that what we want through a contemplative spirituality? First, a new *consciousness* is the clue. (And this is the whole inspiration of our Conference from the Merton text). This is a double movement. It involves an un-learning of the mindset of instrumentalism, consumerist mentality, and a re-learning of a worldview of interconnection and right relation. The difference between the Biblical worldview and ours was that it was theocentric and theofocused: to lose this meant alienation from God and the necessity of coming back, the "return" to which the prophets allude. But today, culture and context are largely secular: the task is harder. (I do not want to undervalue the fact that there are secular spiritualities today; nor that most of the urgency for environmental action is emerging from secular groups – but here I am exploring religious resources.) And we do have our prophets of alternative consciousness. Walter Brueggeman called for an alternative consciousness to what he called the reigning "royal consciousness," that is driven by the economics of affluence.⁶ Thomas Merton – as you are all aware - called this changed consciousness, "awakening the paradise mind", and devoted his whole life to the practice of contemplation, a holistic therapy of contemplative living, in order to restore this consciousness:

Here is an unspeakable secret: paradise is all around us and we do not understand. It is wide open ... "Wisdom," cries the dawn deacon, but we do not attend.⁷

Paying attention as contemplative practice in ecological circles has a long genealogy, from Simone Weil, through the novelist Iris Murdoch, to the contemporary Ecofeminist, Sallie McFague. The latter has developed a similar contemplative practice of "seeing with the loving eye", an invitation to relate to nature different from "seeing with the dominant eye", the eye that wishes to control and rule.⁸ I think these are all different ways of describing the same thing, the attempt to recover what is called in Catholic tradition the sacramental way of beholding reality, creation filled with the presence of God. It is also a mentality permeating the Bible and will be part of any contextual spirituality confronting climate change. I want to pursue this in a way that will undergird a practice of reconciliation with the earth,⁹ drawing the roots of tradition into a new flowering in the context of the current crisis.

So, I begin with a poem by the late Denise Levertov, expressing how new this need for reconciliation with the earth seems as part of the whole salvific schema:

How can desire fail?
we have only just begun
to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision

how it might be
to live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors...

So much is unfolding that must complete its gesture,
so much is in bud.¹⁰

Following the call for a changed consciousness, a re-reading of tradition in line with this will kick-start the process. Santmire's suggestion in *The Travail of Nature* was to read through the lens of the metaphor "fecundity" and "migration to a good land", rather than through the lens of "the hierarchy of being" which he thinks is responsible for much of domination thinking. Following this grounding metaphor, what are the contours of a contemplative spirituality seeking justice with the earth?

5. Intuitions for the Path of Ecomysticism

This a new word for an old wisdom –and there are many approaches. Mine is ecofeminist – maybe not a word that Merton would recognise, but he would concur with its aims. It is a combination of ecology/justice for women. The focus is making the links between where women and nature suffer from the same injustices or flourish where these are attended to. But it leads to a holistic approach, both contemplative and prophetic, as well as a lifestyle that can inspire a new practice.

I am calling it a path/journey or voyage – for those who love sea metaphors. But what is important is that this is more than an attitude. It is a praxis. Of course you are familiar with the starting point - a sense of radical awe and wonder. The inspirational passage for our Conference was preceded in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* by that wonderful epiphanic statement of Merton,

Meanwhile, that most wonderful moment of the day is that when creation in its innocence asks permission to "be" once again, as it did on the first morning that ever was.¹¹

We are always in the same place- recovering that sense of "be-ing" at the dawn of each day, held in tension with decisions as to how we will act with justice , how we will hope, how we will pray. Thomas Moore in "The Re-enchantment of everyday life" captures this well in relation to water/trees/stones/food – food rituals/homemaking/gardens. But how do we nurture radical wonder in a context of globalisation and rampant consumerism? And still keep a keen sense of the priority of justice in all things? Clues are given with the stress on attention, referred to above. Attention means listening, care and responsibility. (Remember, "I am responsible for my rose," said the Little Prince of St Exupery?)

Merton, in *Contemplation in a world of Action*, stressed listening in silence if the contemplative is to dwell at the centre of society and not at the periphery. The alternation between noise and silence asks for attention. "If we only really listened, we would hear the grass grow, the squirrel's heart-beat and the roar that lies on the other side of silence," wrote George Eliot, (Introduction to *Middlemarch*).¹²

Paying attention, if we look at the word itself suggests tending, attending, intending with overtones of caring, waiting. Appreciation of rhythm will follow and the alternation between

seasons of feasting and fasting, something that is strong in Benedictine spirituality. In Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, the poet's ability to attend to the particular and in so doing evoke the eternal is remarkable.¹³ There will be attention to the cross-over between order and chaos, the wild and the domesticated, the tamed. Awakenings and sensitivity to Beauty- "a terrible beauty is born". What is the true and the beautiful in a celebrity culture? Attention can bring a re-enchantment of speech. "There are words I will not use again..." said the poet, Adrienne Rich. Dorothee Soelle, theologian, wrote:

All mysticism is part of the endeavour to escape from the language that serves the exercise of power, control and possession.¹⁴

How does our speech contribute to dominating nature? There is no need to look far: for example, the expression, *Kill two birds with one stone*, or the frequent derogatory expressions about animals that point to the subconscious hierarchical thinking that still has a tenacious grasp.

Hopefully this will lead to the re-enchantment of action, to *Care* in public life, care for earth communities, beauty in public spaces, prophetic action for the sake of the threatened earth. Merton saw contemplation as culture critique and as the ultimate guarantee of human freedom. I find the metaphor of connection strong in his writings, for example in the famous Louisville vision. If mysticism is about a profound awareness of the Divine presence, in eco-mystical awareness that is given with attending to place, to time, to the rhythms of the nature, now imperilled, human and non-human alike.

6. Seeking God in the eco-mystical way.

Awareness of Divine presence is discernible in diverse ways and I simply offer traces of this richness here in this eco-mystical path, building on strengths from traditional spirituality, from life-experience and from seeking prophetic justice.

- **the garden** as place of divine presence: the notion of *Dwelling as Place of epiphany* can be an inspiration. What does God teach us with this metaphor? From tradition come the legacy of the Creation stories, of paradise as walled garden where God walked with Adam and Eve; the cry of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane as he realised in anguish what was being asked of him. From the Book of revelation comes the image of the Tree of Life that will be for the healing of the nations; from spiritual tradition come the Benedictine stress on work on the land, the rhythm of prayer and work of human hands. Remember how much this meant to Merton: with the planting of a thousand saplings he felt he was part of the vital force of creation and caring for the earth's future.

Within life experience, the sheer giftedness of creation is poured out. With the rhythms of the seasons, the dying and rising, comes a heightened consciousness of our human fragility, human lifespan in relation to, for example, the oak tree – "Unless a grain of wheat shall die". From the garden is learnt appreciation of diversity and humbler forms of life and the interrelating of wilderness and order. Factoring in justice for the earth, contemplative listening is called for - *to the crying of the earth, the needs of earth communities themselves-air/soil/water*, the animal world in these days of vanishing species, along with their habitats. The growth of the "quiet garden" movement and the creation of gardens with victims of torture - (See *The Healing Fields: Working with Psychotherapy and Nature to Rebuild Shattered Lives*) – links the wellbeing of people and nature. Prison experience can mean deprivation of nature: - nature is sometimes glimpsed only as a twig or stray piece of

vegetation through a barred window – for example, the jasmine of Etty Hillesum. Nelson Mandela’s prison garden even fed his gaoler’s family.

7. A focus on the city as dwelling: How does a contemplative spirituality experience God in the city?

From *tradition* comes the fact that Christianity as urban religion as opposed to *pagani*, country-dwellers. But Merton sometimes has a negative attitude to the city - he thought it distracted from contemplation. I recall his earlier interchange with Rosemary Ruether, then a young theologian, where she challenged him to join her in the city with actions for social justice. Neither could see that the other’s stance was valid.¹⁵ I hope you can see that these strands presented here interrelate and interweave.

I would argue of the great need to become *ecological ecclesia* in the cities. Cities are frequently places where poverty, injustice, homelessness and pollution are found in densely compacted forms. Symbols of the city manifest the public face of globalisation. Think of the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon, Stock Exchange, International Banks and their role in the economic crisis, and the Ministry of Defence’s links with the global arms trade. Yet the city is also a place of imagination and hope. Cities are also sites of resistance and action for justice, inspired by God as passion of justice, as those of you who have marched for peace or the planet around London will know. There is the extraordinary feeling of transcendence, (transient unfortunately) of the city being liberated to a new state of redeemed existence. Dorothy Day – who was inspired by Merton, as he was inspired by her, received inspiration from nature on Staten Island, yet poured all her energies into creating communities in inner cities. Catholic Worker farms still flourish. The Book of Revelation tells us that God dwells in the redeemed city where *the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*.... Because cities are close to centre of power, to places where decisions are made for housing, employment, transport, town planning, for the future of manufacturing and trade, surely it is here that the contemplative way is needed urgently? No accident then that movements are mushrooming in different ways in response to the need for “contemplation in the city”. For example, the *Frères et Soeurs de Jerusalem*,” a mystical community in France and Italy, whose members earn their living in secular institutions.

8. How does God dwell in the desert?

Are we speaking of the real desert, stripped of trees, place of burning heat, or of the desert as place of blessed solitude, where we are stripped bare of all but the essentials? The revelation of God through the metaphor of desert dwelling is that of basic simplicity and emptiness enabling deeper awareness of the presence of God in all things.

First, there is a need to be aware of the tendency in spirituality to mystify and idealise the desert, or to metaphorise away its harshness too easily. Yes, there are deserts in the city’s isolation, in the poverty and gang violence of enormous housing estates or city ghettos and favelas. But let us not shirk the encounter with real deserts: the problems of sub-Saharan Africa, the Bedouins driven from their land in Palestine, the vulnerability of isolated villages in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan.

From tradition comes a strong heritage: the desert was the place of storying - the place where the Jewish people were given their story’s foundation- “Your father was a wandering Aramean..” And “Out of Egypt I have called my son”. It was a place of refuge and revelation. Think of Elijah’s flight to Mt Horeb and the sustenance (Bread in the wilderness) and

revelation he received there. (1.Kg 19). The desert is place of testing, as we know, when Jesus went there, (or was driven?) immediately after his Baptism by John and gift of the Spirit. Story, place of rest, revelation and trial –all elements of the contemplative way. I add two more. The first is encounter – who we meet in the desert can be formative, and life changing, boundary-breaking, being pulled into the depths of a “heart-speaks –to heart” conversation. And in pursuit of justice, there is a further point. The Desert Fathers and Mothers sought the desert and a lifestyle of utter simplicity as a culture-critique of the society they lived in. They blazed a trail that later monastic movements including the Trappist - would follow. Today’s witnesses are those who seek simplicity, cutting the carbon, for the sake of the earth –in a multitude of ways. This seems to me in the spirit of Merton’s legacy. A contemplative spirituality, seeking God by truly dwelling in many dimensions, re-connects our fragmented selves with the very earth that nurtures us; calling us to seek forgiveness and to live in a deepening sense of accountability.

Julian of Norwich, a 14th century anchoress in her cell in Norwich, prayed for three wounds, that of contrition, compassion and longing for God. She called them wounds: I will call them three movements in a contemplative eco-spirituality of reconciliation with the earth.¹⁶ The wound or movement of compassion links the redemptive mystery with the current need for compassion for the earth. Compassion is the basis of any liberation spirituality, and compassion for the suffering of the earth is vital. But a theology of interrelatedness, that recognises ecological wisdom, becomes aware of the compassion *of the earth for human beings*. In Buddhist spirituality, the weeping willow is seen as symbol of the Goddess Kwan Yin, as her branches fall compassionately toward the water. The same sense is conveyed by the mediaeval poem *The Dream of the Rood*: afflicted by the death of Christ, the tree speaks and tells its story, its involvement in Christ’s suffering:

They insulted us both together: I was drenched in the blood that streamed from the Man’s side after he set his spirit free.¹⁷

As Cretan poet Kazantzakis is reputed to have written:

And I said to the almond tree: “Sister, speak to me of God”, and the almond tree blossomed.

Julian’s third wound, honour or movement is longing for God. In a time of planetary crisis, this is longing for the restoration of wholeness and health to the entire system. Scripture is full of such imagery. In my book *Sacred Longings*, I linked longing for running water, greening power, with longing for God.¹⁸ “Mine, O thou Lord of Life, O give my roots rain,” cries Hopkins, and many of his poems are redolent with imagery of wildness and wetness.¹⁹ It is that longing for restored wholeness, that is the hope, the grounding of a lifestyle of simplicity, sacrifice and self-imposed limits for the good of the whole; but more than that – a complete re-orienting of desire and longing for a restored future. When I was writing my book on redemption more than 20 years ago,²⁰ I discovered that the Dutch word for redemption was *verlossen*. This could mean “Reclaiming” – as farmers reclaimed land from the sea (Zuyder Zee) in the Netherlands; but also “to give birth” – here in the sense of giving birth to new creation. I want to suggest this is where contemplative spirituality is leading: there are two elements in a theology of reconciliation - the mystical and prophetic. The mystical dimension is the longing and re-orienting of desire, the prophetic is the translating of this into action. Reconciliation, the Latin version of the Greek verb *katallasso*, to exchange, means exchanging hostility for friendship and communion. Used here it implies a total

reorientation of values, a re-orientation urgently needed if we and all forms of life may hold on to hope in a shared future for our planet.

Is this not where Merton's clarion call to awakening and deepened consciousness is leading us?

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For ten years, Mary was editor of the Journal *Eco-theology*. Her theological project is now reconciliation, of which reconciliation to the earth is a special focus. See *To Rwanda and Back: Spirituality, Justice and Liberation*, (Darton, Longman and Todd 2008). She is a founding trustee of the NGO, *Wells for India*, a water-based organisation in Rajasthan, NW India and is also Chair of the Theology Group of Friends of Sabeel UK, an organisation for the liberation of Christians in Palestine.

Mary's other recent writings include: *The Unheard Scream – the Struggles of Dalit Women in India*, (New Delhi 2004), *Pursuing the Dream – a Jewish-Christian Conversation*, with Rabbi Dan Cohn Sherbok, (Darton, Longman and Todd 2005).

¹ Otto Steggink, "Spiritualiteit was nooit zonder tijdgeest" in *Speling* 37/1/1985/pp.14-21.

² Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000)

³ Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Binsey Poplars" in *Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953), pp 39-40.

⁴ Space does not allow me to describe these in detail: see my *Sacred Longings: Ecofeminist Theology and Globalisation* (London: SCM, 2003), Ch.1.

⁵ Grey, *Sacred Longings*, p.17.

⁶ Walter Brueggeman has developed the idea of prophetic consciousness in many of his works.

⁷ Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1966) p.118.

⁸ Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001)

⁹ I have written extensively elsewhere on this.

¹⁰ Denise Levertov, "Beginners" from *Candles in Babylon* (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp, 1982)

¹¹ Merton, *Conjectures*, p.117.

¹² George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (New York: Signet Classic, 2003) p.207.

¹³ Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998)

¹⁴ Dorothee Sölle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001) p.63.

¹⁵ *At Home in the World: The Letters of Thomas Merton & Rosemary Radford Ruether* ed Mary Tardiff (Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis Books, 1995)

¹⁶ *The Revelations of Divine Love of Julian of Norwich* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961)

¹⁷ "The Dream of the Rood" trans. Kevin Crossley Holland, in Ray Sampson, *Celtic Daily Light*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997) March 26th - 27th.

¹⁸ Grey, *Sacred Longings*.

¹⁹ Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Thou are indeed just, O Lord," in *Poems*, op cit., p.67.

²⁰ Mary Grey, *Redeeming the Dream: Feminism, Redemption and Christian Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1989)