**Creation Spirituality**

*by Matthew Fox (1991), notes by Doug Muder (2001)*

**Interpretive Essay**

I had much more trouble getting into this book than any of the others in the series, but at some point I started to get it, and from there on I was able to find value in it. For this reason I’m going to write it a longer introduction, to help people who think and read like I do to get over the hump.

*Creation Spirituality*, I believe, is written to affirm and energize people who already agree with Fox at some level, and who have been looking for words to express what they already know in their hearts. It is not written as a exposition for those to whom these ideas will be strange and new. Those people will need a bridge to get to into the book. I’m writing this introduction to be such a bridge.

**Attitudes, beliefs, and facts.** One essential point to grasp is that creation spirituality is largely about taking a new attitude towards life, and only secondarily about specific beliefs or facts about the world. This distinction is often lost in Fox’s prose. He appears to be stating facts or beliefs when he is really expressing an attitude, such as “the universe loves us every day the sun rises.” [page 11]

New attitudes are unconvincing when compared with what seem to be the “facts” of our current way of viewing the world. For that reason, I find Fox’s message easier to understand and accept if I start with a critique of our current culture, and look at the ways that the contemporary Western worldview is also shaped by an attitude, and by a set of assumptions that have no more basis in testable fact than the assumptions Fox would want to replace them with.

What is it about the way we usually think or live that creation spirituality would change? Here are some assumptions underlying everyday life in the West that creation spirituality would throw out:

- **Appreciation of the beauty of the world is not essential; it is a luxury.** Appreciating beauty is something we will get around to if we have time, after all the essential things are done. Aesthetic appreciation is not part of the experience of every moment. Instead, we compartmentalize it. We set aside some time to take a walk during our lunch hour, or we schedule a Saturday afternoon trip to an art museum. But we’ll cancel those plans if something important comes up. Creation spirituality points out how strange this is in the context of human history: There has never been a human culture whose survival was so precarious that they did not devote a great deal of their attention to appreciating beauty.

- **Beauty is rare.** There are beautiful places – in far away national parks. There are beautiful things – but only the rich can afford to own them. But again, if we look at the sweep of human history, no culture has lived in a place so desolate that they could not find beauty there.

- **Talent is rare.** Only a few people are talented enough to be creative. If we aren’t one of the blessed few, and if we haven’t devoted many years to learning our craft, then we are just embarrassing ourselves if we try to sing new songs, write new stories, build new gadgets, or make something beautiful. We should leave that kind of work to the professionals. And yet, has there ever been a tribe so small or so untalented that it had no artists and produced nothing worth appreciating?

- **It is rare to find value in another person, or for another person to find value in you.** This
belief reaches its apex in our romantic lives, where many people are anxious that they will never be appreciated by someone they appreciate. But this belief (and the anxiety that goes with it) permeates all areas of life. We must search hard for our friends, and could not possibly be so lucky as to find one living next door. We are frequently unmoved by the hardships of strangers and the suffering of people far away from us. And yet, no village is so small that the people in it do not make friends with each other. Over the centuries, many arranged marriages have worked. Somehow people thrown together by chance or circumstance find a way to value and be valued.

These assertions also may seem like statements of fact or belief, but under closer examination they are more like expressions of an attitude. What Fox asks us to imagine is that this attitude could change. We could approach life with an attitude that places importance on appreciating our world and the people in it. We could expect to find beauty everywhere and value in everyone, including ourselves. We could take seriously our own desire (and our own ability!) to create. We could live in a state of perpetual gratitude for this beauty, this value, and this appreciation.

The fundamental belief Fox asserts in *Creation Spirituality* is that if we took on this attitude, it would work. If we placed as much importance on appreciating the world as we currently place on coping with it and mastering it, we would succeed in finding beauty in almost every moment. We would succeed in finding value in almost every person who crossed our path. We would succeed in creating objects of beauty and expressions of our inner truth. This attitude of abundance would be just as self-validating and just as convincing as our attitude of scarcity currently is.

Further, he asserts, our lives would be better -- more satisfying, more enjoyable. And we would be better people – more compassionate, more in harmony with the world, more motivated to defend the world’s value and relieve the world’s suffering.

**The role of cosmology.** Another hump I had difficulty getting over is the way that Fox again and again appeals to “cosmology” or to science in general. At times he runs dangerously close to claiming that science supports his religious views. For example, he writes: “Imagine what might happen when science and spirituality come together again. That possibility, in fact, constitutes the best and most empowering news of our time. Science today has given us a new cosmic story about our origins. It is a sacred story, one that fills us with awe upon hearing it.” [page 1]

After a careful re-reading, I don’t think he intends to claim that science-as-science has religious content, in the manner of medieval scholars who proved the existence of God through logical argument, of creationists (not to be confused with creation spirituality) who claim that the Genesis story of creation is actually scientific, or of new-agers who make a variety of wild claims about quantum mechanics. More precisely, I don’t think Fox needs to make such a claim, and that the passages where he seems to make it are due mostly to rhetorical excess. (If there is one charge I will not defend Fox from, it is rhetorical excess.)

What I believe Fox is saying is that (in all human cultures except perhaps this one) creation stories have never existed as ends in themselves. They are not simple attempts to satisfy people’s curiosity about how the world came to be. Instead, creation stories are told for a purpose. “What does a creation story do for us? It grounds us in the history of how we arrived here, and it awakens awe and wonder that we are here. When this happens, we are less subject to manipulation, to trivia, to titillating distractions, addictions, and consumerism. Awe and amazement are the results of a rich creation story, and the awe we feel should encompass our very selves, since every self is part of the unfolding creation story.” [page
This attitude gives a very different spin to the Genesis-versus-Science battle that has been going on for over a century. (Fox does not talk about this, but I think a critique of creationism from a creation spirituality point of view is an exercise that helps illuminate the difference between them.) Genesis tells a story which accomplishes the goals Fox lays out: It is grounding, awe-inspiring, and affirms the specialness of human existence. You can root a culture in Genesis. The scientific creation story (as it is frequently told) is quite different: the Earth is a tiny, insignificant part of the Universe, and the existence of humanity on Earth is the result of a long sequence of accidents. This telling of the story lends itself to a belief that life has no meaning and that it doesn’t matter what we do. This is not the basis for a healthy culture.

Creationists, then, are right to reject this telling of the scientific story, but they do so for the wrong reasons and have the wrong response. They claim that the facts of this story must be wrong, and they hold to the Genesis version of the facts of our history in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. To Fox, on the other hand, it is the story that is the problem, not the facts. He is willing (happy, even) to accept the scientific version of the facts, but he wants to retain religion’s role as the story-teller. The goals of a creation story can still be achieved using this new set of facts. Told with the right intention and the right attitude, a scientific creation story can give us roots in an awe-inspiring richness.

In fact, the scientific story provides certain benefits that go well beyond Genesis. “Today, with scientists agreeing the world over on the basic facts of the new creation story, we have the potential for a sense of global unity, an experience of the human race as a single tribe bound together by a single, amazing, creation story.” [page 27] Moreover, since this story roots human existence in the larger story of all life, it leads naturally to an ecological worldview.

My remaining complaints. Not all of my difficulties reading this book can be explained away. Fox is sloppy with facts. He does not tell us where he gets the facts he quotes, and many of them appear to me to be wrong. (For example: “The rates of drug and alcohol addictions and teen pregnancies are soaring.” [page 118]) In general, when Fox quotes a number, it is wisest to take statement qualitatively rather than quantitatively. (Third world debt is big; if you want to know exactly how big, look somewhere else.) He also has a tendency to state as facts theories which are either controversial or even widely rejected. And sometimes I was left wondering not whether a statement was true or not, but what it could possibly mean. (For example, what does it mean to say that the aboriginals of Australia are “the most ancient tribe on the planet”? [page 43])

And although I appreciate the desire to present an integrated, wholistic philosophy, Fox presents creation spirituality in such a way that it is inseparable from the liberal political position on every conceivable issue. I come away from the book believing that this was not necessary, and that in fact followers of creation spirituality are probably more politically diverse than Fox lets on.

Outline

The book is broken into two sections: Gifts of Awe, which is about mysticism, and Gifts of Liberation, which is about justice. Fox sees the two as complementary, not competitive. “The awe comes when the new creation story elicits an awakening, a reenchantment that is basic to any truly liberating moment or movement. Experiencing our world in a deeper way heralds a new relationship to it.” [page x]
Prologue: A New Creation Story

Fox begins the book with a creation story in poetic form. It begins “In the beginning was the gift.” Over the next three pages we run into hadrons and leptons, supernovas, the evolution of the biosphere, and teachers as diverse as Hesiod, Jesus, and Buffalo Woman sent to teach humanity the ways of compassion.

Part One. Gifts of Awe

Chapter 1. What is Creation Spirituality?

One of the frustrating things about this chapter is that, although Fox says a great deal about creation spirituality in this chapter, he never gives a succinct, sound-bite answer to the question. Anyone looking for a definition will be disappointed.

What is Creation? What is Spirituality?

The first two sections “What is Creation?” and “What is Spirituality?” answer their questions poetically and rhetorically in a creation-is-this-creation-is-that style. These passages can be quite moving and motivating to those who already feel a commitment to Fox’s path, but those who don’t already get it will probably just shake their heads in bewilderment. Here is a sample: “Creation is what the mystic is awakened to and what the prophet fights to sustain. Creation is the subject of the scientist’s search and mystical commitment, and it is the source of all worship and the goal of all morality. ... Creation is the mother of all beings and the father of all beings, the birther and the begetter. It is all-holy; it is awe-filled, from the tiniest onion seed to the towering redwood tree.” [page 10]

“Spirituality does not make us otherworldly; it renders us more fully alive. The path that spirituality takes is a path away from the superficial into the depths; away from the ‘outer person’ into the ‘inner person’; away from the privatized and individualistic into the deeply communitarian.” [page 12]

“Creation spirituality is an ancient tradition, the oldest tradition in this land for it is the basic spiritual heritage of Native Americans. It is also the spiritual heritage of native peoples everywhere ... All these peoples had cosmology as the basis of their worship, prayer, economics, politics, and morality. All of them honored the artist in all persons. All expected the divine to burst out of any place at any time. To see the world this way is to be creation centered.” [pages 13-14] He also finds the creation spirituality tradition in much of the Bible and in medieval Catholicism. “The high point of church history regarding creation spirituality occurred in the great ‘renaissance’ that began in the twelfth century, with mystic-prophets such as Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi and Thomas Aquinas. ... However, with the condemnation of Eckhart in 1329, the handwriting was on the wall: don’t mix mystical and prophetic faith; it may get you in trouble. The split between the mystical and the prophetic, marked by that date, has haunted religion ever since.” [page 15]

“Creation spirituality is also a movement. ... As a movement [it] becomes an amazing gathering place, a kind of watering hole for persons whose passion has been touched by the issues of our day – deep ecologists, ecumenists, artists, native peoples, justice activists, feminists, male liberationists, gay and lesbian peoples, animal liberationists, scientists seeking to reconnect science and wisdom, people of prophetic faith traditions – all these groups find in the creation spirituality movement a common language
and a common ground on which to stand.” [pages 16-17]

**Four Paths**

“The backbone of the creation spirituality tradition is its naming of the spiritual journey in the Four Paths. ... The Four Paths also address the question, Where will God, where will the experience of the divine, be found in our time? Creation spirituality responds: the divine will be found in these places:

In the **Via Positiva**. In the awe, wonder, and mystery of nature and of all beings, each of whom is a “word of God.” ...

In the **Via Negativa**. In darkness and nothingness, in the silence and emptying, in the letting go and letting be, and in the pain and suffering that constitute an equally real part of our spiritual journey. ...

In the **Via Creativa**. In our generativity we co-create with God; in our imaginative output, we trust our images enough to birth them and ride them into existence. ...

In the **Via Transformativa**. In the relief of suffering, in the combatting of injustice, in the struggle for homeostasis, for balance in society and history, and in the celebration that happens when persons struggling for justice and trying to live in mutuality come together to praise and give thanks for the gift of being and being together.” [page 18]

“All four paths of creation spirituality find their apex in Path Three, the Via Creativa. Paths One and Two lead up to Path Three (for we create only out of what we have beheld of light and darkness), and Path Four, the Via Transformativa, flows out of the Via Creativa, since we are putting our imaginations and creativity at the service of compassion. The basic spiritual discipline in the creation tradition is decidedly not asceticism, but the development of the aesthetic. Beauty, and our role in co-creating it, lie at the heart of the spiritual journey.” [page 21]

It’s important to note that the four paths are neither parallel nor sequential. A person doesn’t get done with one before moving on to another. Nor does a person specialize in one path and ignore the others. Later on [page 75] Fox refers to the four paths forming a “spiral”. My interpretation is that at any given point in a person’s life, one path dominates over the others, but that none of them should ever be entirely absent from life.

**Chapter 2. Gifts of Creation Spirituality**

The benefits that creation spirituality offers are: a new cosmic creation story, an awakened mysticism, deep ecumenism, a new story of history, the return of the artist, the recovery of compassion, the redemption of worship, an end to shame, the prevention and cure of addiction, the celebration of the young, letting go, and empowerment for an ecological age. Each of these is the heading of a section, with at least a couple paragraphs on each.

“When society lacks awe or mysticism, life becomes trivialized. As Rabbi Heschel put it, ‘Forfeit your sense of awe, let your conceit diminish your ability to revere, and the universe becomes a marketplace for you.’” [page 30]

“In awakening our capacity for cosmic ritual and for a mysticism that is more aesthetic than ascetic, creation spirituality promotes a movement among all world religions called deep ecumenism. This ecumenical movement is based less on theological position papers than on shared mystical practices. Meeting in sweatlodges, ceremonial dances, and rituals ancient and new that allow us to experience the
awe that we share in common – this is the heart of deep ecumenism.” [page 31]

“Compassion has been sentimentalized and severed from its relationship to justice making and celebration. Creation spirituality resets the jewel of authentic religious faith within the matrix of compassion. By doing so, creation spirituality links the struggle for justice with the yearning for mysticism.” [page 35]

“Creation spirituality offers an avenue of grace by sounding an end to internalized oppression, shame, and self-hatred. We are not here to bemoan our existence, to blame ourselves or others, or to wallow in our sinfulness. Rather, we are here to return blessing for blessing and to give our gift back to the larger community.” [page 37]

“Creation spirituality empowers us for an ecological era, a time when we cease looking up for divinity and start looking around. ... When Jesus preached that the reign of God was among us, he preached about a panentheistic relationship to divinity. Our capacity to experience the divinity all around us is mysticism.” [page 41]

Chapter 3. Gifts of Wisdom: Rules for Living in the Universe

“For too long Westerners have been alienated from the universe, stuck in our human-centered world. The new cosmic story can help us overcome that alienation. [page 43] “Wisdom is about living harmoniously in the universe, which is itself a place of order and justice that triumphs over chaos and employs chance for its ultimate purposes.” [page 43]

The rest of this chapter is a series of one-paragraph meditations on such subjects as justice, extravagance, creativity, and emptiness.

Chapter 4. Cosmology, Liberation, and Wisdom: a Holy Trinity

This chapter is a response to the question of whether Fox is a Christian. “I am a trinitarian Christian. Those who think that Christianity is exclusively about Jesus are in fact heretics. They deny the trinitarian divinity.” [page 55]

“The trinitarian way of seeing the world is rich and hums with energy. I would like to present one trinitarian symbol that I sense coming together in our time – the Holy Trinity of Cosmology, Liberation, and Wisdom.” [page 56]

The chapter continues with a section on each of these themes.

“Cosmology is the human effort to understand and enter the cosmos by way of science, mysticism, and art.” [page 56] He then goes on to describe the first person of the Trinity as “the Subject behind the subjects that science studies”, the “Beloved One to whom the mystic responds”, and “the Artist of artists” [pages 56-57]

“Now consider how God as Divine Child, the second person of the Trinity, is richly named by the movement of liberation. God is the Liberator. Such a person in human form is a prophet, as Jesus pronounced himself.” [page 57] “God inspires, moves, teaches, and graces all persons as prophets. The divinity in us breaks through not only as creator and co-creators but especially as prophets who interfere with injustice while proclaiming freedom for the downtrodden.” [page 58]

“Wisdom can be understood to correspond to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the fecund
Part Two. Gifts of Liberation

In the same way that the first part of this book focused on personal spiritual development, this second part of the book focuses on justice. In particular, Fox wants to develop what he calls “a liberation theology for First World peoples’. To give some background, liberation theology is political interpretation of Catholicism that started in Latin America and has been tolerated but not actively endorsed by the Vatican. In this part of the book, Fox is presenting the idea that people in the First World (what he calls “the overdeveloped countries”) need to be liberated from a spiritual impoverishment that is parallel to the physical impoverishment of the Third World (“the underdeveloped countries”). Fox believes that Americans and other First World people need to be liberated from their spiritual impoverishment so that they play their role in ending the physical impoverishment of the Third World.

A subtext of this part has to do with the internal politics of the Catholic church. The terms ‘first world’ and ‘third world’ are used almost interchangeably with ‘North America’ and ‘South America’. Europe, the power center of the Catholic church, is almost completely ignored, particularly in Chapter 8. In Chapter 8 he comes very close to saying something that he probably did not dare to put into so many words: If North American Catholics and South American Catholics could form a common vision of the mission of the church, why would they need Rome?

Chapter 5. Establishing the Context

“If the quest for justice is inherent in every creature – a thesis I laid out in The Coming of the Cosmic Christ and for which considerable scientific evidence exists today – why aren’t North Americans and other ‘First Worlders’ more involved in the struggle? The answer lies in the fact that critical thinking is required to apply the values of liberation theology to a ‘First World’ cultural context and this need has not yet been adequately addressed. You cannot transfer liberation theology from a ‘Third World’ context to the ‘First World’ and call it liberation; it might be called ideology; it might be called instruction; it might encourage guilt or shame or some limited action. But it cannot serve a liberation movement; it will not do the job, for it lacks incarnational roots. Translation is required – not just of the Spanish or Portuguese words about liberation, but concerning the historical and cultural context in which persons and their institutions find themselves, about how to change people, how to ignite their self-interest, and so on.” [pages 69-70]

Fox believes that the liberation of the First World is linked to the liberation of the Third World. “Why is it, for example, that the United States, which comprises 2 percent of the world’s population, is currently using 60 percent of the world’s illicit drugs? The buyer must be liberated as well as the seller.” [page 71] (This, by the way, is one of many examples of Fox’s innumeracy. His 2 % figure is not even close; the US actually has 4-5% of the world’s population. I have no idea whether the 60% figure is accurate.)

Chapter 6. Can Creation Spirituality Liberate “First World” Peoples?

In this chapter Fox relates creation spirituality to the description of liberation theology given by
theologian Leonardo Boff.

“The basic methodology of liberation theology is to insist that theology is to be practiced inductively: that is, theory must grow out of reflection on lived experience, on our concrete historical and social realities. Our experience represents the work of the Spirit in the history of the people, the history of creation.” [page 73] Fox relates this point to his vision that creation spirituality engages people creatively, both in the creation of their own rituals and in work for social justice. “All of this has one goal: personal and social transformation. All of this emphasizes experience over institution.” [page 74]

“Liberation theology, [Boff] writes, ‘begins with indignation at the poverty experienced by God’s people, a poverty that God surely does not will.’” [page 76] Fox relates this to an indignation at the both the physical poverty that persists in the First World, and the spiritual poverty “that is palpable where consumerism reigns and materialism runs peoples’ lives; where the young are rendered bored or violent to self and others.” [page 78]

Fox attributes this spiritual poverty to the loss of joy that comes from a loss of the sense of awe and of belonging that a good cosmology provides. “Joy is lost when cosmology is lost. Delight is reduced to the pseudo-pleasures of buying and selling, winning and gossiping, living vicariously in heroes and soap operas. Joy – a gift of the spirit – is the starting point for the spiritual journey.” [page 83]

“The north, which is so overdeveloped in our bureaucracies, in our heads, in our addictions, in our capacity for denial, in our fear, in our militarism, in our misuse of the world’s resources, remains severely underdeveloped in our imaginations and spirits and indignation. We need to get on with the task of liberating ourselves.” [page 87]

Chapter 7. Liberation from, Liberation to: An Exodus Story for Overdeveloped Peoples

This chapter is a sequence of things to be liberated from contrasted with things to be liberated to. Each of these pairs gets between two paragraphs and two pages of explanation

- From the secularization of everything to the resacralization of all things
- From boredom and passivity to wonder, creativity, and empowerment
- From taking for granted to thankfulness
- From waste to recycling
- From tiredness to youthfulness
- From complacency to compassion
- From art for art’s sake to art for Earth’s sake
- From fundamentalist fear to trust of the cosmos
- From an “I think therefore I am” philosophy to a “Creation begets therefore we are” philosophy
- From theism to mystical panentheism.
- From overly institutional religion to living mysticism.
- From sexism to gender justice
- From unemployment to good work
From an anthropocentric and nondemocratic capitalism to an Earth-centered economics
From the fantasy dream life of advertising to an authentic eschatology about justice.

“Eschatology comes from the Greek word for the ‘future’ – true eschatology is a dream life about a better future. But the better future that so appeals to our imaginations and dreams is not one of better goods but of more justice. ... A pseudo-dream life banishes such a dream. It fills our fantasies with a different agenda, one that preoccupies our imaginations and distracts us from more noble dreams.” [page 113]

Chapter 8. Toward a Spirituality of the Americas

“One lesson I have learned in writing this essay is how much creation spirituality and liberation theology have in common, that is, how American both movements are.” [page 115] This chapter is Fox’s call for a united front between North American creation spirituality and South American liberation theology, resulting in an “ecclesiogenesis ... the birthing of a church, of a people becoming church in a new way.” [page 125]

He spends the first part of this chapter drawing parallels between the experiences of North and South America: Both have overcome European colonialism. They share ecological concerns. Both “find their youth in crisis”. They are linked by holding opposite sides of the drug problem and the debt problem. They share traditions of wilderness mysticism and pragmatic philosophy.

“The largest Roman Catholic church exists in Brazil and the wealthiest, best educated, and most active Roman Catholics live in the United States. Is there not a natural affinity between these two bodies?” [page 125] The unstated implication here is: If these two bodies were united, how could Rome stand against them?

“Recently a young man told me that he was struggling deeply over whether to stay in the church or leave it. I suggested to him that there was a third option – that of birthing a church. Ecclesiogenesis will challenge many to creativity, especially the young. A church renewed by a spiritual vision is just one area in which a renaissance needs to occur in our time.” [page 126]

“If we cannot transform our institutions – or which the church is a significant one – we are lost and most likely the earth itself is also doomed.” [page 126]

“In all church bodies today there is a deep split between justice-oriented people and fundamentalists. The latter get more vocal, even though they constitute a tiny minority in these traditions, and more energy gets wasted trying to mollify them. What will need to happen is for divisions in the church denominations to take place in order to allow new connectings to occur, linking those from various traditions who agree that justice is a constitutive element of the gospel.” [pages 126-127]

“At the foundation of ecclesiogenesis in liberation theology is the base community movement. ... The small group builds community more effectively than institutional parochial structures can. These communities form a polar tension to institutional structures but are not meant to rival them as such. ... The term base means that ‘the church is not being thought of from the top down, but from the bottom up, from the grassroots.’” [pages 127-128]

“In the base communities, the experience of community is more important than the emphasis on societal conformity found in most parish contexts. ... What has occurred in the base communities with their emphasis on leadership at the base is that the Spirit remakes the entire church.” [page 130] Fox goes
Fox then lists a number of base-community-like movements in the United States, including such movements as 12-Step programs, support groups, hospice, and deep ecology communities. “In this book I have argued, in effect, that the dominant religious soil in which the West has planted Christianity is in great part exhausted. Those who still wish to follow the message of compassion and the person of Jesus and other prophets of the West are called to do some replanting in richer soil. The church of the Americas offers an opportunity in our time when historical circumstances come together in this hemisphere. ... If the church of the Americas were to seize this moment in history, for example, with the liberating movement of liberation theology in the Brazilian church and the movement of creation spirituality in the United States, we might all see a renewed expression of religious wisdom.” [page 145]

Chapter 9. Cosmology as Liberation: A Lesson From Job

Fox interprets the story of Job as an allegory for the comfortable people of the First World. Job’s comfortable life is disturbed by an apparently undeserved and unexpected suffering that Fox relates to the “dark night of the soul” being experienced by First Worlders today. Job confronts God with the apparent injustice of his suffering and is given not the explanation or apology he might have expected, but rather a vision of the immensity of God. “God’s answer to Job’s dark night of the soul is to challenge him with the wonder and amazement of the universe. Job is chagrined by this approach – he is learning his place in the universe.” [page 148]

“Here we learn that cosmology – beholding the awe and terror of the universe – leads to clear thinking, to seeing things in perspective, and therefore to repentance. ... Healing is restored when Job and his community see their plight in the light of the entire creation. Then happiness returns to Job’s life. His healing is not so much a matter of sin or blame as it is of perspective. He could not find healing in an anthropocentric view of the world or of the human-divine relationship. The healing comes with the breakthrough of a cosmic awareness.” [pages 148-149]

“Like Job, our species might have a happy ending to its story once we realize what he did: *That his world was too small.* Whenever we attempt to live or practice education, religion, politics, work, or economics without a cosmology, *our world is too small.* If our world is too small, so too are our souls.” [page 149]

If we have begun to intuit the awesomeness of the universe and the awesomeness of our being here, then it is time to honor one another. ... In this way, we will begin to live out the morality that follows from a cosmic spirituality and we will learn to ground our struggle for justice, rights, and responsibilities in the most common ground of all: our shared experience of awe.” [page 150]

**Discussion Questions**

Do the stories of the origins of the universe, Earth, and human life have spiritual significance for you?

Would you call Fox a Christian? Why or why not?

In the struggle for justice, is mysticism a help or a hindrance?