

HAYDEN: Bible and Conservation

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can make profit off conservation.' They might. But what's at work there is a greed, and if things don't go well, you burn out and you say, 'The hell with it—I'll lapse into my old ways,' [without] the framework of religion or spirituality to try to keep you moving down a positive path."

In short, there's nothing like the fervor of a convert.

But is Hayden on a search for meaning or a means to an end? Does he view religion as another tool to be used in the protection of the environment, like the federal Clean Air Act? Others before him, like author and naturalist E.O. Wilson, have said that one does not have to believe in myth to appreciate its power to persuade.

"No, you can't think of it in terms like what conception of God would be useful to us," Hayden answered. "There's either a God or there's not. My personal view is that there is one God, or what the native people would call one sacred creator."

A Catholic, Hayden says he's a sometime churchgoer who, not surprisingly, has difficulty with the Vatican's orthodoxy on such matters as ordination of women.

How Scripture is interpreted, he says, can have profound consequences on public policy. He re-

calls Interior Secretary James Watt's 1981 explanation for opening up public lands to development and mining.

"My responsibility is to follow the Scriptures, which call upon us to occupy the land until Jesus returns," Watt testified before the House Interior Committee. "I don't know how many generations we can count on before the Lord returns," Watt said.

When his remarks generated criticism, Watt later elaborated: "We don't know when He is coming, so we have a stewardship responsibility . . . to see that people are provided for until He does come and a new order is put in place. So we cannot waste or despoil that which we've been given in the Earth because we don't know our tenure here."

Nevertheless, Hayden still views Watt as "the perfect example of using the Second Coming as some kind of twisted rationale for destroying the Earth as we know it, or helping ourselves to its benefits."

Hayden rejects the accusation that environmentalists, in wanting to revere all the Earth, are akin to pagans who hold polytheistic beliefs.

"The paganism smear has almost replaced the communism smear. They consider this total heresy," Hayden said.

It isn't just the religious right that needs to look anew at Scriptures, he says. His book rebukes mainstream Judaism, Christianity and Islam for standing on the sidelines too long on environmental issues.

Hayden is encouraged by growing recognition within the Roman Catholic Church, old-line Protestants and evangelicals in America of the importance of protecting the environment. Thinking in terms of "stewardship," he said, is far better than the "Lord of the universe" mentality.

What is needed, Hayden argues, is a third alternative, something he calls "kinship" with the universe—a recognition that humans are made of the same stuff as the rest of creation, and that all created things are interdependent.

"Even if you believe in one God or one sacred being, it's evident that that being manifests itself in multiple forms, multiple persons. Trees are not the same as mountains. Every single person that ever was and ever will be is unique and is different. But they're all part of a whole. . . . There's one creation with an infinite variety of forms and no two things are the same. Every single thing manifests itself uniquely and yet at the same time everything is related to everything else. It's amazing!"