
As statements of Christian faith, creeds serve to both summarize the precepts of the faith and unite Christians in that faith. In his work A Creed for Today: Faith and Commitment for Our New Earth Awareness, Irish theologian Donal Dorr re-imagines the traditional creed with an emphasis on deeper understandings of the Trinity; the universe and our place in it; what Incarnation means; and how creation itself reveals God’s nature and being. In this re-conception, he produces a nuanced, deeply theological, and poetic creed that ties theology, spirituality, and ecology together in a prophetic and profound witness to both the mystery of God and the concrete reality of the created world.

This work was prompted not just by the current ecological crisis facing humanity but also in response to what Dorr sees as a fourth major development in spirituality after Vatican II, the first three being humanistic psychology, feminist theology, and theologies of liberation. None of these are adjunct to the central understandings of Christian faith but rather serve to deepen our understanding of God and human life and the relationships in which all people are embedded. In the same way, ecological perceptions and actions are not simply supplemental to our knowledge of the relationship between human beings and God but are central to that understanding. Stewardship of creation and care for all beings is thus an imperative, not merely a good action.

The essays which make up the bulk of the book are focused mainly on bringing together ecological ethics and spirituality with fundamental Christian beliefs, primarily centered on the Trinity, adding greater depth to traditional Christian theological understandings of these foundational Christian precepts. The major strength of the work is this reframing and deeper explication of these familiar concepts in light of an ecological spirituality. The section on Jesus, titled “Integral Incarnation,” is especially original in its approach to the embodied human life of Jesus of Nazareth. For example, Dorr points out that Jesus exists not just as a human being in a certain point in history but is also the result (as we are) of evolutionary processes that existed before his birth and that the “matter” which made up his body is with us still, recycled into our own world as material from all human bodies eventually will be (63–64). The section on the Holy Spirit, which follows the insights of Christ as savior and transformer not just of humanity but all of the created world, is similarly original, expanding traditional understandings of the work of the Spirit in creation and in human lives and relationships.

Overall, this book provokes a depth of thought unlike most other works on ecology and ethics. Some may find his conclusions a bit over the top in their approach, or too poetic to be practical, but they are
conclusions grounded in solid theological reasoning rooted in Scripture (which is liberally referred to throughout) and Christian history. This is married to science and current understandings of the ecological crises humanity currently faces, producing a “creed for today” that affirms authentic Christian belief while situating that belief in our current lived reality. This has the effect of both enhancing the mystery of the divine while also making this mystery more concrete and integral to human life.

This work would be suitable for advanced undergraduates in theology or ethics and is especially suitable for students of spirituality and ecological ethics. It is also a thought-provoking work for personal spiritual introspection and growth, especially for those who sometimes struggle to articulate the deep connections that exist between the created world and Christ.

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_Thought Experiments in Ethics_ is an attempt to provide a novel view of thought experiments from the perspective of the university professor who aims to go beyond theoretical education. Through Kovács’s work, lecturers in Christian ethics and anthropology now have a chance to experience working with thought experiments in a way which goes beyond the limits of argumentation. The originality of the book is in its treatment of thought experiments: they are not simple illustrations, or elements of ethical lines of thought, but rather tools for education. The challenge they pose to the intuitive apparatus of students might not only lead to understanding, but to true ethical conversion.

Kovács works not only with the “classics” of thought experiments, such as the trolley problem, the violinist scenario, or the experience machine, but tries to broaden the scope by including stories from the Bible and literature. The most characteristic example comes from FerencSánta’s _The Fifth Seal_, a novel centered around the story of Tomoceuszkatiti and Gyugyu, an evil tyrant and a slave. Kovács confronts the reader with the necessity to choose between the fate of the two protagonists of the story and thus successfully demonstrates how thought experiments transcend the limits of argumentation. In being whirled by the dilemma, readers can have firsthand experience about how thought experiments work. They have a certain “existential force” due to their power to “reveal something hidden about ourselves” (7), they work with specific rules, such as “Tertia non datur!” (9) and are analogous with the reality of the readers (10). The key role of these three features is also demonstrated through the Parable of the Good