

One topic that could have been discussed more extensively is the unwritten social norms, values, and attitudes that shape people's willingness to create and obey social rules. Steinberg certainly acknowledges the importance of these factors, especially in chapter 9. However, he only briefly discusses some factors that cause attitudes to change, before moving on to strategies for entrenching new ideas as formal rules. Given that changes in attitudes and rules must go hand in hand, more discussion of the literature from psychology, sociology, and other fields could have offered additional insight here.

Overall, *Who Rules the Earth?* offers a clear argument, firm grounding in research, and practical guidance for those who want to have a voice in shaping the rules that we live by. It will certainly be of value to Christians as we learn to work together to help our society achieve greater sustainability.

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**CREATION IN CRISIS: Science, Ethics, Theology**  
by Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014. xii + 388 pages. Paperback; \$50.00. ISBN: 9781626981003.

King David was enjoying his relationship with his wife Bathsheba and their infant son, when Nathan the prophet came over and told him a story of a rich man, who, for his own convenience, had taken away his poor neighbor's one resource, a valued lamb. Angered, David declared, "The man who did this deserves to die!" only to be told by Nathan, "You are the man!" (2 Sam. 12:5, 7). Now Joshtrom Kureethadam declares that the one resource of many poor in the tropics, productivity of the land, has been taken away because of climate change. We in the wealthy countries are to blame: our affluent, sinful lifestyle has caused an ecological crisis, an injustice with physical, moral, and spiritual aspects, and we must repent through an ecological conversion. The author is a Roman Catholic priest, born in Kerala, India, in 1966, who defended his doctoral thesis, *René Descartes and the Philosophical Roots of the Ecological Crisis*, in 2007, and is now secretary and lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy of the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome.

A brief introduction outlines the book's message. Then, Part I, "Are We Tearing Down Our Home?," traces the formation of Earth and its biosphere—home to humanity—from the Big Bang, through the accretion of the solar system, to the origin and evolution of life, culminating in modern humans. Over millennia, agriculture and industrialization shaped civilization, and "some of the major world religions were born: the great mysti-

cal religions of the East like Hinduism and Buddhism, and the great religions of revelation like Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Middle East ..." (p. 45). All this occurred on Earth, "a unique home for life in the infinitely vast universe" (p. 46). But now our home is evidently in peril: the scientific community has confirmed the ecological crisis, with global climate change its worst feature. Humans are deliberately destroying our common home.

In Parts II, III, and IV of the book, Kureethadam describes the ecological crisis as "a triple cry—of the earth, of the poor, and of the gods" (p. 78). The earth cries out: Your greenhouse gases have made my climate intolerable for present-day life, with the rising oceans inundating the best land, and with droughts, extinctions, pollution, and waste. The poor cry out: Insecure food supply, scarce fresh water, and bad sanitation are driving us from our homes as ecological migrants. Growth in our population is not the problem, but injustice is: you rich consume and destroy the earth's productivity, while we poor suffer the worst consequences. The gods cry out: You fail "to look at the physical world as God's creation and abode, and to treat God's home with the due reverence" (p. 293). You have lost sight of how the whole of creation is "destined to be redeemed and transformed in Christ" (p. 324). The ecological crisis is a "sin against God, humanity, and the world" (p. 340). Kureethadam's conclusion is then a call to respond to the ecological crisis. Following the example of Francis of Assisi, "we need to embrace the poor with the same love" shown by him, and to "adopt a lifestyle that is sober and frugal, remembering the words of Jesus that it is only the meek who will inherit the earth" (p. 372).

Kureethadam thoroughly documents his statements with numerous citations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), of journals including *Nature*, *Science*, and *Philosophical Transactions*, and references to related books for nontechnical audiences (but not to environmental textbooks). The moral and theological aspects are supported by quotations from scriptural texts, mostly biblical but a few Islamic and Hindu, by declarations of several modern Popes, and by writings by Roman Catholics and other Christians. Calvin DeWitt, John Houghton, Alister McGrath, John Polkinghorne, and Fred Van Dyke are among those cited. The book has a 14-page index but no illustrations other than a devastated landscape on the cover designed by Valentín Concha-Núñez.

Kureethadam's *Creation in Crisis* is a deeply troubling account of the ecological crisis, with a clear explanation for those without a background in science, and with an original discussion of the morality and theology that challenges all readers. However, Kureethadam implies that the emission of greenhouse gases is a wanton

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destructive act, rather than the by-product of development of energy resources which has greatly increased the quality of life for many. There is no mention of much progress in environmental stewardship, for example, by closing coal-fired power plants, by lessening runoff of nutrients into water bodies, or by curbing industrial and vehicular air pollution. Nevertheless, the book's importance is confirmed by its parallels with the May 2015 encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato si' Care for Our Common Home*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html). This relatively brief encyclical has better advice than *Creation in Crisis* on practical actions to take to lessen the ecological crisis, but it has to summarize much, whereas Kureethadam provides a good resource for those wanting more details. ASA members need to pay attention to the message of this book, although its liberal and Roman Catholic theology will be an obstacle for some evangelicals.

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**COSMIC COMMONS: Spirit, Science, and Space** by John Hart. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013. xi + 415 pages. Paperback; \$40.00. ISBN: 9781610973182.

John Hart is professor of Christian ethics at Boston University's School of Theology (2004 to present). For two decades before, he was a professor, theology department chair, and founding director of the Environmental Studies Program at Carroll College, a Roman Catholic liberal arts college in Helena, Montana. Hart has three graduate degrees, including the PhD from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and has worked as principal writer of various pastoral letters for the Midwestern Catholic, the Western US, and the Canadian Catholic bishops regional groups. In addition, he has participated in native spiritual leaders and human rights initiatives, which involved being a member of the delegation of the International Indian Treaty Council (an NGO) to the United Nations International Human Rights Commission, Geneva, Switzerland (1987, 1990), and as an invited observer at the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which was connected with the UN Earth Summit (1992). Hart is widely published as an academic theologian, including four books prior to the one under review: *The Spirit of the Earth—A Theology of the Land* (Paulist Press, 1984); *Ethics and Technology: Innovation and Transformation in Community Contexts* (Pilgrim Press, 1997); *What Are They Saying about ... Environmental Theology?* (Paulist Press, 2004); and *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics* (Rowman & Littlefield's Nature's Meaning Series, 2006).

These credentials need to be emphasized so that readers do not dismiss out of hand—as most academics and scientists have been instinctively trained to do—the thought experiment that is at the heart of *Cosmic Commons*: how might human beings prepare themselves for meeting and interacting with extraterrestrial intelligent (ETI) beings should they exist in the universe? Hart's pilgrimage to this topic began with formal training in social ethics, developed through engagements with environmental theologies, and has been honed over prolonged conversation with native, indigenous, and Amerindian conversation partners. Amid growing discussions of the need for humankind to attempt space travel, and perhaps even to colonize and inhabit other planetary environments, Hart is particularly concerned that we will be propelled by morally deficient and behaviorally destructive models of exploration and conquest such as those encoded in what scholars have called the "Discovery Doctrine." He argues that we should be guided by more recent ethically cogent and ecologically friendly guidelines such as those produced by the United Nations on Earth and outer space, rather than by a doctrine which facilitated European genocide in the Americas over the past five hundred years. Encounters with ETI premised on "Discovery" mentality and attitudes could be tragic, not only for alien creatures but surely for the human species, particularly if these "others" are more technologically advanced in their destructive capacities than we are.

There are four steps to Hart's thought-experiment, each (part) of which includes three chapters. *Terra Firma*, Part I, uncovers both the economic and political roots of Earth's socioecological crisis, the latter especially as unfolded in the history of the Americas, and overviews initial steps that humanity has taken toward restoration of the Earth's socioecological commons. Part 2, *Terra Conscientia*, follows through on the trajectory charted by deployment of "Discovery" commitments as applied to possible ETI "contact," retrieves voices, specifically from the Christian theological tradition, that are suggestive of alternative postures and convictions for considering the possibility of ETI, and outlines an overarching socio-eco-ethical framework for such "contact" between *Homo sapiens* and others. *Terra Incognita*, Part 3, presses forward into imaginative construals of "contact" along three lines: (1) theoretically through the filling out of Hart's proposed "cosmosocioecological praxis ethics"; (2) documentarily through analytical assessment of internationally developed and agreed upon space documents and principles developed in the last generation; and (3) historically through scholarly assessment of alleged prior encounters with ETI, including in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947, and in the Hudson River Valley, New York region, in the early 1980s—topics taken up at greater length in Hart's companion *Encountering ETI: Aliens in Avatar and the Americas* (Cascade Books, 2014).