

INSPIRED SUSTAINABILITY

Planting Seeds for Action

by

ERIN LOTHES BIVIANO

ORBIS  BOOKS
Maryknoll, New York 10545

Ecology and Justice

An Orbis Series on Integral Ecology

Advisory Board Members

Mary Evelyn Tucker

John A. Grim

Leonardo Boff

Sean McDonagh

The Orbis Series on Integral Ecology publishes books seeking to integrate an understanding of Earth's interconnected life systems with sustainable social, political, and economic systems that enhance the Earth community. Books in the series concentrate on ways to

- Reexamine human-Earth relations in light of contemporary cosmological and ecological science.
- Develop visions of common life marked by ecological integrity and social justice.
- Expand on the work of those exploring such fields as integral ecology, climate justice, Earth law, ecofeminism, and animal protection.
- Promote inclusive participatory strategies that enhance the struggle of Earth's poor and oppressed for ecological justice.
- Deepen appreciation for dialogue within and among religious traditions on issues of ecology and justice.
- Encourage spiritual discipline, social engagement, and the transformation of religion and society toward these ends.

Viewing the present moment as a time for fresh creativity and inspired by the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the series seeks authors who speak to ecojustice concerns and who bring into this dialogue perspectives from the Christian communities, from the world's religions, from secular and scientific circles, or from new paradigms of thought and action.

Founded in 1970, Orbis Books endeavors to publish works that enlighten the mind, nourish the spirit, and challenge the conscience. The publishing arm of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Orbis seeks to explore the global dimensions of the Christian faith and mission, to invite dialogue with diverse cultures and religious traditions, and to serve the cause of reconciliation and peace. The books published reflect the views of their authors and do not represent the official position of the Maryknoll Society. To learn more about Maryknoll and Orbis Books, please visit our website at www.maryknollsociety.org.

Sections of chapters 1 and 3 appeared in “Come with Me into the Fields: Inspiring Creation Ministry among Faith Communities,” *New Theology Review*, March 2013, and “Worldviews on Fire: Understanding the Inspiration for Congregational Religious Environmentalism,” *CrossCurrents*, December 2012. The author extends sincere thanks to the editors.

Copyright © 2016 by Erin Lothes Biviano

Published by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545-0302.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Queries regarding rights and permissions should be addressed to: Orbis Books, P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, New York 10545-0302.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Lothes Biviano, Erin, author.

Title: Inspired sustainability : planting seeds for action / Erin Lothes Biviano.

Description: Maryknoll : Orbis Books, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015039181 | ISBN 9781626981638 (pbk.)

Subjects: LCSH: Human ecology—Religious aspects—Christianity. | Ecotheology. | Human ecology—Religious aspects. | Sustainability.

Classification: LCC BT695.5 .L68 2016 | DDC 261.8/8—dc23 LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015039181>

Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
Preface	xv
Introduction: From Ideally Green to Really Green	xix
CHAPTER ONE	
Seven Patterns in Green Spirituality	1
Seven Patterns in Green Spirituality	2
<i>Scientific Literacy</i>	2
<i>Awareness of Global Interdependence</i>	15
<i>Commitment to Social Justice</i>	22
<i>Reverence for Creation</i>	27
<i>Interfaith Connections</i>	29
<i>Expanding Religious Visions of God, Neighbor, and Self</i>	32
<i>Independent Thinkers</i>	34
Igniting the Fire	37
<i>The Spark That Starts It: Noticing Something</i>	38
<i>Bringing on the Heat: Influential Information</i>	40
<i>Stoking the Flame: Leadership</i>	42
<i>Following Friends: Models Make It Possible</i>	44
Hope and Realism	47
CHAPTER TWO	
Engaging Head, Heart, and Hands to Get Over the Gaps	53
Identifying the Gaps	58
The Knowledge Gap: Climate Change—Really?	59
<i>Literacy Limitations</i>	61

<i>Built-in Cognitive Limitations</i>	64
<i>Moral Limitations</i>	79
The Caring Gap: I'd Love to but . . .	84
<i>Consumerism</i>	87
<i>Defeated by "Hidden" Values</i>	88
<i>Progress</i>	91
<i>Disinterest</i>	93
The Action Gap: Just—Do It! The Armchair	
Environmentalist	94
<i>Being Busy</i>	95
<i>Being Comfortable</i>	98
<i>Being Habituated</i>	102
<i>Being Overwhelmed</i>	108
CHAPTER THREE	
Finding Strength in Numbers	111
The Power of Group Energy	111
<i>Renegotiating Worldviews: Creating New</i>	
<i>Doctrinal Syntheses</i>	113
<i>Integrating Experiences in Nature</i>	
<i>with Spirituality</i>	116
<i>Reinforcing Shared Values</i>	123
<i>Social Norms Give Values Traction</i>	127
<i>Worship and Celebration</i>	128
The Silent Side of Groups: Congregational	
Complicity in Society	129
<i>The Risk of Political Framing</i>	131
<i>The Divisiveness of Environmental Politics</i>	133
<i>Political Issues Trump Doctrine</i>	137
<i>Pastoral Priorities</i>	139
Conclusion: Collective Conversion	144
CHAPTER FOUR	
The Courage to Continue	146
Fallibility as Disproportion: A Description	
of Existential Unease	149
<i>Perspectival Knowledge as Limited Openness</i>	161

<i>Perspectival Feeling as Particular Preferences</i>	163
<i>Perspectival Motivation as Variable Desires</i>	167
From Fallibility to Fault	168
<i>From Perspective to Bias</i>	168
<i>From Preference to Attachment: Identity and Consumption</i>	170
<i>From Will to Whim</i>	177
Bridging the Gaps: The Balancing Act of Cooperation	180
<i>Intellectual Hospitality: Connecting Limited Knowledge</i>	180
<i>Prioritizing Values: Embracing the Conflicts of Feeling</i>	182
<i>The Gift of the Possible: Empowering Action</i>	185
CHAPTER FIVE	
Renewal and Community Spirit	187
Moving from the Green Blues toward Green Possibility	189
The Depth of Hospitable Knowing: Knowing Oneself as Related to All Life	192
<i>Invitation to Deeper Awareness of Interrelation</i>	195
<i>From Understanding Interrelation to Compassion</i>	200
<i>Diagnosing Delusion, Prescribing Simplicity</i>	201
Evagrius and Prayer: Prioritizing the Passions	204
<i>The Battle: Thoughts and Demons</i>	206
<i>The Weapon of Focused Prayer</i>	210
<i>Community Support</i>	213
Holy Companionship: The Gift of the Earth and What Is Not Possible	216
<i>The Complex Vocation of Adam One and Adam Two</i>	220
<i>The Gift of Technological Reason Is Not Absolute</i>	223
<i>The Earth Is a Gift That Isn't Free</i>	225
<i>The Vocation for Wonder and Holy Companionship</i>	227
CHAPTER SIX	
Spiritual Community and Shared Self-Giving	229
Interexistent Sacrifice: <i>Shalom</i>	235

Afterword	241
Research Design and Methods	243
Summary Description of Method	243
<i>Theoretical Sources of Method</i>	244
<i>Influences</i>	244
Coherence of Green Blues Method with Grounded Theory	244
Correlation of Grounded Theory and Liberation Theology Method	244
Developing Green Blues Method as a Liberation Theology	248
<i>Intersection with Environmental Decision Theory</i>	250
The Framework of the Study	250
Research Participants (See Appendix B)	250
Strategies	252
<i>Ethnography</i>	252
<i>The Advantage of Focus Groups</i>	253
Strategies for Increasing Objective Assessment of the Data	255
<i>Verification</i>	256
Justification for Strategy of Ranking Codes	257
Methods Not Used	258
Summary	260
LIST OF APPENDICES	261
Appendix A: Focus Group Questions	263
Appendix B: Research Participants	267
Appendix C: Topic Charts	271
Appendix D: Hypotheses	279
Index	281