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At Home In The Cosmos



Synopsis

Now in paperback! This original synthesis of science and theology sheds new light on the meaning of the world, and reveals the poetry that fills our universe. "A lively and cogent introduction to the intersection of science, ecology, Christianity, and cosmology."--America --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

Toolan, associate editor of *America* magazine, surveys the rapprochement between religion and science, not for its own sake but to illuminate questions of environmental responsibility: How should we understand humanity's place in the world and our role in valuing and protecting the natural order? In assembling his sources, Toolan draws from an "arcadian tradition" of scientists, theologians and environmental writers for whom science "can only enhance and deepen our understanding and appreciation of the environment." The book's most original material is Toolan's retelling of how religion and science have shaped Western attitudes toward the environment; he gives a more sophisticated account of biblical and classical Christian theologies of nature than is usually reflected in environmentalist rhetoric. Other sections of the book have a recycled flavor, especially those describing "the state of the earth" and the cultural implications of "the new physics," in which everything post-Einsteinian or postmodern is assumed to be on the side of ecovirtue. Toolan speaks as if science itself could serve as a moral compass: "Will we choose to honor the laws of physics or not? That's the moral question of the twenty-first century." Although the book has

some appeal as an introductory text in environmental ethics from a religious perspective, introductory students may not be well served by Toolan's quirkily teleological interpretation of Darwinism or sufficiently challenged by his polarized treatment of ecological issues. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

In the contemporary discussion of environmental issues Christians are often the bad guys "speciesists" who are insensitive to all animals other than the human. The Christian's ecological fall from grace is said to have begun with the Book of Genesis, in which the Lord sets humans apart from other creatures, giving humans dominion over the rest of creation. Toolan, associate editor of America magazine, takes a different tact, arguing that, from the beginning, religionists have been as captivated in wonder at the universe as scientists. He suggests that it is Adam Smith (who developed fundamental laws of economics), not Moses (who proclaimed fundamental laws of God), whom we are to understand in getting to the bottom of the modern environmental crisis. Moreover, it is Toolan's conviction that the old science vs. religion dualism has disappeared in post-Einstein epistemology and that science and religion, each from its own perspective, can join forces in appealing to the world community on behalf of the earth. Although Toolan's book gets a bit repetitive in argument and phrase, it ultimately makes a nicely crafted argument that seeking worldwide ecological consensus is one significant area in which science and religion can engage in cooperative enterprise. Recommended for university and seminary libraries. David I. Fulton, Coll. of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown, NJ Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Thank you

David Toolan's *At Home In The Cosmos* blends science and theology to reveal the meaning of the world and the poetry that fills the universe. As Toolan unites the spiritual with the scientific, he accents the idea that our evolutionary cosmos is filled with promise, is Christ-centered, with incarnational faith providing the appropriate setting for a contemporary scientific cosmology resulting in a fresh basis for an ecological ethic and a new social contract with nature. *At Home In The Cosmos* is enthusiastically recommended reading for students of Christian theology, the balanced roles of science and religion, and environmental issues within a Christian philosophy and perspective.

This book is one of the hardest books I have ever read. Toolan describes everything in a train of

though manner that would have gotten him a D or lower in any college English class. His facts are semi-indisputable. Our environment is in trouble. It may not be dying, it will probably recover after we are gone, but we are making it an unfavorable place for ourselves to live in. That is the basic message. Unfortunately, Toolan gives this in a disjointed fashion, introducing experts that he gives little to no background for and having them give quotes. Some of his logic is also fuzzy, stating the beginning and the end of a line of thinking, but doesn't say how he got from the problem to the solution, yet we are forced to take his conclusion as fact to finish the passage.

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