

Gentle and Challenging

Nancy Wright

The Rev. Nancy Wright grew up in Colorado, feeling God in the mountains. As a second career, after receiving an M.A. in Environmental Conservation Education from N.Y.U., Rev. Nancy Wright worked for a total of nine years at two ecumenical agencies with a focus on stewardship of Creation: CODEL (Coordination in Development), which served people in poor communities internationally through 38 Christian organizations, and, then, Earth Ministry, in Seattle. She is a Lutheran Pastor in Vermont and appointed by the bishop as the Environmental Liaison to the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She co-authored *Ecological Healing: A Christian Vision* (Orbis, 1993).

How well I remember the journey one Saturday each month during the 1970s and 1980s to Riverdale to hear lectures given by Thomas Berry and some of the most prominent people working in religion and the environment. A minister, working in the New York City area with the elderly, I became increasingly alarmed about the environmental crisis. Thomas Berry stimulated my concern to the extent that I then studied for an M.A. in Environmental Conservation Education, wrote a book with his guidance and support, and enjoyed a two-decade ministry related to Earth care.

I well remember a personal/pastoral conversation in his car at one Saturday's end as he drove me back to the city, in which he reassured me about the foundations in Christianity to care for creation. He also spontaneously bought for me one of the most important newly published books I then read for graduate work, when my funds were minimal: *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Roderick Nash).

Fr. Thomas's repeated insistence that *nature should be consulted in all decision making* and that two books (*nature* and *scripture*) should be read, have been foundational.

I will always hear his gentle, challenging voice and be grateful and moved by it.