

Green Hell?

Rich Heffern | Apr. 28, 2010 NCR Today

Sometimes it pays to listen to those who disagree with us. Spiritual director and writer Carol J. Meyer reviewed a new book for us -- *Green Hell*, written by Steve Milloy. Meyer does workshops and conferences in religious education, spirituality and personal development

Green Hell

How Environmentalists Plan to Control Your Life
and What You Can Do to Stop Them

By Steve Milloy

Regnery Publishing

Reviewed by Carol J. Meyer

Taking care of the earth seems like a no-brainer to me, so I was curious about what the opponents could have against it. Well, now I know. If Milloy is at all typical, it comes down to money and freedom. To him, the green movement is too expensive, and might interfere with our current affluent lifestyle, which must be preserved at all costs. And he doesn't want any greens or government telling him what to do or how he should live.

Noticeably absent from his book and thinking is any sense that the earth is in trouble, so he sees green initiatives as ridiculous, or even dangerous. What he demonizes and presents as terrible, I laud and think, "Isn't that great?" As he highlights the influence of environmental organizations, the EPA, and even businesses, I am heartened, while he is running scared. It never seems to occur to him that such wholesale acceptance of all things green might mean it's an idea whose time has come. He still pushes against the tide.

Green Hell might seem convincing to the uncritical reader who never questions what the author left out. He touts the value of genetically-modified foods, DDT, offshore drilling, big cars, bottled water, etc. with no mention of their negative effects to the earth. He never mentions the realities or possibilities of diminishing resources, species extinction, pollution, deforestation, the increase of disease, shrinking oil reserves, plastics in the oceans, and more. I couldn't detect any awareness of the connection of all life or a vision beyond what's good for Americans in the short run.

Sarcasm and disdain feature prominently in Milloy's writing. Never does he give the greens credit for trying to try to come up with solutions, even if they're not perfect yet. He uses extreme examples -- like a woman spending \$2,000 to clean up a chloroflourocarbons -- to discredit the whole green enterprise. A little more respect, openness, and seeking of common ground could serve him, and all of us, well.

I found the book fascinating (as in, "Wow, he really thinks like this!") and interesting, even if I didn't agree with the author's conclusions. I'd encourage you to read it because: 1) It's filled with facts and specifics, and you'll learn a lot; the author has done his homework 2) You'll get a broader perspective and see clearly the anti-environmentalists' concerns 3) You'll learn about the green progress being made and 4) You'll see the inconsistencies and faults of the green movement, which hopefully will inspire humility, self-examination, and correction efforts.

In the end, it all comes down to whether you think the Earth is in trouble or not. If so, the green revolution, regulations, changes, expenses are all small prices to pay for saving the very source of ongoing life. If not ? as Milloy believes -- all this green business is a misguided conspiracy to diminish our lives and control us, and we need to fight against it. Green hell or green heaven ? which one is it?

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