

A CONCERN FOR THE NATURAL WORLD  
AS PART OF FAITH



**THE BIG IDEA:  
PEOPLE CREATE A SPECTRUM OF RELATIONSHIPS  
IN THEIR MINDS**

**AT ONE OF END OF THE SPECTRUM:  
RELATE TO ONESELF-- WHO AM I? WHY DO I  
EXIST?**



AT THE OTHER END:

RELATE TO THE UNIVERSE-- WHAT IS THE  
NATURAL WORLD? HOW AND WHY DO WE  
EXIST WITHIN IT?

# RELATIONSHIPS CONNECT TO ONE ANOTHER

INDIVIDUAL →

COMMUNITY →

ADJACENT NATURAL WORLD /LOCAL GODS→

COSMOS/GOD(S)

## RELIGION AND RELATIONSHIPS

TWO KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS PREDOMINATE  
CURRENTLY WHEN CONSIDERING THIS SPECTRUM

# SOCIAL AND ETHICAL RELATIONS AMONG PEOPLE



DIVINE/HUMAN  
RELATIONS FOR  
SALVATION OR  
LIBERATION FROM  
EARTHLY TRAVAILS



BUT THERE IS A THIRD SET OF RELATIONSHIPS

## THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

- AS INDIVIDUALS TO NATURAL WORLD
- AS COMMUNITY TO NATURAL WORLD
- THE NATURAL WORLD IN TURN TO THE UNIVERSE



Three Pre-science, Pre-industrial Cultures

Vikings

Medieval Christianity

Southwest Indigenous Indian Community

# VIKING VIEW OF COSMOS EXAMPLE

**Numerous gods and goddesses:** recognized as a permanent part of nature

**Servant of the gods**

**Animals of Asgardr:** ravens goats, cats, rams

**Valkyrjur** bring spirits of warrior dead to Asgardr-- demons of carnage

**Nornir:** Beings of cosmological purpose-- control past present future of people

**Jotnar:** Beings of nature-- big and nasty but apart from humans



## Supernatural beings of nature

**Dvergar** are dwarves: are wise, and make things to help humans

**Alfar** are elves

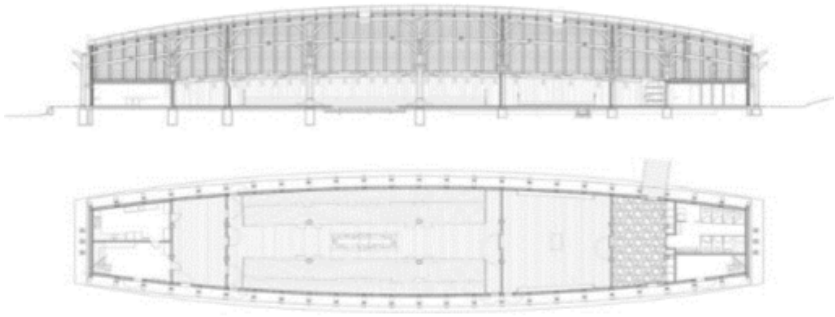
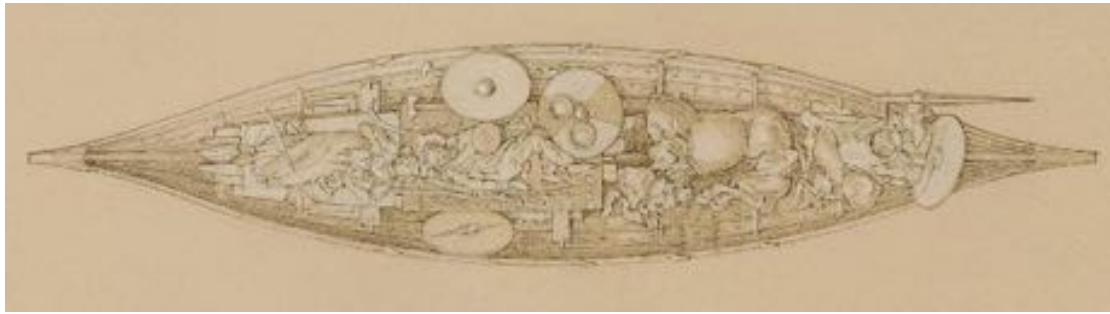
**Huldufolk** are hidden people that create good/bad fortune, and can help humans

**Trolls** are generally underground

**Landvaettir** are land spirits that embody nature, everywhere



Dead not dead; are in different form of living  
Burial Long Boats and Communal Long Houses Are the Same

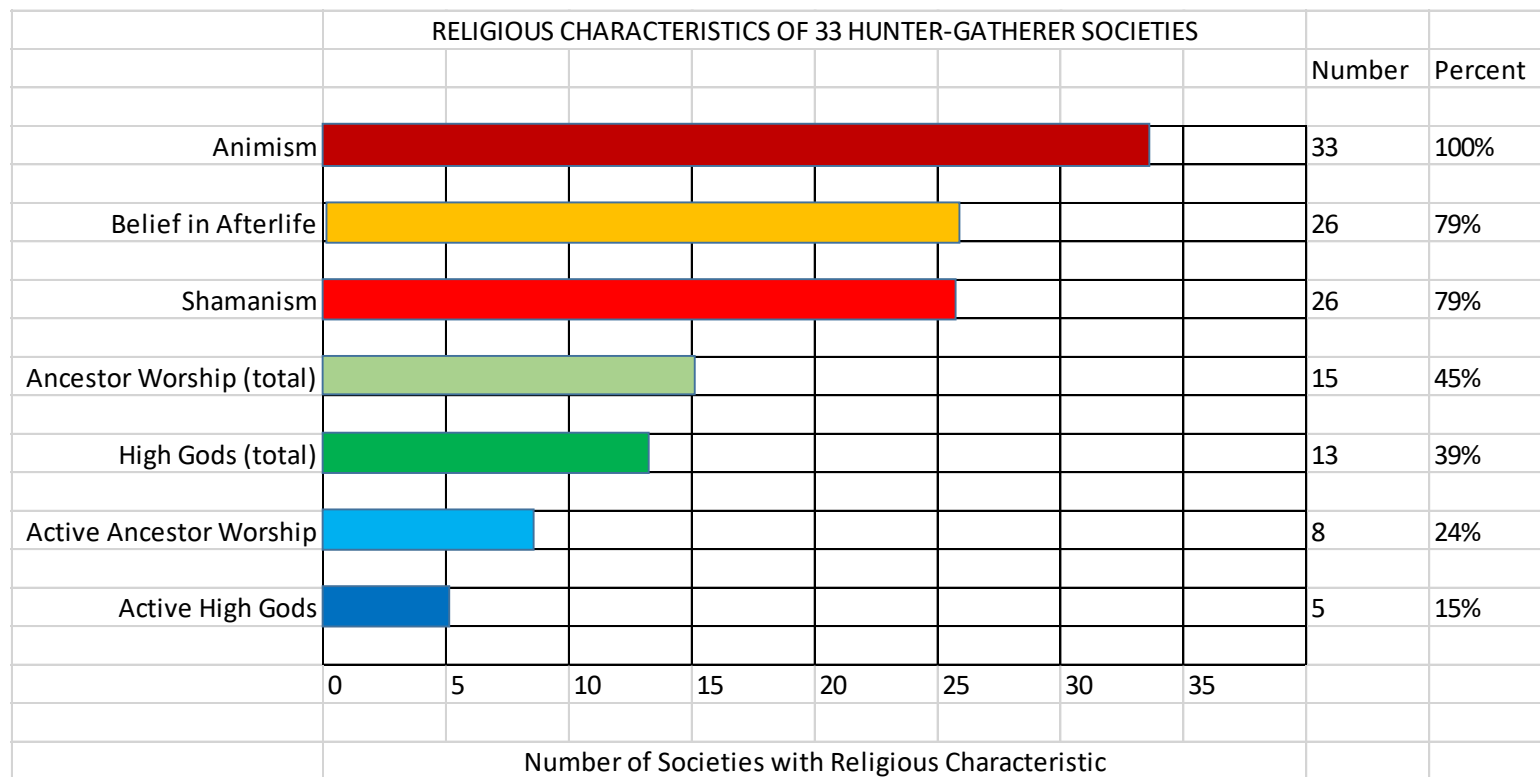


## MEDIEVAL IMAGERY

MAN IS AT THE CENTER  
OF THE UNIVERSE  
WHILE GOD AS LOVE  
ENCIRCLES AND  
DIRECTS IT. COSMIC  
RELATIONSHIPS ARE  
EMBEDDED INSIDE ONE  
ANOTHER



# RELIGION IN EARLY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



**ANIMISM:** Attribute a vital force to animate and inanimate elements in the environment

**SHAMANISM:** Communication with the world of spirits

**ACTIVE HIGH GODS:** Involved in human affairs, may or may not be morally punishing

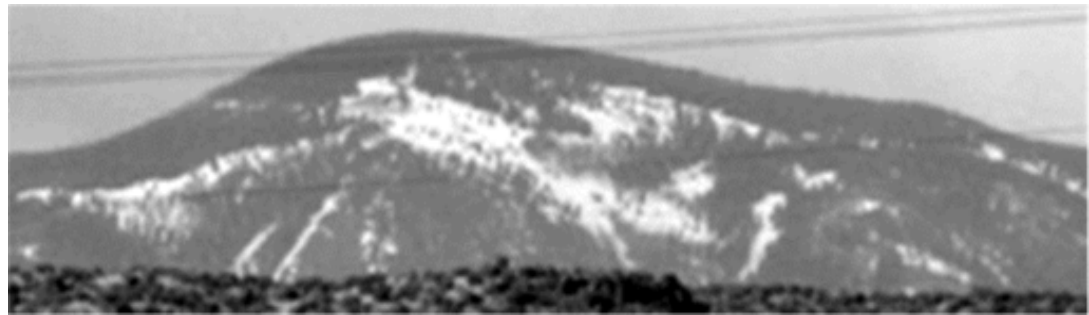
## PUEBLO OF JEMEZ EXAMPLE

- The Hemish (Jemez) people emerge from the underworld long ago.
- The chief (cacique) tells the Spirits of the people's desire to find a new home as a result of a parching drought.
- A centuries long migration occurs across deserts, canyons and mountain ranges
- The people look up at a mountain peak (Walatowa) and see the silhouette of an eagle standing guard. This is the sign of where to live as promised by their creator.
- They then live good lives in the shadow of the mountain peak with the eagle watching over them.



Looking northward  
from the Pueblo of  
Jemez toward  
Walatowa Redondo  
Peak





The geology and tree growth suggest the outline of an eagle. Religiously, the location shows a sacred eagle with lightning coming from its mouth.



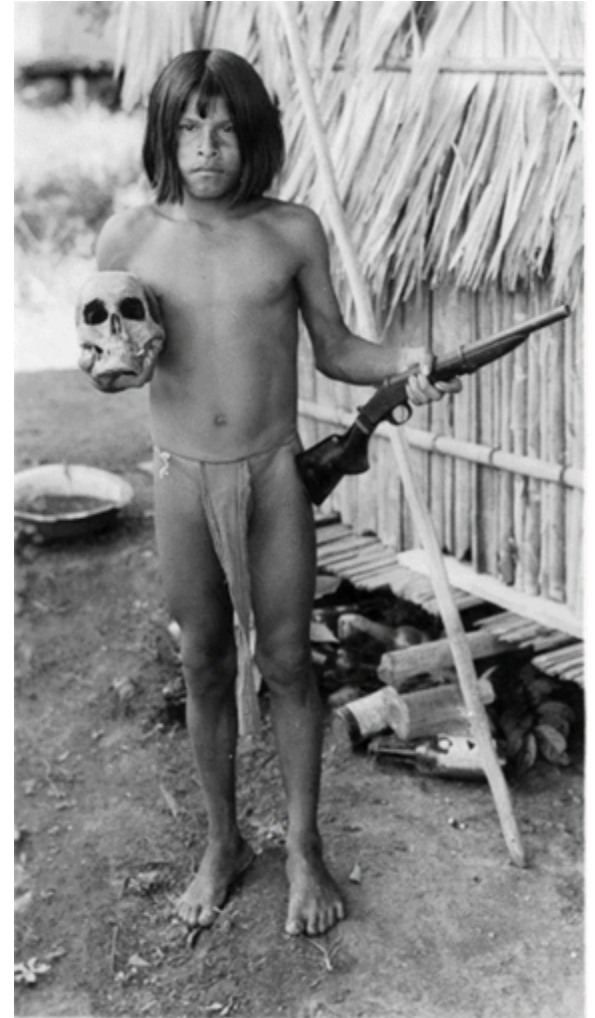
## Pre-Industrial Communities Directly Affected by Nature

Thatched Roofs, dirt streets, No utilities, No telephone



## The Gods of the Natural World Can be Dangerous

A native boy about ten years old  
holds a skull and his gun



The Natural World can be Beautiful.

Flowers decorate a Native Woman



## DECLINE OF NATURE IN RELIGION

EMERGENCE OF  
SCIENCE TO ANALYZE  
EXPLAIN AND  
CONTROL THE  
NATURAL WORLD



## THESE KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS HAVE CHANGED OVER THE CENTURIES

UNDERSTANDING THE  
NATURAL WORLD BECAME  
ECOLOGY, A TYPE OF SCIENCE  
IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> TO 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

GOD(S) BECAME SEPARATED  
FROM THE NATURAL WORLD

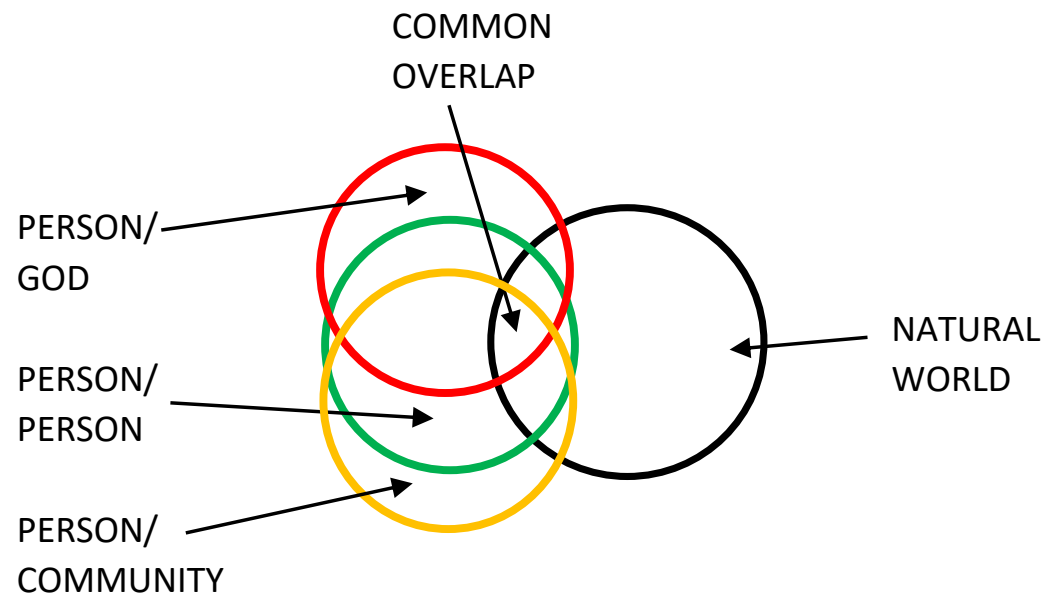


URBAN  
INDUSTRIAL  
SOCIETIES  
**SUPPOSEDLY**  
NO LONGER  
IMMEDIATELY  
AND DIRECTLY  
AFFECTED BY  
NATURAL WORLD





GOD NO LONGER IS A PART OF THE NATURAL WORLD  
BUT INSTEAD CREATES IT FOR PEOPLE TO USE



## REEMERGING ROLE OF RELIGION

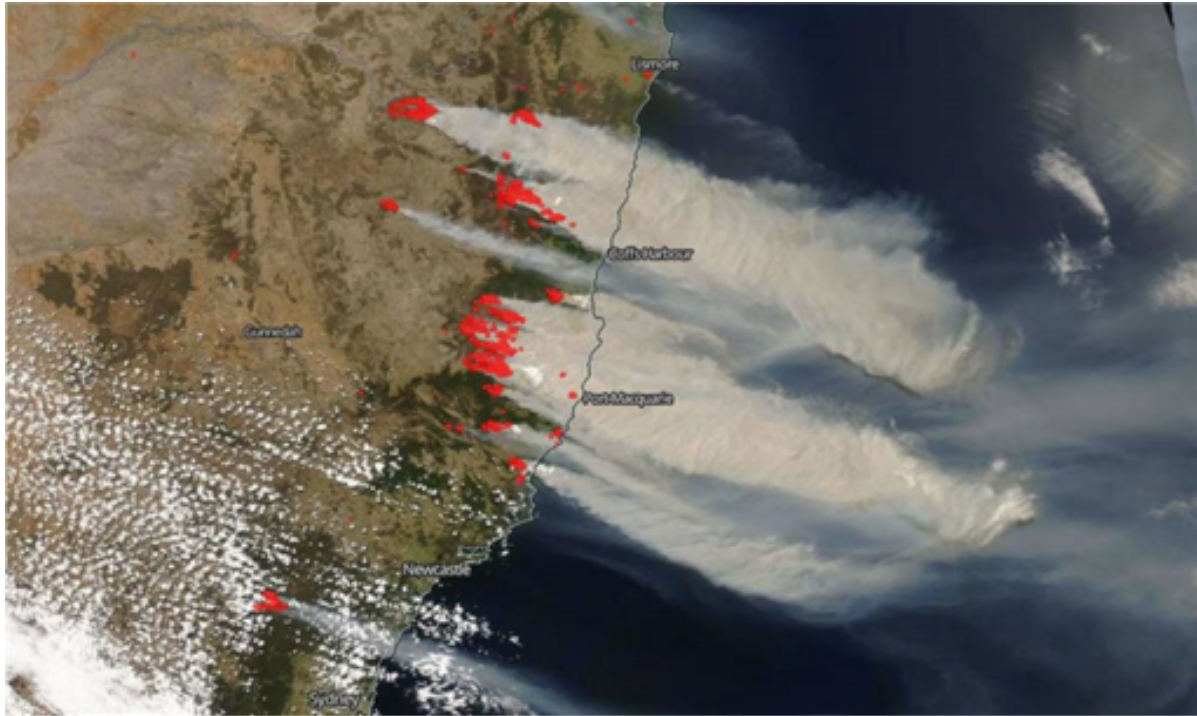
REGIONAL AND WORLD-WIDE ECOLOGICAL ISSUES  
HAVE SET THE STAGE FOR RELIGION TO RE-ESTABLISH A  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

- ECOLOGICAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED LIMITED, SHORT TERM AND LOCAL IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES
- BUT REGIONAL AND WORLD-WIDE ISSUES ARE CREATING A CHANGE OF VIEW

## EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS



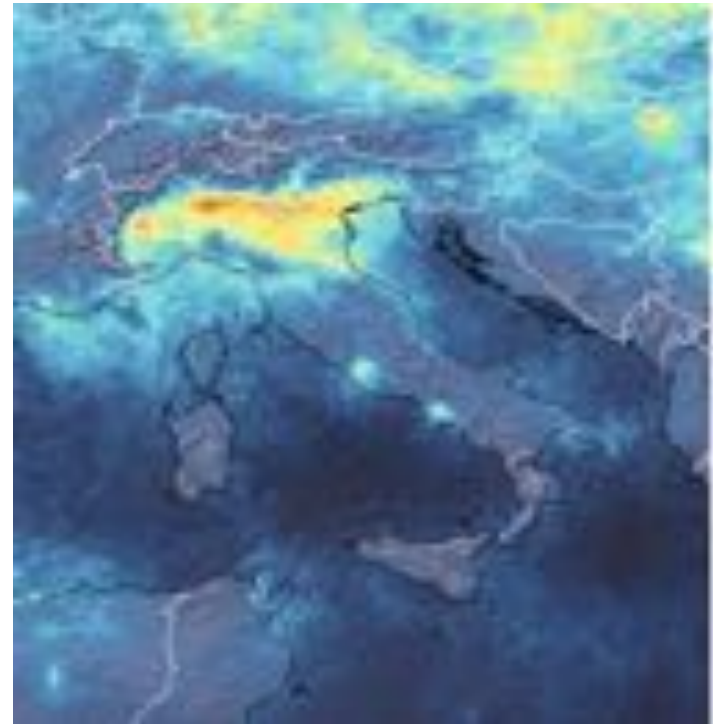
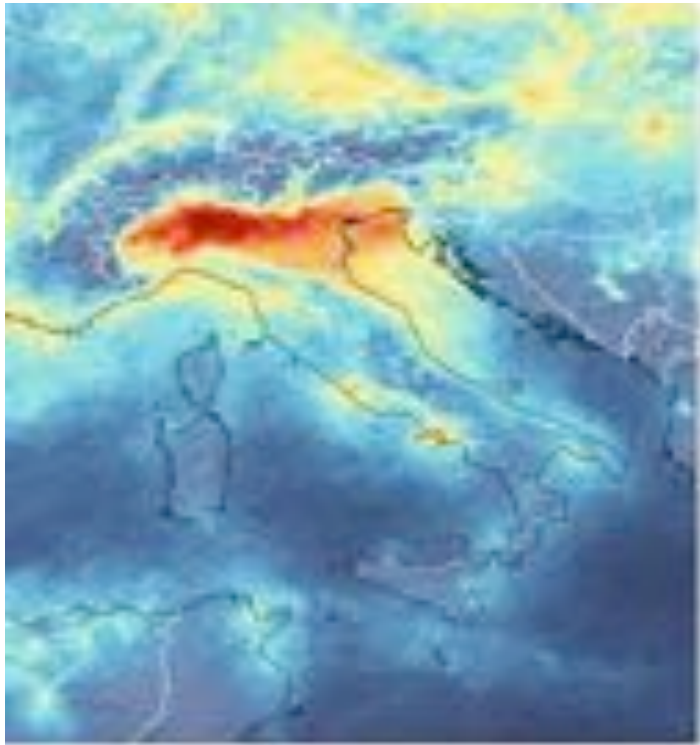
MID-WEST DUST BOWL OF 1930'S



## FOREST FIRES IN AUSTRALIA



AMAZON RAIN FOREST CUT DOWN FOR CATTLE GRAZING



DECREASE IN GASES WITH DECREASE IN DRIVING IN ITALY



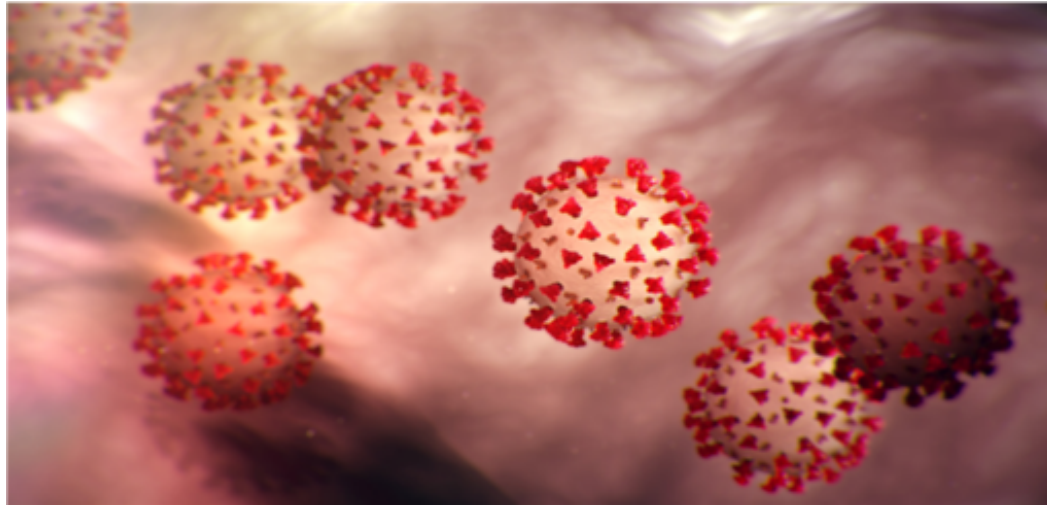
**MIGRATIONS FROM AFRICA TO EUROPE:  
SEEKING HOPE**



MIGRATIONS FROM CENTRAL TO NORTH AMERICA:  
DENY HOPE



# THE CORONOVIRUS PANDEMIC



INFECTIOUS DISEASE FROM THE NATURAL WORLD  
CAN IMPACT URBAN-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

## ACTIVELY MAINTAINING COMMUNITIES AND THE ETHICS OF RELIGION AS IMPORTANT AS USING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

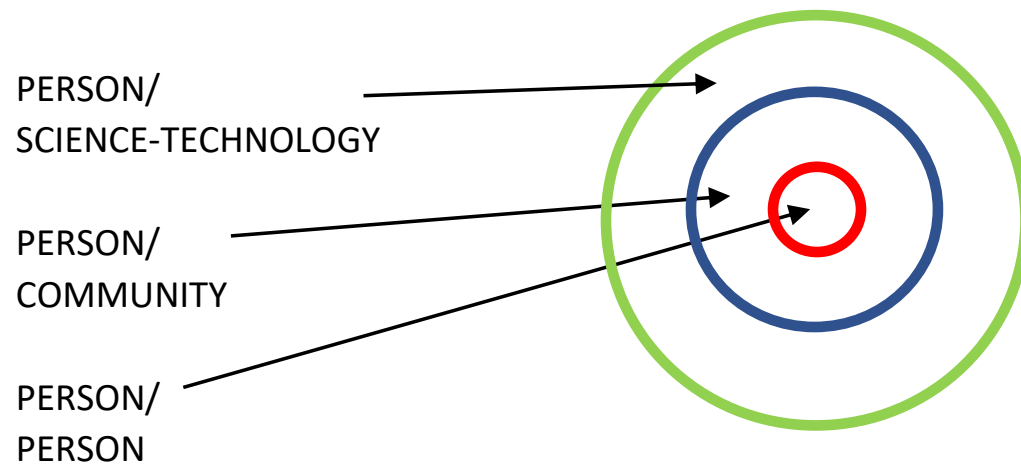
- THE NATURAL WORLD AFFECTS COMMUNITIES THE SAME AS IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL TIMES
- QUARANTINE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING BECOME SOCIAL RITUALS
- FRUSTRATION WITH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-- NOT IMMEDIATELY PROVIDING A CURE
- REEMERGENCE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

- CAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ALONE REALLY STOP OR PREVENT SUCH EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN A CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT?
- WILL RELIGION AGAIN ASSERT THAT PEOPLE ARE A PART OF THE NATURAL WORLD, NOW CALLED THE ENVIRONMENT?
- WILL NATURAL WORLD CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE ETHICS, GIVEN PEOPLE ARE A PART OF IT?

## CURRENT NESTING OF RELATIONSHIPS

THE NATURAL WORLD IS USED FOR IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC BENEFIT

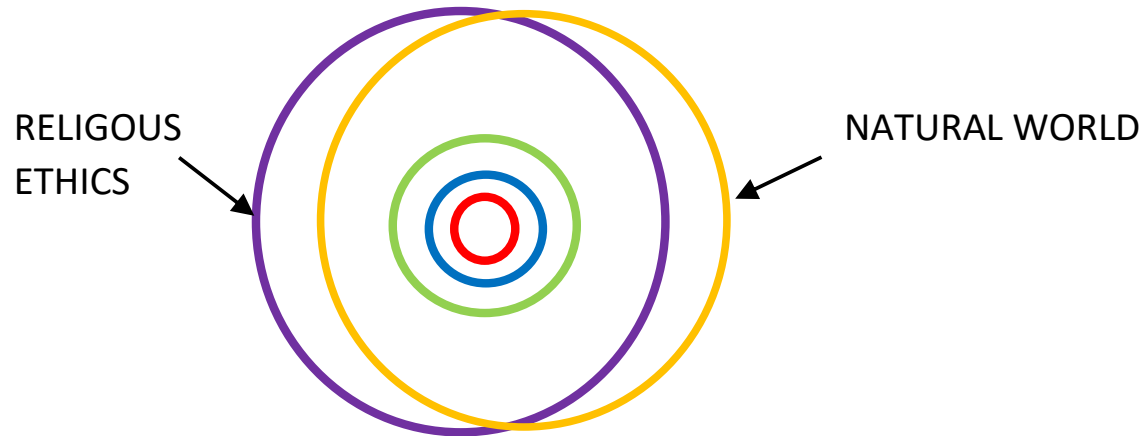




## EARLY AND RECENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY IMPACTING NATURAL WORLD

## EMERGING NESTING OF BELIEFS

THE NATURAL WORLD IS A GARDEN FROM EDEN,  
TO BE CARED FOR ETHICALLY  
MIEVIAL IMAGERY REEMERGES



WILL RELIGION JOIN WITH 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCIENCE FOR A RENEWED CONCERN FOR THE NATURAL WORLD AND THE PEOPLE WHO ARE A PART OF IT?

WATER AND WIND WHEEL TECHNOLOGY HELPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY BY USING A RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE

