

# God and the Environment

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# An Environmental Crisis?

- Loss of biodiversity and growing extinction rates
- Deforestation
- Sea level rise
- Pollution, especially plastic in the oceans





“What signatures our species will leave in the strata! We remove whole mountain tops to plunder the coal they contain. The oceans dance with hundreds of thousands of tons of plastic waste, slowly settling into sea-floor sediments. Weaponry tests have dispersed artificial radionuclides globally. The burning of rainforests for monoculture production sends out smog-palls that settle into the soils of nations. A nitrogen spike, indicated in ice-cores and sediments, will be one of the key chemical insignias of the Anthropocene, caused by the mass global use of nitrogen-rich fertilizers and by fossil-fuel burning. Biodiversity levels



nations. A nitrogen spike, indicated in ice-cores and sediments, will be one of the key chemical insignias of the Anthropocene, caused by the mass global use of nitrogen-rich fertilizers and by fossil-fuel burning. Biodiversity levels are crashing worldwide as we hasten into the sixth great extinction event, while the soaring number of a small number of livestock species ensures the geological posterity in the fossil record of sheep, cows, and pigs. We have become titanic world-makers, our legacy legible for epochs to come.”

Robert Macfarlane

*Underland: A Deep Time Journey* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2019) p76





But **why** should we care?





# **Foundations for Environmentalism**

Secular Attempts to Solve the Problem

# Foundations for Environmentalism

## Secular Attempts to Solve the Problem

- Appeal to emotion



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# SAVE OUR SEALIFE

## SENTINELS OF THE SOUND BEACH CLEANUP

WEST SEATTLE ALKI BEACH

Saturday June 14, 2014 9:30am - 12:30pm

(meet at Statue of Liberty, Alki Ave and 61st Ave SW, please RSVP @ sealsitters.org)

*Many thousands of marine animals die each year from derelict fishing gear, marine debris and pollution. They are entangled and drowned by nets and gear. Strangled and contaminated by plastics.*

**Make a difference and join us to remove litter from Alki Beach.**

### POLLUTION HAS A FACE

Sandy, a tiny seal pup, was rescued by Seal Sitters from a West Seattle beach in August of 2011. She was rehabilitated at PAWS Wildlife and, finally healthy, released back to the waters of Puget Sound.

Sandy was found dead sixty-six days later, entangled in derelict fishing line.

### LET'S CLEAN UP OUR ACT

Help save sea birds, turtles and marine mammals. Pick up trash ~ protect wildlife and our fragile Salish Sea.



photo: PAWS  
learn more about Sandy at [www.sealsitters.org](http://www.sealsitters.org)



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## Secular Attempts to Solve the Problem

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- Show how environmental care benefits us









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## Secular Attempts to Solve the Problem

- Appeal to emotion
- Show how environmental care benefits us
- Claim that “we owe it to future generations”
- Point out that we are closely related to animals



96% of our DNA in common



Carbon atoms in common



60% of our DNA in common



Environmental Claims are Moral Claims



“And God saw that it was good.”

Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25



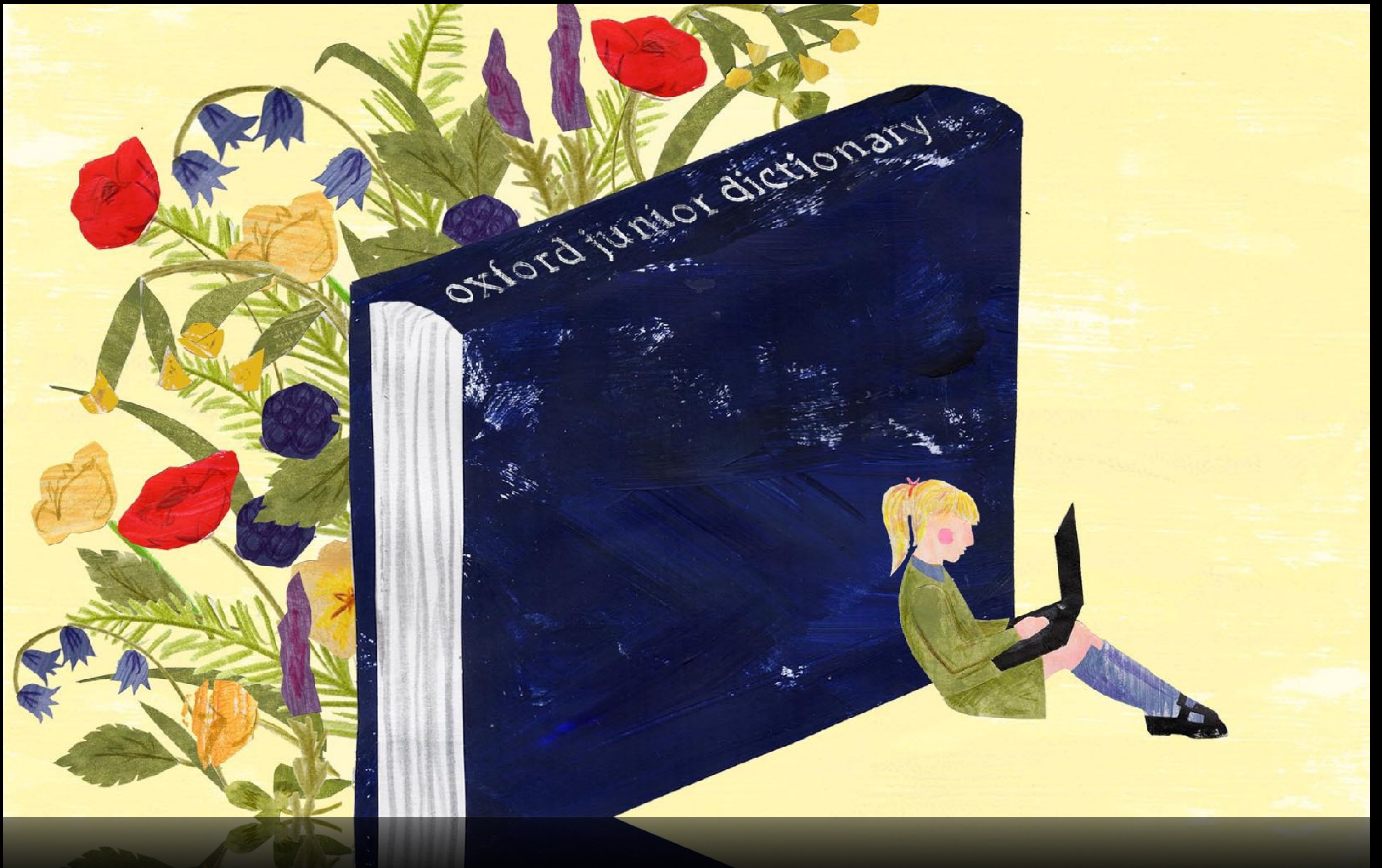
Jesus said: “Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground outside your heavenly Father’s care.”

The Bible: Gospel of Matthew 10:29



An aerial photograph showing a dense, vibrant green forest on the left side, which meets a bright turquoise lake on the right. The forest is thick and covers a significant portion of the frame. The lake's water is a striking, clear blue-green color. In the lower right quadrant, the word "Gratitude" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Gratitude



The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.

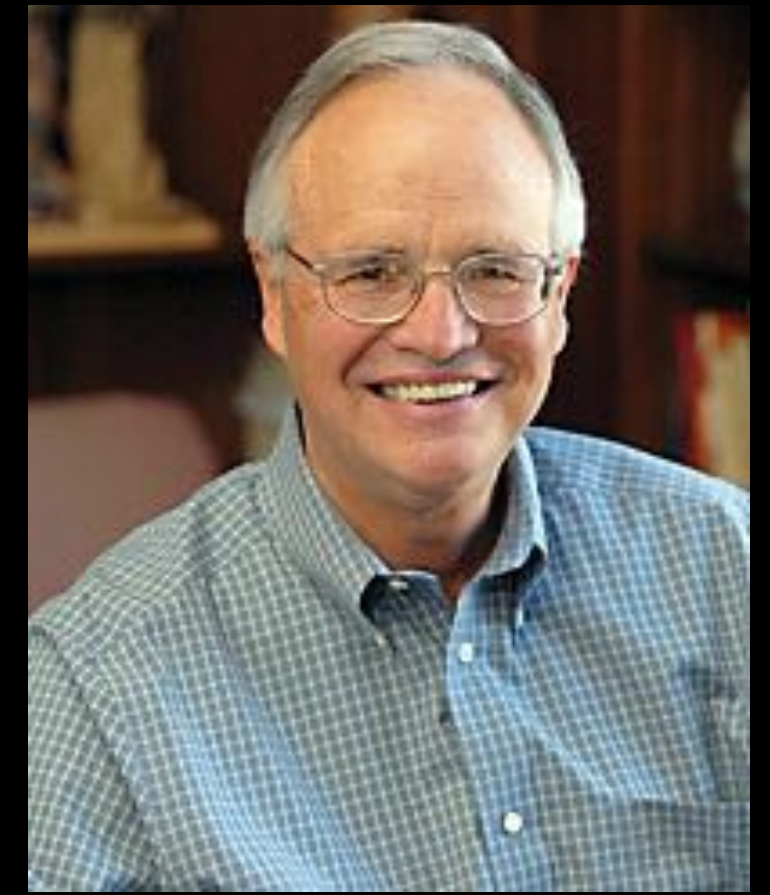
Psalm 19:1-4



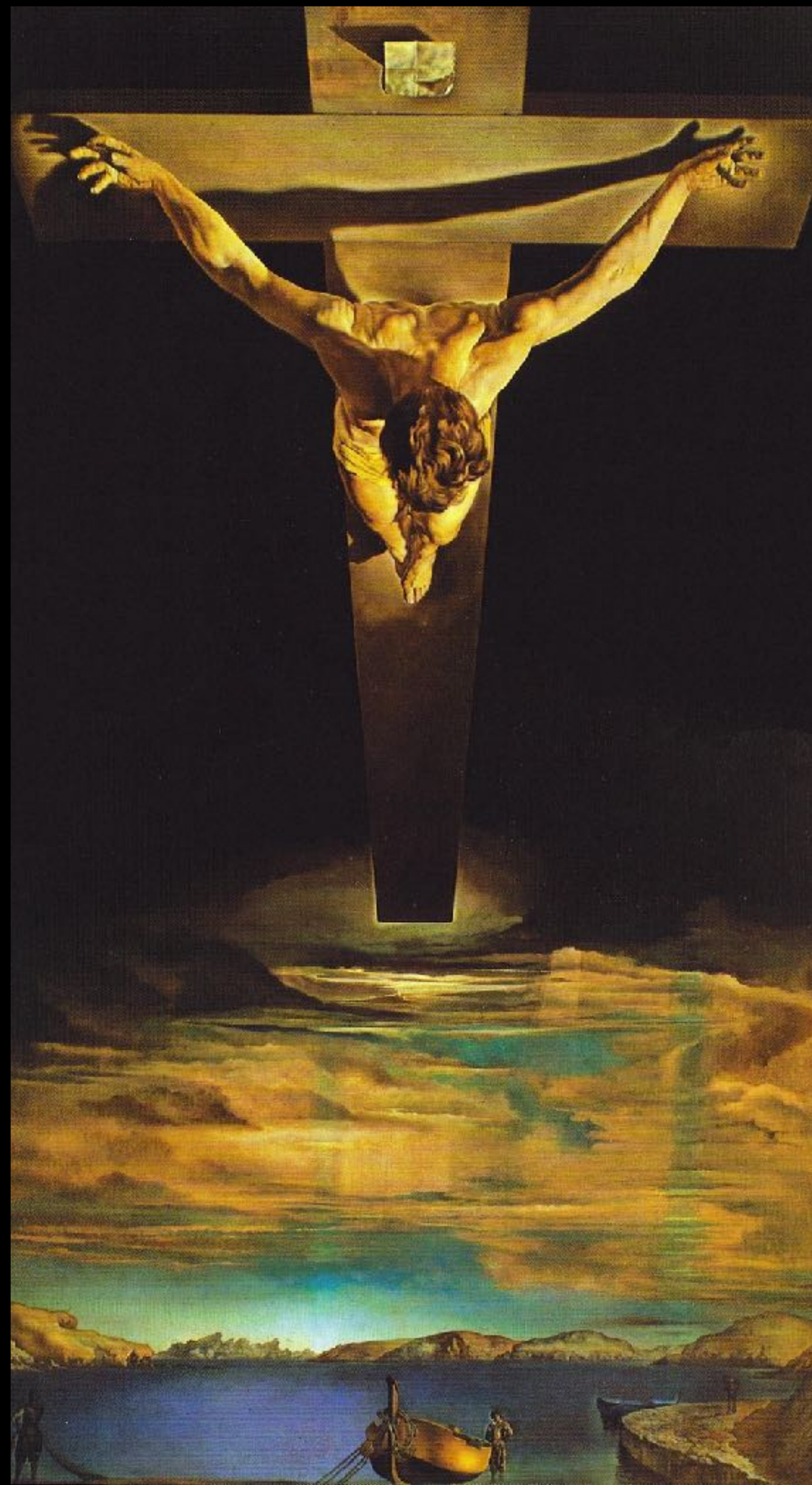
Gus Speth

“I used to think that the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that thirty years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that.”

Gus Speth







“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not die, but have eternal life.”

The Bible: Gospel of John 3:16