

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAN EXPERIENCING THE NATURAL WORLD BRING US CLOSER TO GOD?

You don't need to spend forty years—or even forty days—in the wilderness to encounter God. From a backpacking trip in a truly remote wilderness to an afternoon spent in a nearby park to a single moment savored in your own backyard, you can experience God's presence in many variations of the natural world. The tradition of going to the wilderness to find God is an ancient impulse that spans religious boundaries. Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius—all knew that in the wilderness they would find the quiet and simplicity that leads to profound spiritual connections. How can retreating from everyday civilization stretch our physical and spiritual boundaries and bring us more fully into the presence of God and into the presence of living?

“How can I say I see divinity in the wilderness?” writes John Lionberger in the Introduction to **RENEWAL IN THE WILDERNESS: A Spiritual Guide to Connecting with God in the Natural World** (SkyLight Paths / August 2007 / Quality Paperback Original / \$16.99). “How can I say I feel God's presence in a chorus of loons, in the throaty chuffing of a family of otter, in the primal call-and-response howling of wolves, in the splendor of a bald eagle, in a gibbous moon's shimmering wash of orange light on dark moving water, in the healing silence of wild places or in a day when my soul has known the amazing grace of utter peace for six straight hours? How can I say I see God in those things? But how can I say that I don't?”

Inspiring, **RENEWAL IN THE WILDERNESS** illuminates the power of finding God in the wilderness experience and the universality of spiritual connection through nature. Exploring wilderness wisdom from several faith traditions—Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and more—it shows us how the universal experience of being present in nature can lead to startling discoveries both about God and about ourselves.

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John Lionberger, MDiv, a former agnostic whose first real encounter with God was in the wilderness, is founder of Renewal in the Wilderness, an interfaith wilderness ministry (www.renewalinthewilderness.org). He is also head chaplain at Three Crowns Park, a retirement community in Evanston, Illinois.

RENEWAL IN THE WILDERNESS
A Spiritual Guide to Connecting with God in the Natural World
by John Lionberger
SkyLight Paths (Woodstock, VT); www.skylightpaths.com; 800-962-4544
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Praise for

RENEWAL IN THE WILDERNESS
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with God in the Natural World

by John Lionberger

“Probing and provocative.... Enjoins us to remember our primal sacred beginnings with clear grace and compelling reasons. Lionberger has an encompassing reach, giving voice to atheists, agnostics and the simply soul-weary, as well as believers from many of the world’s great faith traditions.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“If you’ve been wondering how to find God, here’s a topo map.”

—**Bill McKibben**, author of *The End of Nature* and other books

“Reminds us that wilderness offers us rapture, grace and, ultimately, transcendence. May help lead us to places of holy encounter—and to a deeper commitment to preserving those wild spaces.”

—**Sy Montgomery**, author of *The Wild Out Your Window*

“Reading this book made my fingers tingle and the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. The physical experience of wilderness strips us down to the basic elements of body and soul. And when our spiritual nerve endings are exposed, we find ... God. Start this journey today.”

—**Rev. Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite**, president and professor, Chicago Theological Seminary

“These musings evince a passion for fierce landscapes, drawing on a wide range of religious and spiritual traditions. It makes you want to shoulder a pack and head for the mountains.”

—**Belden C. Lane**, professor of theological studies, Saint Louis University; author of *Landscapes of the Sacred*

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RENEWAL IN THE WILDERNESS: A Spiritual Guide to Connecting with God in the Natural World (6" x 9", 176 pp., Quality Paperback Original, ISBN-13: 978-1-59473-219-5 / ISBN-10: 1-59473-219-1, \$16.99) is available from Barnes & Noble, Borders, Books-a-Million, Cokesbury, Doubleday, Indigo/Chapters, Waldenbooks, B. Dalton, amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, and many other booksellers, or directly from SkyLight Paths Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091; Tel: (802) 457-4000; Fax: (802) 457-4004; www.skylightpaths.com. For credit card orders, call (800) 962-4544. Add \$3.95 shipping and handling for the first book, \$2.00 for each additional book.