WASHINGTON D.C.—Life on earth is wildly diverse, but the future of that diversity is now in question. Through environmentally destructive farming practices, ever-expanding energy use, and the development and homogenization of land, human beings are responsible for unprecedented reductions in the variety of life forms around us. Estimates suggest that species extinctions caused by humans occur at up to 1,000 times the natural rate, and that one of every twenty species on the planet could be eradicated by 2060.

Kevin O’Brien tackles what this means to Christians in his new book, An Ethics of Biodiversity, arguing that these facts should inspire careful reflection and action in churches. O’Brien asserts that to live morally in the world, we need to take ecological science seriously. Biodiversity serves as a sign of and connection to the richness and endless mystery of creation. Each threatened life is God’s creation, loved by God and so to be loved by human beings. Standing on the belief that the creator did not make a world in which we can trust that things will work out if we simply have the faith and do nothing, An Ethics of Biodiversity calls upon Christians to accept responsibility to steward life on this planet as advocates for the oppressed and marginalized, including those in our own species.

Accessible to students and the general public, An Ethics of Biodiversity offers a set of tools for students, environmentalists, and people of faith to think critically about how human beings can survive and thrive with and as part of the variety of life in God’s creation. Dan Spencer, of the University of Montana, applauds O’Brien’s work, calling it “an excellent book that makes a distinctive contribution to a critically important and timely issue, and advances the task and agenda of Christian environmental ethics in several important ways...The scientific scholarship and ethical analysis are both first-rate. This is a terrific book!”

Kevin J. O’Brien is an assistant professor of Christian ethics at Pacific Lutheran University.