

**Religion and Ecology Events**  
**2015 American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting**  
**Atlanta, GA**

Greetings from the Religion and Ecology Group at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. We are looking forward very much to seeing you in Atlanta, and are attaching below a list of events that the group is sponsoring or otherwise involved in this year.

Given the focus on sustainability this year, there are also many other events and sessions that may be of interest, but there are too many to list here! All in all this year promises to be exceptionally rich for those interested in the nexus of religion and ecology.

Evan Berry & James Miller, co-chairs

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*M20-107*

Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University

***Annual Luncheon***

**Friday - 11:45 AM-1:45 PM**

*Hilton-208-209 (Level 2)*

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*A20-201*

Religion and Ecology Workshop

***Journey of the Universe: Hope for the Future***

Nancy Menning, Ithaca College, Presiding

Mary Evelyn Tucker, Yale University, Presiding

Heather Eaton, Saint Paul University, Presiding

**Friday - 2:00 PM-5:00 PM**

*Hilton-Crystal CD (Level 1)*

*Journey of the Universe* narrates the history of the cosmos in a mythic mode richly informed by contemporary science, bringing religion and science together in compelling ways. In this workshop we will explore the pedagogical potential of this universe story, at the cosmological as well as more localized scales. We will examine the ways in which this narrative shapes our understanding of the long arc of history, defines our human place in the grander ecological or cosmological journey, and suggests possibilities for ethical action. The goal of the workshop is to strengthen our capacity to awaken awe and wonder in the classroom with implications for our students' capacity to participate effectively in much-needed environmental activism. Focusing on hope and working with the *Journey of the Universe* curricular materials we will develop skills in analyzing the emotional resonance of this narrative structure, the ways the materials will engage students, and how this contributes to an effective pedagogy.

The cost for the workshop is \$35, which includes the entire afternoon of sessions and a coffee break. Registration is limited to the first 120 participants.

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M21-3

*Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture & Ecology*

**Worldviews Board Meeting**

**Saturday - 7:00 AM-9:00 AM**

*Hilton-Grand Salon C (Level 2)*

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A21-229

Religion and Ecology Group

***The Religion and Politics of Sacred Space***

James Miller, Queen's University, Presiding

**Saturday - 1:00 PM-3:30 PM**

*Hilton-Crystal BE (Level 1)*

Five scholars examine the social imagination of nature in India, Latin America, Sweden, the UK and Bhutan, with particular attention to the religious and political implications of these views.

Luke Whitmore, University of Wisconsin, Steven's Point

*Understanding the Destructive Dance of Nature*

Muazu Shehu, University of Sheffield

*Varieties of Religious Environmentalism: Understanding the Spiritual Motivation for Pro-Environmental Action among Christian and Muslims in Northeastern Nigeria*

Jonas Idestrom, Church of Sweden Research Unit, Uppsala, Sweden

*Encounters with God in Rural Landscapes: "Nature-Based" Spirituality in Northern Sweden*

Todd LeVasseur, College of Charleston

*Grow the Scorched Ground Green: Values and Ethics in the Transition Movement*

Chris Crews, The New School

*Sumak Kawsay, Pachamama, and Cosmopolitics: The Rights of Nature, Earthbound People and Global Indigenous Struggles*

Responding:

Christopher Ives, Stonehill College

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A21-329

Religion and Ecology Group

***Affect and Moral Emotions in Religion and Ecology***

Lucas Johnston, Wake Forest University, Presiding

**Saturday - 4:00 PM-6:30 PM**

*Hilton-Grand Salon B (Level 2)*

What does it mean to desire nature, or to be ashamed at human inaction on climate change issues? Five papers examine the role of embodiment, materiality, affect and feeling in relation to environmental ethics.

Courtney O'Dell-Chaib, Syracuse University

*Desiring Devastated Landscapes: Cultivating Biophilia Within Ecological Collapse*

Sarah Fredericks, University of Chicago

*Climate Shame, Restorative Justice, Religious Ritual*

Brandon Morgan, Baylor University

*Materiality in Excess: Toward a Theological Aesthetics of Bodily Life in Elizabeth Grosz and*

Rowan Williams

Andrew Thompson, University of the South

*Emotion and Ethics in Novel Ecosystems: An Environmental Pragmatist Approach*

Luke Higgins, Savannah, GA

*Affective Experimentation in Eco-Religious Practice: Insights from Whitehead and Latour*

Responding:

Christopher Carter, University of San Diego

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A23-129

Religion and Ecology Group

***New Directions in Ecotheology***

Anne Marie Dalton, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Presiding

**Monday - 9:00 AM-11:30 AM**

*Marriott-International 6 (International Level)*

Five individual papers on the history of ecotheology, postcolonialism, art, new materialism, and process theology.

Panu Pihkala, University of Helsinki

*Rediscovery of Early Twentieth Century Ecotheology*

Daniel Horan, Boston College

*Decolonizing Creation: A Postcolonial Critique of Ecological Stewardship*

David Larrabee, Union Theological Seminary

*Process Thought and Environmental Ethics*

Lily Oster, Emory University

*Bound in Being: An Obligated Ontology*

Matthew Eaton, University of St. Michael's College

*From Idolatry to Infinity: Transitional Christology Following Emmanuel Levinas and the New Materialism*

Responding:

Heather Eaton, Saint Paul University

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A23-233

Religion and Ecology Group and Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Group

***Teaching Climate Change and Climate Justice in Religion/Religious Studies Classrooms***

Laura Stivers, Dominican University of California, Presiding

**Monday - 1:00 PM-3:30 PM**

*Hilton-208 (Level 2)*

This panel is comprised of Christian ethicists who teach environmental ethics and work to promote climate justice. The goal of the panel is to share successful pedagogical ideas we have used to teach about climate change and climate justice. The first panelist will talk about the use of a spectrum of diverse viewpoints to engage students in conversation about the ideological nature of responses to climate change. The second panelist frames climate justice from an ecowomanist perspective and connects students to examples of earth justice happening in communities of color as they protest environmental racism. The next two panelists will engage the audience in discussion of case studies using two different methods: a spectrum exercise and a power dynamic sculpture. The last panelist will share a semester-long teaching strategy in which

students learn about the interplay of behavioral and social structural change in promoting climate justice.

Kevin O'Brien, Pacific Lutheran University

*Teaching Climate Controversies as Theological Conflicts*

Melanie L. Harris, Texas Christian University

*Ecowomanism and Ecological Reparations*

James Martin-Schramm, Luther College

Daniel T. Spencer, University of Montana, Missoula

*Using a Case Method Approach and Unique Pedagogical Techniques to Teach about Climate Change*

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

*Teaching Climate Change for Moral Agency, Eco-Justice, and Structural Analysis*

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A23-329

Religion and Ecology Group

***Local and Transnational Religious Environmental Discourses***

Laurel D. Kearns, Drew University, Presiding

**Monday - 4:00 PM-6:30 PM**

*Hilton-Grand Salon E (Level 2)*

Four individual papers address religious and ethical perspectives on sustainability, water, food security and mining from Cuba, the USA, Canada and the UK, and discuss methodological issues in qualitative social science research. The business meeting follows.

Rose Caraway, Iowa State University

*The Spiritual Dimensions of Cuban Permaculture Ethics*

Emma DeVries, Duke University

*Climate Ethics from the Site of the Wound: Exploring Race, Bodies, and Resistance in the Alberta Tar Sands*

Brett Esaki, Georgia State University

*Environmental Justice, Religious Studies, and the Development of Sustainability Literacy*

Anna Huxley, University of Manchester

*The Wonder and Awe of U.K. Faith-Based Organizations Engaged in Advocacy on Climate Change: A Qualitative Investigation*

Responding:

Robin Veldman, Iowa State

### **Business Meeting**

James Miller, Queen's University

Evan Berry, American University

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A23-402

Films

***The Fire Inside: A Documentary Screening and Conversation about Nature, Contemplative Practice and the Climate Crisis***

Laurel D. Kearns, Drew University, Presiding

**Monday - 8:00 PM-10:00 PM**

*Marriott-International 7 (International Level)*

Our session will consist of a screening begins with a screening of the 2012 documentary short, "The Fire Inside," co-created by a professional, Atlanta-based film director and a religious studies scholar in the Religion and Ecology Group. The screening will be followed a discussion of the themes of the film and the provocative questions it raises. Such questions include: Does contemplative practice matter when there is so much on-the-ground work to be done? If so, how does it matter? How do people connect across religious and spiritual differences to work toward climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience? Our hope and intention is that such questions will spark a thoughtful and engaging conversation. We have also found, from prior screenings, that audience members often feel that simply viewing the film is a contemplative experience in and of itself. Our hope also, then, is to provide an experiential getaway for those who desire a contemplative experience in the midst of the hectic pace of the Annual Meeting!

Panelists:

Rebecca Kneale Gould, Middlebury College

Barbara A. B. Patterson, Emory University

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*A24-103*

Animals and Religion Group and Contemplative Studies Group and Religion and Ecology Group and Space, Place, and Religion Group

***The Value of Religious Studies in 21st Century Higher Education: Place-Based Pedagogy in the Southern U.S.***

Isabel Mukonyora, Western Kentucky University, Presiding

**Tuesday - 8:30 AM-10:00 AM**

*Hyatt-Hanover D (Exhibit Level)*

In recent decades place-based education has emerged as an effective set of pedagogical strategies for teaching complex social and environmental issues in the college setting. Along with a theory of education, place-based pedagogy is inevitably grounded in specific locations, requiring students and teachers to break out of the traditional classroom environment. Tied to the 2015 AAR's location, this round table brings together five educators who each use place-based pedagogical methods in their approaches to religious and environmental studies in the southern U.S., a region long known for its unique cultural and religious histories as well as a painful legacy of racial oppression and injustice. As well, by connecting religious studies departments to interdisciplinary student education and research on campuses and by pointing to the relevance of place-based religious studies to address major environmental problems, the panelists will address the 2015 theme of the value of religion in higher education.

Panelists:

Joseph Witt, Mississippi State University

David Aftandilian, Texas Christian University

A. Whitney Sanford, University of Florida

Barbara A. B. Patterson, Emory University

Lucas Johnston, Wake Forest University