

The Forum on Religion and Ecology Newsletter
9.1 (January 2015)

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1. Overview, by Elizabeth McAnally

Greetings,

Welcome to the January issue of the newsletter for the Forum on Religion and Ecology. We have much to share with you this month with regards to developments in the field of Religion and Ecology, including publications, events, retreats, calls for papers, a job opening, and more.

We are excited to share news with you about the upcoming encyclical that Pope Francis is preparing for 2015. It is very likely that the Pope will focus this highly influential document on the environment and climate change. As Mary Evelyn Tucker explains in an article published by Flux, “The upcoming encyclical from Pope Francis is the highest level teaching document in the Catholic Church and will have significant implications for living one’s faith in action, not only for the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics, but also for the other billion Christians in the world.” For the full article, visit: <https://www.beaconreader.com/flux/pope-francis-climate-evangelist> See

below for more important articles on this topic. Pope Francis is also scheduled to speak in the fall at the UN General Assembly.

We would like to draw your attention to two upcoming events this summer.

“Retreat into the Universe Story” will be offered July 5 – 10, 2015 at IL Ritiro Franciscan Retreat Center in Dittmer, MO, USA and August 9 –15, 2015 at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat in Wheatland, IA, USA. This silent retreat will include morning ritual and presentations on birthing and living the Universe Story, experiencing a Council of All Beings, and more. For details, see below or visit: http://fore.research.yale.edu/files/Universe_Story_Retreat_2015.pdf

“Contemplative Environmental Studies: Pedagogy for Self and Planet” will be held July 26 – August 1, 2015 at Lama Foundation in San Cristobal, NM, USA. This workshop explores ways of using contemplative practices—meditation, yoga, journaling, art, nature walks, etc.—to enhance pedagogy and cultivate wellbeing for students, professors, and all who work for a sustainable future. For details, see below or visit: <http://www.american.edu/sis/gep/Contemplative-Environmental-Studies-Workshop.cfm>

We hope this newsletter supports your own work and helps you further your own engagements with the field of Religion and Ecology.

Warm wishes,
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2. Articles on Pope Francis and the Upcoming Encyclical on the Environment and Climate Change

“2015 could be the year we save the earth”

By NCR Editorial Staff

National Catholic Reporter

January 2, 2015

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/editorial-2015-could-be-year-we-save-earth>

“Tracing the Roots of Pope Francis’s Climate Plans for 2015”

By Andrew C. Revkin

Dot Earth

New York Times

December 31, 2014

http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/12/31/tracing-the-roots-of-pope-franciss-climate-plans-for-2015/?_r=0

“Pope Francis Calls for Action on Climate Change & Capitalism on a Planet ‘Exploited by Human Greed’”

Democracy Now

December 31, 2014

http://www.democracynow.org/2014/12/31/pope_francis_calls_for_action_on

“Pope Francis’s edict on climate change will anger deniers and US churches”

By John Vidal

The Guardian

December 27, 2014

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/27/pope-francis-edict-climate-change-us-rightwing>

“Pope Francis: climate evangelist?”

By Virginia Gewin

Flux

December 19, 2014

<https://www.beaconreader.com/flux/pope-francis-climate-evangelist>

3. “Retreat into the Universe Story” (July 5-10, 2015 and August 9-15, 2015)

July 5 – 10, 2015 at IL Ritiro Franciscan Retreat Center, Dittmer, MO, USA

August 9 –15, 2015 at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat, Wheatland, IA, USA

This silent retreat will include morning ritual and presentations and an optional sharing later each day.

Presentations include:

- Birthing a New Story: The Universe Story
- Exploring the Nature of the Universe in its Guiding Principles
- Experiencing a Council of All Beings
- Gleaning Wisdom from Mentors
- Living the Universe Story

http://fore.research.yale.edu/files/Universe_Story_Retreat_2015.pdf

4. “Contemplative Environmental Studies: Pedagogy for Self and Planet” (July 26 – August 1, 2015)

Summer Workshop 2015

Sunday, July 26 – Saturday, August 1

Lama Foundation
San Cristobal, NM, USA

Environmental dilemmas are among the most profound challenges facing humanity. This workshop focuses on how we can best teach college and university students at this historic moment of environmental intensification. Specifically, it explores ways of using contemplative practices—meditation, yoga, journaling, art, nature walks, etc.—to enhance pedagogy and cultivate wellbeing for students, professors, and all who work for a sustainable future.

Part workshop and part retreat, this 6-day summer institute provides an opportunity to step back from our frenetic lives, develop pedagogical tools, and deepen our inner resources as teachers committed to education on a fragile and wild planet.

Faculty: Paul Wapner (professor, American University), Karen Litfin (professor, University of Washington), Jeff Warren (author and meditation instructor), Lisa Schnall (psychotherapist), Nicole Salimbene (visual artist)

Sponsored by: Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education; Global Environmental Politics, American University

<http://www.american.edu/sis/gep/Contemplative-Environmental-Studies-Workshop.cfm>

5. New Publications

Thomas Berry: Selected Writings on the Earth Community

Selected and with an Introduction by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014

<http://www.orbisbooks.com/thomas-berry.html>

Published for the centenary of his birth.

Thomas Berry (1914-2009), was a priest, a “geologist,” and a historian of religions. He was an early and significant voice awakening religious sensibilities to the environmental crisis. He is particularly well-known for articulating a “universe story” that explores the world-changing implications of the contemporary science. Berry pointed the way to an ecological spirituality attuned to our place in nature and giving rise to an ethic of responsibility and care for the Earth.

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The Ecology of Coexistence and Conflict in Cyprus: Exploring the Religion, Nature, and Culture of a Mediterranean Island

By Irene Dietzel

Series: Religion and Society 57

De Gruyter, 2014

<http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/203695>

What is the significance of sustainable resource management for the functioning of Mediterranean island societies? How do human-environment relations reflect in a multi-ethnic religious landscape? This book poses these questions in the context of the Ottoman, British, and modern history of Cyprus. It explores the socio-ecological dimension of the Cyprus conflict and considers the role of local environmental practices for historical coexistence and modern division. The book synthesizes theoretical approaches from the research on 'religion and ecology' with the anthropology of Cyprus, with the goal to develop and establish an ecological perspective on coexistence and conflict in the Mediterranean. Religion is seen as the place where local representations of nature and traditions of resource management are generated and maintained. The work takes a comparative look at the impact of Eastern Orthodox and Islamic institutions on the island's landscape, as well as the religious and economic practices of the rural peasant communities. The findings are then spelled out in the context of current discourses on religion, environmental ethics, and social justice.

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Finding Wisdom in Nature: An Eco-Wisdom Reading of the Book of Job

By Norman C. Habel

Series: Earth Bible Commentary, 4

Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014

<http://www.sheffieldphoenix.com/showbook.asp?bkid=285>

'Wisdom, where can she be found?' This question, at the core of Job 28, is arguably the central question also of the entire book of Job. Where is Wisdom found in Job 28? Habel's answer may be surprising: in the domains and forces of nature, in the ecosystems of the cosmos! And who employs the 'scientific approach' of the ancient Wisdom School to discern this Wisdom? A Sage called God during the process of creation. This key chapter, Job 28, is therefore where Habel begins his ecological commentary, using an approach he designates an eco-wisdom reading. In the preceding 27 chapters of the Book of Job, the focus had seemed to be on the question of where justice could be found. Job has been ready to take God to court in order to find justice. Yet, throughout these chapters there has also been a question about Wisdom, raised by Job and each of his friends, though it has remained churning in the background. When God finally answers Job, God communicates—via nature—about the 'design' of the cosmos. During his journey through the cosmos with his divine mentor, depicted in the divine speeches of Job 38–41, Job is challenged to discern the 'way,' the 'place' and the inter-relationship of the domains and forces of nature, which is to say, their dynamic innate Wisdom. In his final speech, Job admits he does not know everything and dismisses his plan to take God to court, and the claim for justice lapses. In its place, Job declares he has 'seen' or 'observed' God—presumably in the ecosystems of the cosmos that God has shown him. So the Book of Job ends with his experience of what we may call an 'ecological conversion'.

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Vaishnavite Ecotheology

By U. Sumathy

AuthorsPress, 2014

http://www.authorspressbooks.com/book_detail.php?preference=502

Ecotheology is a branch of scholarship that traces the relationship between nature and religion. As environmental degradation grows beyond bounds with each passing day, there is an increasing worldview that religion could supply the antidote. Hence scholars of various religions re-read their holy texts and re-interpret their philosophies in order to deduce environment-friendly ethics. However, Vaishnavism has traditionally looked upon the whole household of God's creation as an interrelated system. The idea of divine immanence of the cosmos is integral to the philosophy of Vaishnavism. *Vaishnavite Ecotheology* examines the literature, philosophy and rituals, which belong to the southern school of Vaishnavism, as a composite whole, and establishes the fact that they are grounded in the dynamics of nature. This book is a celebration of the unparalleled ecological wisdom that Vaishnavism exudes. And it is written with the fervent hope that it will bring about an ethical transformation in its readers.

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Ecocultures: Blueprints for Sustainable Communities

Edited by Steffen Böhm, Zareen Pervez Bharucha, and Jules Pretty

Routledge, 2014

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415812856/>

The world faces a 'perfect storm' of social and ecological stresses, including climate change, habitat loss, resource degradation and social, economic and cultural change. In order to cope with these, communities are struggling to transition to sustainable ways of living that improve well-being and increase resilience. This book demonstrates how communities in both developed and developing countries are already taking action to maintain or build resilient and sustainable lifestyles. These communities, here designated as 'Ecocultures', are exemplars of the art and science of sustainable living. Though they form a diverse group, they organise themselves around several common organising principles including an ethic of care for nature, a respect for community, high ecological knowledge, and a desire to maintain and improve personal and social wellbeing. Case studies from both developed and developing countries including Australia, Brazil, Finland, Greenland, India, Indonesia, South Africa, UK and USA, show how, based on these principles, communities have been able to increase social, ecological and personal wellbeing and resilience. They also address how other more mainstream communities are beginning to transition to more sustainable, resilient alternatives. Some examples also illustrate the decline of ecocultures in the face of economic pressures, globalisation and climate change. Theoretical chapters examine the barriers and bridges to wider application of these examples. Overall, the volume describes how ecocultures can provide the global community with important lessons for a wider transition to sustainability and will show how we can redefine our personal and collective futures around these principles.

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Living with Limits, Living Well! Hints for Neighbours on an Endangered Planet

By William F. Ryan, sj and Janet Somerville with Anne O'Brien, gsic and Anne-Marie Jackson

Produced by the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Publications, 2014

<https://esubmitit.sjpg.com/cccb/index.aspx?component=ProductDetails&id=184-864>

A popular-style workbook for small groups to engage on the interconnectedness of spirituality, ecology, poverty and inequality. Pope Francis has called us to be protectors of the environment and protectors of people. This colourful 54-page workbook is designed to help educators, animators, people of faith, leaders, preachers and others to gain the information and inspiration to understand how justice for the poor and justice for the Earth are not only deeply interconnected but are also firmly based in the Gospel and in Catholic social teaching on human dignity, solidarity and the common good.

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“Earth as Our Home”

Catholic Sisters for a Healthy Earth, 2014

Download this free resource at:

http://www.sinsinawa.org/peace_justice/earthasourhome.pdf

Catholic Sisters for a Healthy Earth have prepared a reflection booklet titled “Earth as Our Home” on the various rooms of a house, placing each room and its activities into the broader context of our Earth-home. Simple actions for families are suggested for living more sustainably and walking more gently on Earth.

6. The Miracle of Light: Eight Nights on Hanukkah and Climate Change

Shomrei Breishit: Rabbi and Cantors For the Earth has created a Jewish follow-up for #LightForLima by producing 8 videos of rabbis and cantors from the United States and Israel creating special prayers or kavannot (meditations) for lighting the candles for Hanukkah connecting the holiday with the need to act on climate change.

1st night: Rabbi Lawrence Troster and Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster

<http://youtu.be/CdD7vDWEWAA>

2nd night: Rabbi Jill Hammer

<http://youtu.be/V3L2rEtObw8>

3rd night: Rabbi Katy Allen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG7VvaS5Ksw>

4th night: Rabbi Robin Damsky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuIviZLzhOg>

5th night: Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vua7ZsrHtuQ>

6th night: Cantor Jack Chomsky
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLDxZZYk8dI>

7th night: Rabbi Amy Levin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tavnp-LmcQM>

8th night: Rabbi Yonatan Neril
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55A--IDApC4>

7. “Sacred Energy (Mass of the Universe),” by William L. (Bill) Wallace

“Sacred Energy (Mass of the Universe)” is a narrated musical exploration written by William L. (Bill) Wallace of Christchurch, New Zealand. This mass comes from a prophetic, mystical orientation in which everything is seen to be one, inter-connected and intrinsically sacred, inviting the human being to enter into dialogue with the Cosmos.

Part 1 of Sacred Energy (Mass of the Universe) presents the mass in a form that you can interact with. Each individual musical segment has both an audio file (mp3) and a musical score (pdf).

<http://progressivechristianity.org/resources/sacred-energy-mass-of-the-universe-part-1/>

A separate resource, Part 2, contains downloadable pdf’s with the complete text (including melody lines) as well the complete musical score for an accompanist.

<http://progressivechristianity.org/resources/sacred-energy-mass-of-the-universe-part-2/>

Finally, Part 3 has some background commentary on the mass and the Powerpoint slides that illustrate it.

<http://progressivechristianity.org/resources/sacred-energy-mass-of-the-universe-part-3/>

You can access many more resources (48 children’s songs and 149 hymns) by William L. (Bill) Wallace related to spirituality and ecology at ProgressiveChristianity.org, many of which could be used in a secular or an inter-religious setting. To find these songs and hymns, enter “Wallace” in the search box and choose Last Name.

8. Events

“Climate, Faith, and Justice”

Panel Discussion with the Venerable Tashi Nyima, Dr. Hind Jarrah, and Dr. Pankaj Jain;

Moderated by Stephen Fuqua

Bahá'í Center of Dallas, Dallas, TX, USA

January 19, 2015 at 7pm

<http://www.dallasinterfaith.org/d/events/ClimateJusticeJanuary2015>

5th International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS) Conference and Gathering of the Elders
Mysore, Karnataka, India

January 31 – February 5, 2015

<http://iccsglobal.org/>

Central Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA)

Hilton at the Ball Park, St. Louis, MO, USA

There will be sessions for the International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE) at this meeting.

February 18-21, 2015

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/news/item/call-for-papers-international-society-for-environmental-ethics-2015-central/>

For more events, visit: <http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/>

9. Calls for Papers

“Nature and Religion”

Twentieth Postgraduate Religion and Theology Conference

University of Bristol, UK

March 13-14, 2015

Submission Deadline: TBA

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/gradschool/pg-activity/conferences/twentieth-postgraduate-religion-and-theology-conference/>

“Religion in the Anthropocene – Challenges, Idolatries, Transformations”

5th international conference of the European Forum for the Study of Religion and Environment, in collaboration with the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society

Munich, Germany

May 14-17, 2015

Submission Deadline: February 15, 2015

http://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/events_conf_seminars/calendar/ws_efsre/index.html

“Our Common Future under Climate Change”

International Scientific Conference

UNESCO, Paris, France

July 7-10, 2015

Submission Deadline: February 15, 2015

<http://commonfuture-paris2015.org>

“Religion, Science and the Future”

A Conference sponsored by the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (Celebrating its 10th Anniversary)

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA

January 14-17, 2016

Submission Deadline: TBA

http://www.religionandnature.com/society/pdf/ISSRNC_CFP-2016.pdf

10. Job Opening

Lecturer of Anthropology with Environmental Anthropology as preference

The University of North Texas, Department of Anthropology, Denton, TX, USA

We are particularly interested in candidates with experience in applied anthropology, ecology and the environment, and/or technology and design.

Review of Applications begins November 26, 2014.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Position begins Fall 2015.

See full job description:

https://facultyjobs.unt.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/position/JobDetails_css.jsp?postingId=162894

11. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*

Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology has as its focus the relationships between religion, culture and ecology world-wide. Articles discuss major world religious traditions, such as Islam, Buddhism or Christianity; the traditions of indigenous peoples; new religious movements; and philosophical belief systems, such as pantheism, nature spiritualities, and other religious and cultural worldviews in relation to the cultural and ecological systems. Focusing on a range of disciplinary areas including Anthropology, Environmental Studies, Geography, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Sociology and Theology, the journal also presents special issues that center around one theme.

For more information, visit: brill.com/wo

For the online edition, visit: <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/15685357>

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- Religion and Sustainability in Global Civil Society (Evan Berry)
- The Integrative Worldview and its Potential for Sustainable Societies (Annick Hedlund-de Witt)
- Spiritual Roots of the Land (Christopher Golden)
- When you have seen the Yellow Mountains (Ole Bruun)
- Environmental Conservation and Preservation of Cultural Heritage (Paul Sarfo-Mensah, Akwasi Owusu-Bi, Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye, Steve Amisah)
- Ecology and Vision (Matthew T. Eggemeier)
- Of Gardens and Prosperity (Paul Walker)
- Co-Creator or Creative Predator? (Daniel P. Scheid)
- Leonardo da Vinci Our Contemporary? (Nina Witoszek)
- “Green” Reproduction, Resource Conservation, and Ecological Responsibility (Cristina Richie)

Reviews:

- Anne Primavesi. *Exploring Earthiness: The Reality and Perception of Being Human Today*. (Review by Frederica Helmiere)
- Sigurd Bergmann, Irmgard Blindow and Konrad Ott (eds). *Aesth/Ethics in Environmental Change: Hiking Through the Arts, Ecology, Religion and Ethics of the Environment*. (Review by Christopher Hrynkow)
- Gretel Van Wieren. *Restored to Earth: Christianity, Environmental Ethics, and Ecological Restoration*. (Review by Daniel T. Spencer)
- Clayton Crockett and Jeffrey W. Robbins. *Religion, Politics, and the Earth: The New Materialism (Radical Theologies)*. (Review by Whitney A. Bauman)
- George Alfred James. *Ecology is Permanent Economy: The Activism and Environmental Philosophy of Sunderlal Bahuguna*. (Review by Sam Mickey)
- Eliza F. Kent. *Sacred Groves and Local Gods: Religion and Environmentalism in South India*. (Review by Pankaj Jain)
- Cynthia Moe-Lobeda. *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*. (Review by Max Thornton)
- Roger S. Gottlieb. *Spirituality: What is it and Why it Matters*. (Review by Daniella Vaclavik)

For the archive of previous Forum newsletters, visit:

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/publications/newsletters/>

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