

The Forum on Religion and Ecology Newsletter
8.7 (July 2014)

Contents:

- 1. Editorial, by Elizabeth McAnally**
 - 2. *Journey of the Universe* Events in England (Report by John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker)**
 - 3. *Journey of the Universe* Events**
 - 4. New Publications**
 - 5. Events**
 - 6. Video Recordings of Conference on “As Long As the Rivers Flow: Coming Back to the Treaty Relationship in our Time”**
 - 7. Audio Recording of Webinar on Catholic Perspectives on Divestment and Reinvestment**
 - 8. Tikkun Tevel / Rabbinic Network for the Earth**
 - 9. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology***
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1. Editorial, by Elizabeth McAnally

Greetings,

Welcome to the July 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, conferences, events, recordings, and more.

The *Journey of the Universe* film continues to move out into the world. It is now available on Netflix, and since it went up in December, it has been rated by over 50,000 people. For more about the *Journey* project, visit: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/>

We want to invite you to the upcoming Sophia Summer Institute at Holy Names University in Oakland, CA on July 17-20. This year’s focus is “The Legacy of Thomas Berry in *Journey of the Universe*.” Presenters include Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Sister Helen Prejean, Brian Swimme, Carl Anthony, Paloma Pavel, Marya Grathwohl, Dedan Gills, Belvie Rooks, Drew Dellinger, Peter Mayer, and Jim Conlon. A post-institute retreat on “Beauty and Danger: A Spiritual Path Inspired by Thomas Berry” will be held July 20-22 and led by Helen Prejean and Marya Grathwohl. For more information on these events, visit:

<http://www.hnu.edu/sophia/summerInstitute.html>

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. *Journey of the Universe* Events in England (Report by John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker)

John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker have been showing and discussing *Journey of the Universe* this summer at a number of places in England, including London (June 18, 19, and 21), Bristol (June 21), Devon (June 22, 24, 27), and Manchester (July 4-5). These showings have been accompanied by workshops focused on *Journey* -- the film, book, and conversations. Here is their description:

We began June 18th with an event sponsored by the Gaia Foundation at the Quaker Meeting House in Hampstead Heath in London. The next day, June 19th, we showed the film at the Guardian newspaper auditorium followed by a lively discussion. The Guardian is located in King's Cross, which is a fascinating area of urban renewal, including the remarkable renovation of St Pancras station where the Channel Tunnel connects London to Paris. On Saturday the 21st we gave a workshop at the Global Generation site, Skip Garden, which is bringing the universe story into this area of renewal. The area includes academia (the British Library), medical research (the Crick Institute), arts (St Martins College of Art and Design), and internet entrepreneurship (Google). It is encouraging to see a formerly run down and abandoned area being transformed with green buildings and ecological landscaping. It was as if the universe story was finding expression on the ground, especially as Global Generations brings students together with construction workers to reflect on *Journey of the Universe*.

On June 21st we took the train to Bristol where we had a lively conversation with the Teilhardian scholar and historian of religions, Ursula King. She joined us for the showing of *Journey* at the beautiful Arnifoli Gallery theater along the quay. This neighborhood, too, has experienced a major revival in the last few years -- former warehouses have been transformed into restaurants and shops along the canal. It is encouraging to show *Journey* in cities where urban life is pointing toward sustainable living.

We drove through the Devon countryside to show *Journey* the next day, Sunday June 22nd, at the Tagore Festival. The festival was in honor of Rabindranatha Tagore, the Indian poet and Nobel laureate. It was held at the Dartington estate whose owners, the Elmhirsts, led a

revitalization of local arts, crafts, and farming in the 1920s and 1930s inspired by their friendship with Tagore. After the showing we met with Sally and Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud who direct the One Planet MBA at Exeter University. They brought their students later in the week to Schumacher College to view *Journey*.

While in Devon we led a 5 day course on *Journey* at Schumacher College, which was founded to continue the work of the economist, E.F. Schumacher, who wrote *Small is Beautiful*. We had a public showing and discussion of *Journey* on June 24th. During the same week there was a short course on the Dark Mountain literary and environmental movement, which is having traction in the UK and beyond. We had good exchanges with the leaders, Paul Kingsnorth and Dougald Hine.

While staying with friends in Kent outside of London we visited Charles Darwin's home at Down and Winston Churchill's home, Chartwell. Darwin's commitment to developing his theory of evolution and Churchill's courageous leadership during wartime were both sources of inspiration.

Finally we traveled to Manchester where the industrial revolution began along with many social justice movements, such as fair labor laws and suffrage. We showed the film on Friday July 4th and held an all day workshop on Saturday. Our final talk was at Gorton monastery on Sunday morning where we spoke on the influence of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry on the *Journey* project.

The film was met with enthusiasm regarding the way science and humanities perspectives were interwoven and with thoughtful questions exploring the implications of this story for our environmental challenges. Many people were keen to move forward in their exploration of these topics using the *Journey Conversations*.

3. *Journey of the Universe* Events

“The Legacy of Thomas Berry in *Journey of the Universe*”

July 17-20, 2014

In celebration of the centenary of Thomas Berry's birth

Sophia Summer Institute 2014

Holy Names University, Sophia Center
Oakland, CA, USA

Presenters: Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Sister Helen Prejean, Brian Swimme, Carl Anthony, Paloma Pavel, Marya Grathwohl, Dedan Gills, Belvie Rooks, Drew Dellinger, Peter Mayer, and Jim Conlon.

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/files/2014-Summer-Flyer.pdf>

<http://www.hnu.edu/sophia/summerInstitute.html>

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“Teaching and Researching Big History: Big Picture, Big Questions”

August 6-10, 2014

2014 International Big History Association Conference

Dominican University of California
50 Acacia Ave
San Rafael, CA, USA

Journey of the Universe Film Screening: August 8, 2014 at 7pm

<http://ibhanet.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1367098>

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"Integrating Ecology, Justice, and Peace"

October 4, 2014

With John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker

Francis Day at Agape Community
2062 Greenwich Rd.
Ware, MA, USA

Contact: peace@agapecommunity.org

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/item/integrating-ecology-justice-and-peace/>

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“Living Cosmology: Christian Responses to *Journey of the Universe*”

November 7-9, 2014

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Thomas Berry’s birth

Yale Divinity School
409 Prospect St.

New Haven, CT, USA

<http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/living-cosmology-conference/>

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For more events, visit: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/upcoming-events/>

4. New Publications

Ecology and Religion

By John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker

Island Press, 2014

<http://islandpress.org/ip/books/book/islandpress/E/bo8053388.html>

(For a 20% discount, use the code 4ECOREL)

From the Psalms in the Bible to the sacred rivers in Hinduism, the natural world has been integral to the world's religions. John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker contend that today's growing environmental challenges make the relationship ever more vital.

This primer explores the history of religious traditions and the environment, illustrating how religious teachings and practices both promoted and at times subverted sustainability.

Subsequent chapters examine the emergence of religious ecology, as views of nature changed in religious traditions and the ecological sciences. Yet the authors argue that religion and ecology are not the province of institutions or disciplines alone. They describe four fundamental aspects of religious life: orienting, grounding, nurturing, and transforming. Readers then see how these phenomena are experienced in a Native American religion, Orthodox Christianity, Confucianism, and Hinduism.

Ultimately, Grim and Tucker argue that the engagement of religious communities is necessary if humanity is to sustain itself and the planet. Students of environmental ethics, theology and ecology, world religions, and environmental studies will receive a solid grounding in the burgeoning field of religious ecology.

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Sacred Mountains: How the Revival of Daoism is Turning China's Ecological Crisis Around

By Allerd Stikker

Bene Factum Publishing, 2014

<http://new.bene-factum.co.uk/product/sacred-mountains/>

Allerd Stikker witnessed and actively participated in the Daoist resurgence, together with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation. Strikker shares his fascination for Daoism, and explains how nature conservation is deeply rooted in its philosophy and practice. He tells the story of his cooperation with ARC in assisting Daoist masters to build the first Daoist Ecology

Temple in China, and how this ecology movement has spread throughout China in recent years. He shares his joy when the Chinese government picked up on this success and officially declared that Daoism should be restored as the heart of Chinese culture, in order to overcome the ecological and societal problems that China is facing—thereby putting Daoism officially back on the map.

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Religion and Ecological Sustainability in China

Edited by James Miller, Dan Smyer Yu, and Peter van der Veer

New York: Routledge, 2014

<http://routledge-ny.com/books/details/9780415855150/>

This book sheds light on the social imagination of nature and environment in contemporary China. It demonstrates how the urgent debate on how to create an ecologically sustainable future for the world's most populous country is shaped by its complex engagement with religious traditions, competing visions of modernity and globalization, and by engagement with minority nationalities who live in areas of outstanding natural beauty on China's physical and social margins. The book develops a comprehensive understanding of contemporary China that goes beyond the tradition/modernity dichotomy, and illuminates the diversity of narratives and worldviews that inform contemporary Chinese understandings of and engagements with nature and environment.

Background regarding the birth of this volume by Dan Smyer Yu:

This multidisciplinary volume has a "Tucker and Grim character." The story of it began with Chen Xia, a friend of Mary Evelyn and John, and a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In 2009, when Chen Xia was teaching a course at a U.S. study abroad center in Beijing directed by Dan Smyer Yu, she introduced Dan to the works of Mary Evelyn and John and connected Dan with them. Dan soon began to seek funding for a religion and ecology conference in China. Finally in 2011 Dan successfully received funding from the School of Ethnology & Sociology at Minzu University of China and Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. Yang Shengmin, the former Dean of the ethnology school at Minzu and Peter van der Veer, Director of the Max Planck Institute, were instrumental in making this international collaborative project possible. Throughout the preparation of the conference and the envisioned volume, Dan, as the principal organizer, sought advice from Mary Evelyn and John. Both of them generously shared their wisdom and experience, and also recommended James Miller of Queen's University as a co-editor of the volume. With their advice and encouragement, the conference organizers and volume editors decided to expand the study of religion and ecology further into other disciplines of social sciences and humanities, especially anthropology, ethnology and sociology. This trans-disciplinary expansion is particularly needed in the context of China as environmental issues are mostly tackled among scholars of natural and social sciences with a clear applied orientation. The conference took place in Beijing in March 2012. The "Tucker and Grim influence" is shown in these aspects of the volume: an urgent sense of ecological crisis worldwide; advocating critical understandings of progress and development; exploring diverse modes of environmental sustainability from different religious traditions

including those from smaller scale, indigenous societies; the effort to recover the feelings of affection and bonding with the Earth from "the feeling of alienation" resulting from our exploitative relationship with the natural environment; and advancing the study of religion and ecology as "an inter-religious project."

Read a related post by James Miller on his Sustainable China blog:

“Why China Will Solve the World’s Environmental Problems”

<http://www.sustainablechina.info/2014/05/12/why-china-will-solve-the-worlds/>

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Daoism: A Guide for the Perplexed

By Louis Komjathy

Bloomsbury Academic, 2014

<http://www.bloomsbury.com/us/daoism-a-guide-for-the-perplexed-9781441148155/>

A different, yet very successful approach to Daoism by topic rather than chronology or lineage, this consists of nine chapters: Tradition, Community, Identity, View, Personhood, Practice, Experience, Place, and Modernity. Highly insightful, meticulously researched, the book is extremely well written and combines a strong historical understanding with a deep involvement in contemporary practice. It opens Daoism in a new and amazing way.

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Faith in Food: Changing the World One Meal at a Time

By Susie Weldon and Sue Campbell

Bene Factum Publishing, 2014

<http://new.bene-factum.co.uk/product/faith-in-food/>

Eating is a moral act: our choices of what, when and how we eat have a huge impact upon the Earth, our fellow human beings and other living creatures. *Faith in Food* is a unique vision, combining essays, scripture, storytelling, recipes, initiatives and general wisdom in one beautifully produced book, all seeking to change our relationship with what we eat and how we obtain our food. Altogether this is a groundbreaking collaboration between Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism, alongside secular organizations as well, to get people thinking, acting and eating.

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Systematic Theology and Climate Change: Ecumenical Perspectives

Edited by Michael S. Northcott and Peter M. Scott

Routledge, 2014

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415742795/>

This book offers the first comprehensive systematic theological reflection on arguably the most

serious issue facing humanity and other creatures today. Responding to climate change is often left to scientists, policy makers and activists, but what understanding does theology have to offer? In this collection, the authors demonstrate that there is vital cultural and intellectual work for theologians to perform in responding to climate science and in commending a habitable way forward. Written from a range of denominations and traditions yet with ecumenical intent, the authors explore key Christian doctrines and engage with some of the profound issues raised by climate change. Key questions considered include: What may be said about the goodness of creation in the face of anthropogenic climate change? And how does theology handle a projected future without the human? The volume provides students and scholars with fascinating theological insight into the complexity of climate change.

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Following St. Francis: John Paul II's Call for Ecological Action

By Marybeth Lorbiecki

Rizzoli Ex Libris, 2014

<http://followingstfrancis.com/>

<http://www.rizzoliusa.com/book.php?isbn=9780847842711>

The first book to present the environmental teachings of this pope—the newly canonized John Paul—and the hopeful words of Pope Francis, thoughtfully synthesized into a complete spiritual and practical vision for the future.

"The ecological crisis is a moral crisis." So said Pope John Paul II, an unexpected and fierce advocate for ecological responsibility throughout his papacy. Rather than seeing environmental concerns as "earthly" or "political," he showed that they are in fact at the heart of the covenant between human beings and their Creator. In dozens of addresses, sermons, and encyclicals, Pope John Paul II made specific recommendations on twelve interconnected ecological issues, including climate change, ocean destruction, water scarcity, poverty, the role of women, and war. He showed that each could become a source of spiritual, social, and economic transformation.

Following St. Francis integrates Pope John Paul II's vision with that of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology, and the galvanizing words of Pope Francis. Accessible and illuminating, it speaks to hearts and minds, to nonreligious readers as well as devoted Catholics, incorporating Scripture, current science, and inspiring stories of solutions and restoration. Marybeth Lorbiecki unifies and champions the late pope's view that all life issues are related and that all forms of life deserve care. And if we work with God and each other to protect them, we can "renew the face of the earth" (Psalm 104:30).

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Greening Your Church: A Practice Guide to Creation Care Ministry for Parishes, Dioceses and Religious Communities

By Norman Lévesque

Novalis, 2014

<http://www.novalis.ca/Product.aspx?ids=7612252>

A compelling call to churches and faith communities to implement environmentally friendly practices.

With increasing anxiety about ecological crises, many Christians have begun to seriously consider our impact upon the environment. Compelled to take action, communities have discovered an abundant wealth of Church teaching on environmental stewardship, yet few resources demonstrate how churches can reduce their impact on God's creation. *Greening Your Church* shares with us the theology of creation care ministry and shows us practical ways to live in harmony with creation. Now faith communities have a helpful guide and companion to creating environmentally friendly churches.

5. Events

Climate Webinar by Anna Lappe
Hosted by the Franciscan Action Network
4pm EST
July 10, 2014

To register, email Rhett Engelking at engelking@franciscanaction.org
<http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/item/climate-webinar-by-anna-lappe/>

“Retreat into the Universe Story”
Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat, Wheatland, IA, USA
July 21-26, 2014

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/item/retreat-into-the-universe-story/>

“Sustainability and the Sacred”
Hampshire College, Amherst, MA, USA
July 24-27, 2014

http://fore.research.yale.edu/files/SS_brochure_2014.pdf
<http://www.hampshire.edu/specialprograms/25435.htm>

“Religion, Ecology, and the Environment in Africa and the African Diaspora”
6th Conference of the African Association for the Study of Religion (AASR)
University of Cape Town, South Africa
July 30 - August 3, 2014

<http://www.a-asr.org/meetings/>

“The Future of Science and Religion in a Globalizing World”
The 60th Anniversary Conference of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science
Star Island, NH, USA
August 2-9, 2014

<http://www.iras.org/2014-conference.html>

“Northeast Eco-Dharma Conference 2014”

Wonderwell Mountain Refuge, Springfield, NH, USA

August 7-11, 2014

<http://wonderwellrefuge.org/events/calendar/eventdetail/363/-/northeast-eco-dharma-conference-2014>

“Uniting for Peace: Building Sustainable Peace Through Universal Values”

25th International Peace Research Association (IPRA) General Conference on the Occasion of 50th Anniversary of IPRA

Istanbul, Turkey

August 10-14 2014

<http://ipra2014.org/>

“The Prophetic Voice: Healing the Earth as a Jewish Spiritual Practice”

With Rabbi Arthur Waskow & Nili Simhai

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center, Falls Village, CT, USA

August 11-15, 2014

<http://hazon.org/calendar/living-lab-prophetic-voice/>

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

6. Video Recordings of Conference on “As Long As the Rivers Flow: Coming Back to the Treaty Relationship in our Time”

On May 31 – June 1, 2014, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) and Olthuis Kleer Townshend (OKT) hosted “As Long As the Rivers Flow: Coming Back to the Treaty Relationship in our Time,” a conference intended to spark a meaningful conversation about how we balance economic development, Aboriginal rights and care for the earth.

OKT and ACFN proudly welcomed human rights luminary Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa as the keynote speaker. Other speakers included Chief Allan Adam and Eriel Deranger of ACFN, and John Olthuis and Bob Rae of OKT.

Their speeches addressed the very real impacts of oil sands development on ACFN and other First Nations and the challenge in balancing economic development with the protection of treaty rights and the environment.

At OKT, we believe that all Canadians are treaty partners. Archbishop Tutu spoke eloquently (and humorously) about the need for us to remember we are all connected and we must move forward on the path to Treaty renewal together. Treaties are not just our past, they are also our future.

We hope this conference begins a discussion about how to honour the treaties to ensure the best and most just economic and environmental outcomes for all.

For more about the conference, visit:

<http://aslongastheriversflow.com/>

Watch videos of the speeches at:

<http://www.oktlaw.com/blog/now-available-online-archbishop-desmond-tutus-keynote-speech-from-as-long-as-the-rivers-flow-conference/>

7. Audio Recording of Webinar on Catholic Perspectives on Divestment and Reinvestment

On May 5, 2014, GreenFaith offered a webinar featuring Catholic theologians on divestment and reinvestment.

It featured:

- Doug Demeo, author of *Getting out of Oil*, *America Magazine*, 4/21/14, <http://americamagazine.org/issue/getting-out-oil>
- Dr. Erin Lothes, Assistant Professor of Theology at the College of St. Elizabeth and author of "Worldviews on Fire: Understanding the Inspiration for Congregational Religious Environmentalism" and *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice* (Herder and Herder, 2007).
- Dr. Richard Miller, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Creighton University and editor of *God, Creation, and Climate Change: A Catholic Response to the Environmental Crisis*

Listen to the webinar at:

<http://greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest/catholic-perspectives-on-divestment-reinvestment>

8. Tikkun Tevel / Rabbinic Network for the Earth

The Shalom Center has established Tikkun Tevel / Rabbinic Network for the Earth. We invite Rabbis, Cantors, and registered Rabbinic Pastors, Chaplains, Spiritual Directors, and Kohanot, plus students enrolled in programs specifically leading to these Sacred Callings, to join in this network, which already has more than 120 members.

We look to the Tikkun Tevel ("Healing the Planet") network for advice and assistance in bearing forth the message of Jewish concern for and commitment to healing the Earth from its present crises — in regard to climate, mass extinction of species, dearth of pure and potable water, mounting human population, etc.

To join Tikkun Tevel / Rabbinic Network for the Earth, visit:

<https://theshalomcenter.org/civcrm/petition/sign?sid=14&reset=1>

9. 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>

Table of Contents for Volume 18 (2014):

- 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)
- The Integrative Worldview and its Potential for Sustainable Societies (Annick Hedlund-de Witt)
- Spiritual Roots of the Land (Christopher Golden)
- 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:

- 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)

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

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