Greetings,

Welcome to the December 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, calls for papers, and more.
We are pleased to inform you of a new publication in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Thomas Berry's birth. Selected and with an introduction by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, *Thomas Berry: Selected Writings on the Earth Community* is now available from Orbis Books at: [http://www.orbisbooks.com/thomas-berry.html](http://www.orbisbooks.com/thomas-berry.html)


The Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) was held in San Diego, CA on November 21-25. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim have shared their reflections on this annual meeting, which you can read below. For more about the AAR, visit: [http://www.aarweb.org/](http://www.aarweb.org/)

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

Warm wishes,
Elizabeth McAnally
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Website Manager & Newsletter Editor
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2. Reflections on the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim

Something for all of us to celebrate in a season of thanksgiving:

The Forum on Religion and Ecology was founded in 1998 at a conference at the United Nations after the 10 conferences on world religions and ecology were completed at Harvard in 1996-1998. At that time there was neither an academic field nor an engaged force of religion and ecology. The remarkable growth of the field of religion and ecology in the last 15 years was evident at a recent gathering in Southern California.

On November 21-25, 2014, the American Academy of Religion (AAR) held its annual meeting (along with the Society for Biblical Literature) in San Diego, CA. Some 10,000 scholars gathered there from across North America and many other parts of the world. A major focus of
the conference was on climate change and the environment. Indeed, more than one third of the panels addressed these issues. Plenary sessions included addresses from scientists, including the head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC), Rajendra Pachauri, and activists such as the founder of 350.org, Bill McKibben.

The final plenary session, attended by some 4,000 people, was an interview that Mary Evelyn and Steve Kepnes conducted with former President Jimmy Carter. This focused on both the degradation of the environment as well as violence against women (the subject of his latest book). It was a powerful session with an elder statesman who preserved more land than any other president, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

The President of AAR, Laurie Zoloth, was a driving force behind deciding that the theme of the conference would be climate change and inviting the plenary speakers. Many other professors contributed as well with papers and panels to make this conference a watershed moment for religion and ecology. The Forum on Religion and Ecology hosted a lunch for nearly 100 professors, graduate students, and guests. This was a joyous occasion when the dedicated efforts for the future flourishing of the planet were recognized as each participant shared their current work.

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

“Yale conference continues Journey of the Universe”
By Jamie Manson
National Catholic Reporter
November 21, 2014

"What is the creativity that brought forth a trillion galaxies?"

It is a daunting question asked by evolutionary cosmologist Brian Swimme in the film "Journey of the Universe." His line echoed throughout the halls at Yale Divinity School, where hundreds gathered for the Nov. 7-9 conference "Living Cosmology: Christian Responses to 'Journey of the Universe.'"

The conference was a historic gathering of many of the finest theologians, ethicists and activists in North America, all of whom joined together to contemplate the ways in which the Christian tradition can open up more fully to a sense of the sacredness of the universe and the flourishing of the Earth community.

"We have invited these scholars and advocates with the fundamental hope that they will help us see how deeply we are connected to the epic story of evolution," said Mary Evelyn Tucker, a senior lecturer and research scholar at Yale University and one of the conference's organizers. Tucker and her husband, John Grim, co-direct the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale.

Read the full article:
4. New Publications

*Thomas Berry: Selected Writings on the Earth Community*
Selected and with an Introduction by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim
http://www.orbisbooks.com/thomas-berry.html

Published for the centenary of his birth.

Thomas Berry (1914-2009), was a priest, a “geologian,” 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.

Endorsements:

“*Nowhere else do we have the full scope of Thomas Berry's writing. Consequently nowhere else do we have the full range of his prophetic insight. That would be contribution enough. But Tucker and Grim have also given us an essay on Berry's life and the influences for his creative thought, as well as his call and challenge. Of special import, for him and for us, is his passion for religion and what it contributes to reinventing the human for a new age of Earth-human relations. Put this book in your library and absorb it, page by page and piece by piece.***”
~ Larry Rasmussen, Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, Author of *Earth Honoring Faith*

“*This is the essential collection of Thomas Berry. It organizes key passages from his major works into the pattern of his life’s work and makes available many lesser-known essays that fill out that pattern with the complexity of his thought. Introduced with an elegant biography written by his extraordinary students, there is no better way into this genre-defying figure.***”
~ Willis Jenkins, University of Virginia, Author of *The Future of Ethics*

“*Thomas Berry offers big picture thinking, big-hearted love, and big screen imagination both scientific and religious about how the cosmos can thrive. It requires human beings to get their story straight so as to take up our task of becoming ‘a more benign mode of presence.’ New readers and longtime students of Berry alike will find this volume a portable summary of his best work.***”
~ Mary Hunt, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)

“*These days, ongoing conflicts of humans and nations seem as inevitable as they are disturbing. Yet, another way seems possible when we consider Thomas Berry’s historical and spiritual approach to the earth community’s ‘new story.’ This is a story of grace, return, intercommunion, awakening and interconnections. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, in this important selection of collected writings, invite us to consider our contributions to a functional***”
cosmology that is capable of nurturing, revising and sustaining our spiritual intuitions and our beloved earth community.”

~ Barbara A. Holmes, President, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Author of Race and the Cosmos

The Intellectual Journey of Thomas Berry: Imagining the Earth Community
Edited by Heather Eaton
Lexington Books, 2014
Paperback available January 2015
For the flyers with 30% off discount, visit:

Thomas Berry had a gentle yet mesmerizing and luminescent presence that was evident to anyone who spent time with him. His intellectual scope and erudite manner were compelling, and the breadth, depth, clarity, and elegance of his vision was breathtaking. Berry was an intellectual giant and cultural visionary of extraordinary stature. Thomas Berry’s vast knowledge of history, religions, and cultural histories is a unique blend revealing a genuine, original thinker. The ecological crisis, in all its manifestations, came to dominate Berry’s concerns. He perceived that the greatest need was to offer the possibility of a viable future for an Earth community. Many know of his proposal for a functional cosmology, the need for a new story, and a vital Earth sensitive spirituality. Few know of his rich and varied intellectual journey. The Intellectual Journey of Thomas Berry: Imagining the Earth Community is about the roots and insights hidden within his ecological, spiritual proposal. These essays, written by experts on Thomas Berry’s work, probe into, and reveal distinct themes that permeate his work, in gratitude for his contribution to the Earth. Contributions by: Brian Swimme, Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Christopher Key Chapple, Dennis O’Hara, Cristina Vanin, Anne Marie Dalton, Brian Brown, Paul Waldau, and Stephen Dunn.

Political and Spiritual: Essays on Religion, Environment, Disability, and Justice
By Roger S. Gottlieb
Rowman and Littlefield, 2014

Roger S. Gottlieb is internationally known for his groundbreaking studies of religious environmentalism, passionate account of spirituality in an age of environmental crisis, and enlightening vision of the role of religion in a democratic society. Political and Spiritual brings together for the first time his most powerful essays on these and related themes. The book’s wealth of topics includes spiritual deep ecology, ethical theory, animal rights, the Holocaust, the environmental crisis, and the experience of disability—as well as new essays on the human meaning of technology, facing death, and a fascinating intellectual autobiography. As a whole,
Political and Spiritual reveals Gottlieb’s unique ability to connect our collective struggles for a just, rational, and caring society with our personal strivings for contentment, wisdom, and compassion.

On the Verge of a Planetary Civilization: A Philosophy of Integral Ecology
By Sam Mickey
Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2014

On the Verge of a Planetary Civilization presents a philosophical contribution to integral ecology—an emerging approach to the field that crosses disciplinary boundaries of the humanities and sciences. In this original book, Sam Mickey argues for the transdisciplinary significance of philosophical concepts that facilitate understandings of and responses to the boundaries involved in ecological issues. Mickey demonstrates how much the provocative French philosopher Gilles Deleuze contributes to the development of such concepts, situating his work in dialogue with that of his colleagues Felix Guattari and Jacques Derrida, and with theorists who are adapting his concepts in contemporary contexts such as Isabelle Stengers, Catherine Keller, and the speculative realist movement of object-oriented ontology. The book focuses on the overlapping existential, social and environmental aspects of the ecological problems pervading our increasingly interconnected planet. It explores the boundaries between

- self and other,
- humans and nonhumans,
- sciences and humanities,
- monism and pluralism,
- sacred and secular,
- fact and fiction,
- the beginning and end of the world, and much more.

Climate-Challenged Society
By John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg
Oxford University Press, 2013

This book is an original, accessible, and thought-provoking introduction to the severe and broad-ranging challenges that climate change presents and how societies can respond. It synthesizes and deploys cutting-edge scholarship on the range of social, economic, political, and philosophical issues surrounding climate change. The treatment is introductory, but the book is written "with attitude", for nobody has yet charted in coherent, integrative, and effective fashion a way to move societies beyond their current paralysis as they face the challenges of climate change. The coverage begins with an examination of science, public opinion, and policy.
making, with special attention to organized climate change denial. The book then moves to economic analysis and its limits; different kinds of policies; climate justice; governance at all levels from the local to the global; and the challenge of an emerging "Anthropocene" in which the mostly unintended consequences of human action drive the earth system into a more chaotic and unstable era. The conclusion considers the prospects for fundamental transition in ideas, movements, economics, and governance.

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*The Anthropology of Climate Change: An Historical Reader*  
Edited by Michael R. Dove  
Wiley-Blackwell, 2014  

This timely anthology brings together for the first time the most important ancient, medieval, Enlightenment, and modern scholarship for a complete anthropological evaluation of the relationship between culture and climate change.

- Brings together for the first time the most important classical works and contemporary scholarship for a complete historical anthropological evaluation of the relationship between culture and climate change  
- Covers the historic and prehistoric records of human impact from and response to prior periods of climate change, including the impact and response to climate change at the local level  
- Discusses the impact on global debates about climate change from North-South post-colonial histories and the social dimensions of the science of climate change  
- Includes coverage of topics such as environmental determinism, climatic events as social catalysts, climatic disasters and societal collapse, and ethno-meteorology  
- An ideal text for courses in climate change, human/cultural ecology, environmental anthropology and archaeology, disaster studies, environmental sciences, science and technology studies, history of science, and conservation and development studies

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*A Dog's History of the World: Canines and the Domestication of Humans*  
By Laura Hobgood-Oster  
Baylor University Press, 2014  

Canines and humans have depended upon one another for tens of thousands of years. Humans took the initial steps of domesticating canines, but somewhere through the millennia, dogs began dramatically to affect the future of their masters. In *A Dog’s History of the World*, Laura Hobgood-Oster chronicles the canine-human story. From the earliest cave paintings depicting the primitive canine-human relationship to the modern model of dogs as family members, Hobgood-Oster reveals how the relationship has been marked by both love and exploitation. Canines have aided and been heir to humankind’s ever-increasing thirst for scientific advancements, empire
building, and personal satisfaction. They have tested equipment for space exploration, fought beside us in war, and advanced countless industries. But Hobgood-Oster reminds us that, just as canines would not have flourished without humans, humans would not have flourished without canines. They have been our healers, licking wounds and providing therapy to the sick and troubled for countless years. Weaving together archaeology, history, and literature, Laura Hobgood-Oster conclusively shows that humans would not be what they are without the presence and influence of canines, that the human-canine relationship has never been one sided, and that humanity's temptation to exploit canines is never far away.

5. New Documentary: *Searching for Sacred Mountain*: Can Buddhist Values Offer China a Greener Path?

The Tibetan monastery at Baiyu rests in the brilliant Nianbaoyuze mountain range, a sacred and nationally protected park. The Nianbaoyuze mountain range is the epitome of intersections between religion and environment and China—and a key element in *Searching for Sacred Mountain*, the video documentary by filmmakers Gary Marcuse and Shi Lihong that captures one of the most surprising contemporary trends in China.

The documentary, filmed in Beijing and at a monastery on the Tibetan Plateau, tells the story of Liu Jianqiang, an investigative environmental journalist and Beijing editor of ChinaDialogue who has recently converted to Buddhism. The documentary includes footage of senior Chinese government officials declaring their commitment to an "ecological civilization" that draws on Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and other Chinese cultural traditions as a means of addressing the country's growing environmental challenges. It also shows that leading Chinese academics are making the connection between such traditions and the protection of vulnerable lands and habitats. The 20 minute video was commissioned by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting as part of their religion and environment project. The website includes additional background, panel discussions, and extended interviews.

Watch this 20 minute video:


6. 35th Annual Winter Solstice Celebration with Paul Winter (December 18-20, 2014 in New York, NY, USA)

A Holiday Celebration on a Spectacular Scale

December 18-20, 2014

Cathedral of St. John the Divine
1047 Amsterdam Ave
New York, NY, USA
Winter Solstice is our contemporary take on ancient solstice rituals, when people came together during the longest night of the year to celebrate the turning point in the Earth’s journey around the sun, and the birth of a new year.

Now in its 35th year, this cross-cultural performance within the awe-inspiring space of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine has become one of New York’s favorite holiday events. This year’s Solstice promises to be a landmark in the show’s tradition of interweaving diverse performers of the world.

“For me, the solstice celebration is an ever-renewing thrill — whether watching the sun gong ascend 12 stories with its player to the vault of the Cathedral; or hearing the ‘tree of sounds’ as it slowly turns, reflecting a myriad of lights from its hundreds of bells, gongs and chimes. Please join us as we ‘bring home the sun’ and celebrate the birth of a new year.” ~ Paul Winter

http://solsticeconcert.com/

7. “Climate Justice: Hurricane Sandy Recovery” (February 21-28, 2015 in Brooklyn, NY, USA)

This special service learning journey for seminarians combines study and theological reflection on climate change, with a vivid, hands-on experience of the justice issues that arise as our climate warms.

Hurricane Sandy hit the Eastern Seaboard of the United States on October 29, 2012. It was the second most costly hurricane in U.S. history and affected a total of 24 states, but the New York area was particularly hard hit. Many thousands of housing units were damaged or destroyed along with hundreds of small businesses that formed the backbone of their communities. Roads, subway systems, parks, and other public infrastructure were also severely damaged. As we move into 2015, thousands of homes remain uninhabitable, hundreds of small business owners cannot yet reopen the sources of their livelihoods, and those who were already the most vulnerable have found themselves even more marginalized.

Working and learning in the aftermath of Sandy is one way to build our capacity to speak out and act on the most critical issue of our times, climate justice. During the program, participants will receive training in basic demolition and rebuilding skills, and the bulk of several days will be spent on urgently needed recovery work. We will also meet with leaders from immigrant and tenants’ rights organizations and will gain insight into how our own religious leadership can include solidarity with those most marginalized — both before and in the wake of disasters like Sandy.

The program has been designed to complement the March 23-27 course offering “Cosmos and Ethos: Religious Naturalism and the Climate Crisis” at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Students from other seminaries are also welcome! You may register for this journey
as a stand-alone experience, or you may also register for the full course through Meadville Lombard.

Date of service learning course: February 21-28, 2015

Register by December 21, 2014

http://uucsj.org/theologyandclimatejustice/

8. Study Abroad Course: “India Ecological & Rural Development through Religion” (June 1-21, 2015 in India)

University of North Texas professors George James and Pankaj Jain are teaching a Study Abroad course in India in summer 2015 both at undergrad and grad levels:

“India Ecological & Rural Development through Religion”
June 1, 2015 - June 21, 2015

The course is cross-listed in the departments of philosophy & religion and anthropology with both undergrad and grad sections.

The program is designed to enable students to achieve an informed appreciation of the manner in which forest communities depend on their surroundings for the maintenance of their communities. Students will gain an understanding of some of the threats to the ecosystem upon which their existence depends. Topics to be covered include, but not limited to ecological degradation, rural migration, climate change, the Appiko movement, religious issues of conservation, rural energy development, water mills, and forestry.

This course is open to the general public.

http://www.academia.edu/9396243/Study_Abroad_in_India_in_June_2015

9. Events

“Philosophy and Life World”
Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) International Conference
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS), P.R. China
December 15-16, 2014
http://www.crvp.org/conf/2014/sass.htm

“Reconstruction of Values and Morality in Global Times”
Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) International Conference
Yangzhou University, P.R. China
December 18-19, 2014
“Value Conflict and Consensus in the Context of Cultural Diversity”
Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) International Conference
Liaoning University, Shengyang, P.R. China
December 22-23, 2014
http://www.crvp.org/conf/2014/shengyang.htm

International Association for Environmental Philosophy
At the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division
Philadelphia, PA, USA
December 27-30, 2014
http://environmentalphilosophy.org/

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

10. Calls for Papers

5th International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS) Conference and Gathering of the Elders
Mysore, Karnataka, India
January 31 – February 5, 2015
Submission Deadline: December 31, 2014
http://iccsglobal.org/

Animals in the Humanities
Special issue of Ecozon@
Submission deadline: January 15, 2015

“The Ethics of Nature – The Nature of Ethics”
University of Manchester, Manchester, UK
May 16, 2015
Submission deadline: January 31, 2015

11. Funding Opportunity: “The Enhancing Life Project”

The University of Chicago, in collaboration with the Ruhr-University Bochum / Germany, is
pleased to announce a new, two-year project on “Enhancing Life,” supported with a generous
grant from the John Templeton Foundation and co-led by William Schweiker (Chicago) and
Günter Thomas (Bochum).

“The Enhancing Life Project” explores an essential aspiration of human beings that moves
persons and communities into the future. Given the profound expansion of human power
through technology as well as advances in genetics, ecology, and other fields, the vulnerability and endangerment as well as the enhancement of life are dominant themes in the global age. “The Enhancing Life Project” aims to explore this rich but widely unexamined dimension of human aspiration and social life, and to increase knowledge so that life might be enriched.

The Project will support:

- 15 research projects of advanced career scholars with $100,000 each
- 20 research projects of early career scholars with $50,000 each

The Project will support applications particularly but not exclusively in the following areas:

- Religious Thought/Theology/Philosophy
- Philosophy of Biology/of Science/of Technology
- Social Sciences (e.g., Anthropology/Law/Political Science/Psychology/Sociology)
- Communications and Media Studies

The grant runs Summer 2015 – Summer 2017.

Applications are due February 1, 2015.

enhancinglife.uchicago.edu

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12. "Whole Faith Living Earth" (Blog by Nathan Aaberg)

Nathan Aaberg feels compelled to write the "Whole Faith Living Earth" blog because he desires for Christians to be known for their skill in creating beautiful, living communities; for their leadership in preserving natural systems; and for their collective commitment to living as lightly and simply and compassionately as possible in every way.

http://www.wholefaithlivingearth.com/

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13. Graduate Programs

Joint MA in Religion and Ecology

Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (FES) and Yale Divinity School (YDS), New Haven, CT, USA

This graduate program is aimed at students who wish to integrate the study of environmental issues and religious communities in their professional careers and for those who wish to study the cultural and ethical dimensions of environmental problems.

Faculty members: Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and Fred Simmons

http://fore.research.yale.edu/yale-ma/
MA and PhD in Philosophy and Religion, concentration in Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness

California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA, USA

This graduate program is dedicated to re-imagining the human species as a mutually enhancing member of the Earth community.

Faculty members: Brian Thomas Swimme, Elizabeth Allison, Sean Kelly, Richard Tarnas, and Robert McDermott

http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Graduate_Programs/Philosophy_Cosmology_and_Consciousness.html

For more educational programs related to religion and ecology, visit: http://fore.research.yale.edu/education/resources/links/

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14. 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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For the archive of previous Forum newsletters, visit:  
http://fore.research.yale.edu/publications/newsletters/

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