

The Forum on Religion and Ecology Newsletter
9.12 (December 2015)

Contents:

- 1. Overview, by Elizabeth McAnally**
 - 2. New Study: *The Francis Effect: How Pope Francis Changed the Conversation about Global Warming***
 - 3. Buddhist Climate Statement to World Leaders**
 - 4. Hindu Declaration on Climate Change**
 - 5. Black Church Climate Change Statement**
 - 6. President Obama Rejects Keystone XL Pipeline**
 - 7. Paul Winter's 36th Annual Winter Solstice Celebration (December 17-19, 2015 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, NY, USA)**
 - 8. New Publications**
 - 9. Videos of Series of Talks on *Laudato Si'* (St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore, MD, USA)**
 - 10. Eco-Reformation -- Preparing for 2017: The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation**
 - 11. Study Guide: "A Life of Grace for the Whole World"**
 - 12. Job Opening, Post-doc. Position, and Research Studentships**
 - 13. Calls for Papers**
 - 14. Events**
 - 15. Video of Thomas Berry: "The Art and Crisis of Planet Earth" (Holy Cross Centre in Port Burwell, Ontario, Canada)**
 - 16. Graduate Programs**
 - 17. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology***
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1. Overview, by Elizabeth McAnally

Hello!

Welcome to the December 2015 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 videos, publications, calls for papers, events, job openings, and more.

On November 30 to December 11, 2015, the 21st annual Conference of Parties (COP21) is being held in Paris, France. This conference is extremely important, as it will attempt to “achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C” (<http://www.cop21paris.org/about/cop21>). For more, see this helpful newsroom of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/> In light of COP21, religious traditions are sharing climate change statements that are calling for action from religious communities, as well as the government leaders who are meeting at COP21. We are very excited to share with you three of the most recent climate change statements from Buddhists, Hindus, and the Black Church. For more about these important statements, see below. Also note this page of the Forum website on climate change statements from the world’s religions: <http://fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/>

We want to direct your attention to a couple items that feature Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, “Praised Be: On the Care of Our Common Home” (*Laudato Si*). A special report has been released by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. You can read this new report entitled *The Francis Effect: How Pope Francis Changed the Conversation about Global Warming* here: <http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication/article/the-francis-effect/>

Also, we want to share with you videos of a series of talks on *Laudato Si*’ held at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Baltimore, MD, USA. YouTube links to these talks by Stephen Scharper, John Haught, and Mary Evelyn Tucker are provided below. There are a number of resources on the Forum site (<http://fore.yale.edu/>) to provide you more information on the encyclical, in which Pope Francis highlights issues of “integral ecology,” namely concerns for people and the planet.

We would like to invite you to Paul Winter’s 36th Annual Winter Solstice Celebration. This celebration will be held December 17-19 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. For more, see below or visit: http://paulwinter.com/winter_solstice/

The Forum on Religion and Ecology has a Facebook page. Please show your support by “liking” us and sharing our page with your Facebook friends. Visit the page here: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Forum-on-Religion-and-Ecology-at-Yale/807941202606307>

Journey of the Universe also has a Facebook page that we invite you to visit: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Journey-of-the-Universe/179213572122084?fref=nf> *Journey of the Universe Conversations* is available on Vimeo for streaming and downloading. You can

access the individual episodes or the complete collection here:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/jotuconversations> For a list of stores where the *Journey* project is available, visit: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/buy/>

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

Take care,
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2. New Study: *The Francis Effect: How Pope Francis Changed the Conversation about Global Warming*

The Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication has released a special report from their new study: *The Francis Effect: How Pope Francis changed the conversation about global warming*. Today more Americans and more American Catholics are worried about global warming than six months ago and more believe it will have significant impacts on human beings. Some of these changes in Americans' and American Catholics' views can be attributed to the Pope's teachings, as 17 percent of Americans and 35 percent of Catholics say his position on global warming influenced their own views of the issue. The report's results draw from a unique study design of within-subject surveys of a nationally representative sample of American adults conducted in the Spring, prior to the release of the Pope's encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and again in the Fall, after the Pope's visit to the United States.

Read more about this study:

<http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication/article/the-francis-effect/>

Download the report here:

http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication/files/The_Francis_Effect.pdf

3. Buddhist Climate Statement to World Leaders

On October 29, 2015, Buddhist leaders from around the world announced a Buddhist Climate Change Statement, urging government leaders to move away from fossil fuels and move toward 100 percent renewable energy. This statement is spearheaded by the Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective. On November 29, a number of eminent national and international Buddhist women leaders from around the world joined list of signers to the statement.

Read the Buddhist Climate Statement to World Leaders:

<http://gbccc.org/>

For more, see the following:

Press Releases

<http://gbccc.org/press/>

“15 Buddhist leaders pen climate change statement to world leaders”

<http://www.lionsroar.com/15-buddhist-leaders-pen-climate-change-statement-to-world-leaders/>

“Stop Praying, Take Action, Cultivate Compassion”

<http://ginst.informz.net/informzdataservice/onlineversion/ind/bWFpbGluZ2luc3RhbmNlaWQ9NTE2MzQ2NSZzdWJzY3JpYmVyaWQ9MTAyMzcwMDUxOA==>

“Dalai Lama says strong action on climate change is a human responsibility”

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/20/dalai-lama-says-strong-action-on-climate-change-is-a-human-responsibility>

“Buddhist Leaders Call For Climate Change Action At Paris Talks”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/buddhists-climate-change-letter_56310898e4b00aa54a4c4208

4. Hindu Declaration on Climate Change

“Hindu Religious and Civil Society Leaders Urge Climate Change Action”

Press Release for Hindu Declaration on Climate Change

http://www.hinduclimatedeclaration2015.org/launch_announcement

On November 23, 2015, the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change was launched, calling for action from both the world’s 900 million Hindus as well as by the 196 governments meeting in Paris November 30 through December 11 at the 21st Conference of Contracting Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21). The Declaration is an initiative of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies / Bhumi Project, in partnership with the Hindu American Foundation the interfaith environmental organisation GreenFaith and the interfaith campaign for climate action OurVoices. The Declaration asks the world’s 900 million Hindus to transition to using clean energy, adopt a plant-based diet, and lead lives in harmony with the natural world.

Read and sign the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change:

www.hinduclimatedeclaration2015.org

5. Black Church Climate Change Statement

On October 29, 2015, the Black Church Climate Change Statement was released. Statement

drafters include Dr. Samuel Tolbert, Jr. (President, National Baptist Convention of America), Dr. Jessie Bottoms (Vice President, National Baptist Convention USA), Bishop Seth Larney (AMEZ), Bishop Ronald Cunningham (CME), Dr. Carroll Baltimore (Global United Fellowship), and Dr. Leonard Lovett (COGIC).

The statement reads, “As leaders in the Black Church, we view climate change as a moral issue and one of the greatest public health challenges of our time, particularly for black and other marginalized communities. Breathing dirty, carbon-polluted air, that causes climate change contributes to thousands of asthma attacks, hospital visits, and premature deaths every year. Black and lower income communities are often hit the hardest by climate change in the United States. In Genesis, breath is declared a God given right, yet, almost 40 percent of the six million Americans living in close proximity to a coal power plant are people of color.”

Read and sign the statement:

<http://www.blackchurchclimate.org/black-church-climate-statement.html>

6. President Obama Rejects Keystone XL Pipeline

Indigenous activists and environmentalists hailed President Barack Obama’s rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline on Friday November 6, calling it a victory for Mother Earth and a step toward shutting down the Alberta oil sands entirely.

“In the fight against Keystone XL our efforts as indigenous peoples, whether Lakota, Dakota, Assiniboine, Ponca, Cree, Dene or other, has always been in the defense of Mother Earth and the sacredness of the water,” said Tom Goldtooth, head of the Indigenous Environmental Network, in a statement. “Today, with this decision, we feel those efforts have been validated. With the rejection of Keystone XL we have not only protected the sacredness of the land and water but have also helped our Cree & Dene relatives at the source take one step closer to shutting down the tar sands. The black snake, Keystone XL, has been defeated, and best believe we will dance to our victory!”

Read the full article from Indian Country Today Media Network here:

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/11/06/keystone-xl-rejection-indigenous-resistance-exults-trudeau-disappointed-162354>

Watch a short video about the rejection of Keystone XL:

<http://350.org/kxl-victory/?akid=8643.561.hgW19v&rd=1&t=3>

For more, see these additional articles:

“Tribal, Grassroots, & Treaty Leaders Respond to President Obama Rejecting Keystone XL Pipeline”

<http://www.ienearth.org/tribal-grassroots-treaty-leaders-respond-to-president-obama-rejecting-keystone-xl-pipeline/>

“President Obama rejects Keystone XL pipeline”

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/president-obama-rejects-keystone-xl-pipeline>

“How an Unlikely Coalition of Environmental Activists Stopped Keystone XL”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anthony-swift/unlikely-environmental-activists-stopped-keystone-xl_b_8513650.html

7. Paul Winter’s 36th Annual Winter Solstice Celebration (December 17-19, 2015 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, NY, USA)

Paul Winter’s Winter Solstice celebrates the spirit of the holidays within the extraordinary acoustics of New York’s greatest Cathedral. A dazzling extravaganza of music and dance, these performances offer a contemporary take on ancient solstice rituals, when people gathered together on the longest night of the year to welcome the return of the sun and the birth of the new year. The event has become New York’s favorite holiday alternative to the Nutcracker and Radio City’s Christmas Spectacular.

Thursday, December 17, 2015, 8:00pm

Friday, December 18, 2015, 8:00pm

Saturday, December 19, 2015, 2:00pm and 7:30pm

Tickets can be purchased here:

http://paulwinter.com/winter_solstice/

The Winter Solstice Collection is available to download for free:

<http://music.paulwinter.com/>

8. New Publications

Earth Ethics: A Case Method Approach

By James B. Martin-Schramm, Dan Spencer, and Laura A. Stivers

Orbis Press, 2015

<http://www.orbisbooks.com/earth-ethics.html>

A revision of the highly successful textbook *Christian Environmental Ethics: A Case Method Approach*, this volume introduces new topics in environmental ethics, including hydraulic fracturing, greenhouse gases, food consumption, and resource stewardship, and revisits traditional topics in environmental ethics, while expanding beyond a specifically Christian hermeneutic. Employing a tried-and-true method first used at Harvard Business School, the authors present material both old and new in a clear and pertinent fashion. In addition, the structure of the book allows teachers (both high school and university) to separate out discrete issues for study and discussion.

Earth Ethics is part of “Ecology and Justice: An Orbis Series on Integral Ecology.” The Orbis Series on Integral Ecology publishes books seeking to integrate an understanding of Earth’s interconnected life systems with sustainable social, political, and economic systems that enhance the Earth community. To see the flyer for this Orbis series, visit:

http://fore.yale.edu/files/Orbis_Ecology_and_Justice_flyer_9-30-15.pdf

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Ecozoic Spirituality: The Symphony of God, Humanity, and the Universe

By Kwang Sun Choi

Series: Asian Thought and Culture, Volume 72

Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2015

<http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.ccc.seitenstruktur.detailseiten&seitentyp=produkt&pk=80761>

This book guides the reader to the emerging Ecozoic Era when humans will be present upon the Earth in a mutually enhancing manner. Indeed, this book calls for an Ecozoic spirituality that is timely and much needed. It also illustrates an important direction for theology and spirituality and for deep ecumenism that is yet to be fully realized and opens more doors for such dialogue. By giving special attention to the integral relationship among God, the cosmos, and humanity, the works of Thomas Berry (1914–2009, USA) and Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073, China) provide insights that speak to the current ecological crisis, a cosmological context for developing an Ecozoic spirituality, while helping to advance clear values and ethical parameters that lead to a more authentic human presence on Earth.

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“Getting to the Next System: Guideposts on the Way to a New Political Economy”

By James Gustave Speth

The Next System Project (NSP) Report 2, October 2015

<http://thenextsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GettingToTheNextSystem.pdf>

Gus Speth, who co-chairs The Next System Project at the Democracy Collaborative, has written a remarkable but short and very accessible article on how we can move forward to a new economy and a next system far superior to the economy and polity we have today. It's entitled "Getting to the Next System: Guideposts on the Way to a New Political Economy" and is available to read here: <http://thenextsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GettingToTheNextSystem.pdf>

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Sacred Mountains: A Christian Ethical Approach to Mountaintop Removal

By Andrew R. H. Thompson

University of Kentucky Press, 2015

http://www.kentuckypress.com/live/title_detail.php?titleid=3976#.VINtfb8m9Wx

In *Sacred Mountains*, Andrew R. H. Thompson proposes a Christian ethical analysis of the controversial mining practice that has increasingly divided the nation and has often led to fierce and even violent confrontations. Thompson draws from the arguments of H. Richard Niebuhr, whose work establishes an ideal foundation for understanding Appalachia. Thompson provides a thorough introduction to the issues surrounding surface mining, including the environmental consequences and the resultant religious debates, and highlights the discussions being carried out in the media and by scholarly works. He also considers five popular perspectives (ecofeminism, liberation theology, environmental justice, environmental pragmatism, and political ecology) and offers his own framework and guidelines for moral engagement with the subject.

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Baptized with the Soil: Christian Agrarians and the Crusade for Rural America

By Kevin M. Lowe

Oxford University Press, 2015

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/baptized-with-the-soil-9780190249458?cc=us&lang=en&>

In the early twentieth century, mainline Protestant churches and cooperative organizations began to come together to promote agrarianism: the belief that the health of the nation depended on small rural communities and family farms. In *Baptized with the Soil*, Kevin M. Lowe offers for the first time a comprehensive history of the Protestant commitment to rural America. Christian agrarians believed that farming was the most moral way of life and a means for people to serve God by taking care of the earth that God created. Because they believed that the earth was holy, Christian agrarians also became leaders in promoting soil conservation. Decades before the environmental movement, they inspired an ethic of environmental stewardship in their congregations.

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Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene

Edited by Katherine Gibson, Deborah Bird Rose, and Ruth Fincher

Punctum Books, 2015

Buy the hardcopy or download the open-access e-book for free:

<http://punctumbooks.com/titles/manifesto-for-living-in-the-anthropocene/>

In light of the tragedy of anthropogenic climate change, it is important to tap into the emotional richness of grief about extinction and loss without getting stuck on the "blame game." Our research must allow for the expression of grief and mourning for what has been and is daily being lost. But it is important to adopt a reparative rather than a purely critical stance toward knowing. Might it be possible to welcome the pain of "knowing" if it led to different ways of working with non-human others, recognizing a confluence of desire across the human/non-human divide and the vital rhythms that animate the world?

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Contemporary Perspectives on Ecofeminism
Edited by Mary Phillips and Nick Rumens
Routledge, 2015

<https://www.routledge.com/products/9781138019744>

This book provides a much-needed comprehensive overview of the relevance and value of using eco-feminist theories. It gives a broad coverage of traditional and emerging eco-feminist theories and explores, across a range of chapters, their various contributions and uniquely spans various strands of ecofeminist thinking. The origins of influential eco-feminist theories are discussed including key themes and some of its leading figures (contributors include Erika Cudworth, Greta Gaard, Trish Glazebrook and Niamh Moore), and outlines its influence on how scholars might come to a more generative understanding of the natural environment. The book examines eco-feminism's potential contribution for advancing current discussions and research on the relationships between the humans and more than humans that share our world.

9. Videos of Series of Talks on *Laudato Si'* (St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore, MD, USA)

“The Cry of the Earth: How Pope Francis Calls Us to the Science Faith, and Action of Saving Our Common Home”

Series of talks on *Laudato Si'* by Stephen Scharper, John Haught, and Mary Evelyn Tucker at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore, MD, USA

“A Compassionate Science: Pope Francis, Climate Change and the Fate of Creation”

By Stephen Scharper

September 30, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keEASFwivp0>

“The Cry of the Earth: Science, Theology, and *Laudato Si'*”

By John Haught

October 14, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWzZI3tuEUo>

“An Integrating Vision: Ecology, Economics, Equity”

By Mary Evelyn Tucker

October 28, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak33CUTzPv0>

10. Eco-Reformation -- Preparing for 2017: The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

We are approaching the observance of the five hundredth anniversary of the Sixteenth Century Reformation in 2017. As preparation for this event, Lutherans Restoring Creation urges us to consider embracing a New Reformation, an Eco-Reformation, as our means to rise to the greatest

challenge of our time. Many Lutherans are committed to fostering an ongoing reformation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that incorporates ecological justice into the full life, identity, and mission of the ELCA. There is now an informal group of theologians, teachers, pastors, and lay people working to promote this goal. This group is in process of working with many Lutheran leaders and organizations to make plans to seize the 2017 anniversary observance and the events leading up to it as opportunities to make headway in this effort.

To see resources and reports of developments, visit:

<http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/500th-anniversary-of-the-reformation>

11. Study Guide: “A Life of Grace for the Whole World”

Now available for free download is of "A Life of Grace for the Whole World" - A five session study of the Episcopal House of Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Environment. Like *Laudato Si*, ' Pope Francis' environmental encyclical, “A Life of Grace” encourages the church to find the connections between her faith and the environmental crisis. The full curriculum is available for free download here: <http://graceforcreation.org/>

12. Job Opening, Post-doc. Position, and Research Studentships

Philosophy and Religion Department Chair
University of North Texas, Denton, TX, USA

This position is a 12-month appointment, beginning fall 2016.

Review of applications begins December 10, 2015.

https://facultyjobs.unt.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/position/JobDetails_css.jsp?postingId=167136

Post-doc Position in Philosophical Ethics of Natural Resource Management

Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC), Berlin, Germany

The contract duration would be 3 years with extension depending on funding.

The envisaged starting date is January 1, 2016.

The position will remain open until filled.

<http://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/AMI188/>

7 International PhD Research Studentships

University of Reading, England

Start date: October 2016

Application deadline: January 29, 2016

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/prospectivestudents/gs-internationalstudentships.aspx>

13. Calls for Papers

“Climate Ethics and Climate Economics: Discounting the Future”

Oxford University, Martin School

Oxford, UK

January 13-14, 2016

Submission deadline: December 10, 2015

<http://ethics-etc.com/2015/11/19/cfp-climate-ethics-and-climate-economics-discounting-the-future/>

“Transformations of the Earth: International Graduate Student Workshop in Environmental History”

Renmin University, China

May 21-23, 2016

Submission deadline: January 1, 2016

http://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/events_conf_seminars/calendar/transformations-of-the-earth/index.html

“Animal Alterity”

Special issue of the peer-reviewed, open-access e-journal *Otherness: Essays and Studies*

Submission deadline: January 15, 2016

<http://www.otherness.dk/journal/call-for-papers/>

14. Events

“Religion, Science and the Future”

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

The University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA

January 14-17, 2016

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

“Seventh Annual Earth Care Summit”

University of Portland, Portland, OR, USA

January 31, 2016

http://www.emoregon.org/emo_events.php

“Consuming the World: Eating and Drinking in Culture, History, and Environment”

Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany

March 11-12, 2016

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

“The Spirit of Sustainable Agriculture”

Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA, USA

March 31 - April 1, 2016

<http://fore.yale.edu/calendar/item/the-spirit-of-sustainable-agriculture/>

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

15. Video of Thomas Berry: “The Art and Crisis of Planet Earth” (Holy Cross Centre in Port Burwell, Ontario, Canada)

The Forum on Religion and Ecology is posting videos and audio recordings of Thomas Berry’s talks on the Thomas Berry Foundation website. The videos are from the library of Lou Niznik thanks to the generous gift of Jane Blewett. We thank Don Smith and Wes Pascoe for editing them and making them available online. We are also very grateful to Don for creating the summary and discussion questions for the videos.

Watch these videos:

<http://thomasberry.org/Biography/videos.html>

The video we are featuring this month is "The Art and Crisis of Planet Earth," a talk by Thomas at Holy Cross Centre, Port Burwell, Ontario, Canada in 1987. Watch this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o79d0n5saHg&feature=youtu.be>

16. 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.yale.edu/yale-ma/>

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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

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

17. *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/15685357/19/3>

Table of Contents for Volume 19, Issue 3 (2015):

- Islamic Attitudes towards Environmental Problems and Practices (Azman Ahmad)
 - Homogenizing Violence, Isa 40:4 (and Luke 3:5) and MTR (Mountaintop Removal Mining) (Anne Elvey)
 - The Post-Colonial Ecology of Siberian Shamanic Revivalism (Eleanor Peers and Lyubov' Kolodeznikova)
 - Theorizing Logger Religion within the Pacific Northwest Timber Conflict (Christopher Serenari; Nils Peterson and Brett Clark)
 - "All My Means are Sane, My Motive and My Object Mad" (Daniel T. Spencer)
 - Film Review: *Pad Yatra: A Green Odyssey*, by M. Yeoh (exec. prod.) and W.J.N. Lee (prod./dir.) (Review by Erin Weston)
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For the archive of previous Forum newsletters, visit:
<http://fore.yale.edu/publications/newsletters/>

To help prevent the Forum newsletter from getting lost in your spam folder,
add news@religionandecology.org to your email address book.
