

The Forum on Religion and Ecology Newsletter
8.1 (January 2014)

Contents:

- 1. Editorial, by Elizabeth McAnally**
 - 2. “The Journey of the Universe – A New Story for Our Times” (Schumacher College Course with Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, June 23-27, 2014)**
 - 3. *Journey of the Universe* Film Screenings**
 - 4. Video: Yale 2013 Chubb Lecture with Wendell Berry**
 - 5. New Publications**
 - 6. New Films**
 - 7. Events**
 - 8. Calls for Papers**
 - 9. Energy Vision Statement**
 - 10. “Retreat into the Universe Story” (June 22-28, 2014 in Dittmer, MO, USA and July 21-26, 2014 in Wheatland, IA, USA)**
 - 11. Adamah: The Jewish Environmental Fellowship**
 - 12. Job Announcement**
 - 13. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology***
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1. Editorial, 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, conferences, events, and more.

We are very pleased to announce that the EMMY® award-winning *Journey of the Universe* film is now available on Netflix. If you have enjoyed *Journey of the Universe*, we would really appreciate if you might be willing to rate or review it at:

http://movies.netflix.com/WiMovie/70276028?strkid=1150144986_0_0&trkid=222336&movieid=70276028 The film is also now available for streaming and downloading from both iTunes and Reelhouse. It is, of course, also available in DVD format at Amazon.com, Target.com, BN.com, and a number of other online stores listed at: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/buy/>. The film has been translated into Spanish and the book into French, Italian, and Korean. For an Overview Statement of the *Journey* project, visit: http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/storage/JOTU_Overview_8-28-13.pdf

We are happy to let you know about an upcoming course on “The Journey of the Universe – A New Story for Our Times” that Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim are teaching at Schumacher College on June 23-27, 2014. Please see the course description below. We hope that you will join us for this week of exploring the *Journey of the Universe* and the Great Work of our time. For more information and to register, visit: <http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/the-journey-of-the-universe-a-new-story-for-our-times>

Mary Evelyn and John also recently completed a book published by Island Press on *Ecology and Religion*. For more information, visit: <http://islandpress.org/ip/books/book/islandpress/E/bo8053388.html> To order the book with a 20% discount, visit: http://fore.research.yale.edu/files/Ecology_and_Religion_order_form.pdf

Finally, to watch the video recording of Wendell Berry’s recent Yale Chubb Fellowship Lecture at the Shubert Theater, along with the interview by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Jeff Brenzel, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4c3GdB461s>

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
California Institute of Integral Studies
Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale
Website Manager & Newsletter Editor
<http://www.yale.edu/religionandecology>
news@religionandecology.org

2. “The Journey of the Universe – A New Story for Our Times” (Schumacher College Course with Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, June 23-27, 2014)

Schumacher College, The Old Postern, Dartington, Totnes, Devon, UK

June 23-27, 2014

For many years we have been looking to science, engineering, policy, law and economics to provide information to help us understand and resolve our complex environmental issues. We

now have a great deal of knowledge in these areas, but we still lack the collective will to engage in long-term changes essential for the continued flourishing of our ‘Earth Community’. Now we are beginning to recognise that other types of knowledge are needed alongside this information – knowledge from the humanities, from spirituality and ethics.

In this course we will explore the *Journey of the Universe* – a film, a book and a series of conversations with leading scientists and environmentalists, born out of Thomas Berry’s call in 1978 for a ‘New Story’ and developed by Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim and Brian Swimme. The *Journey of the Universe* is a cosmological narrative that transcends the boundaries between disciplines and integrates science and values to tell the story of our Universe and its evolution.

From this story we will take a new orientation and context as we reconsider our relationship with the Earth Community, looking at the many symbolic and lived expressions of interconnection between us and how they inspire us to action. Our goal for the week is to explore how this new story can evoke the ‘Great Work’ of our time for social and environmental transformation.

On this course you will gain a fuller understanding of the epic of evolution as a context for inspiring wonder and evoking creativity. We will explore how it is possible for humans to work to enhance Earth’s life systems, looking at examples ranging from bioregionalism and transition towns to international efforts like the Earth Charter.

Contact:

admin@schumachercollege.org.uk

+44 (0)1803 865934

For more information and to register, visit:

<http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/the-journey-of-the-universe-a-new-story-for-our-times>

3. *Journey of the Universe* Film Screenings

Film Screening: New Lebanon, NY, USA (January 14, 2014)

“Exploring Pillar Two: The Living Universe”

Conversation with Sister Miriam MacGillis

Abode of the Message (building TBD)

5 Abode Road

New Lebanon, NY, USA

7pm

Hosted by Seven Pillars and the Sufi Order International

http://www.sevenpillarshouse.org/calendar/item/dialogue_with_sister_miriam_macgillis/

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Film Screening: Madison, CT, USA (January 14, 2014)

Scranton Library
801 Boston Post Rd.
Madison, CT, USA

7pm

Discussion following the screening
Sponsored by the Scranton Library
Hosted by Friends of Hammonasset
Contact: Don Rankin, M.D., donandnancyrankin@gmail.com, 203-245-9192

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Film Screening: Stamford, CT, USA (January 14, 2014)

Temple Beth El
350 Roxbury Road
Stamford, CT, USA

7:30pm

Discussion with Rabbi Hammerman and Terri Eickel
<http://irejn.org/events/>

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Film Screening: Worcester, MA, USA (January 16, 2014)

The Sarah Wyman Whitman Gallery
6 Institute Rd.
Worcester, MA, USA

6:30-9pm

Discussion will be lead by Jim Antal, Minister and President of the MA Conference, UCC.
This film screening is part of the WAMS Winter Film Series.
For flyer and registration form, visit:
http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/storage/JOTU_1-16-14.pdf
Contact: Mary Robbins, mary@wamsworks.org

4. Video: Yale 2013 Chubb Lecture with Wendell Berry

On December 7, 2013, poet, novelist, philosopher, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer Wendell Berry presented the Chubb Fellowship Lecture at the Shubert Theater in New Haven, CT as a guest of Timothy Dwight College and the Yale Sustainable Food Project (YSFP). A pioneering and influential advocate for change, Berry has spent more than 50 years helping to shape the movements for agricultural and ecological sustainability. His poetry and essays flow from the rich agrarian tradition of American writing, and Berry's relationship to his Kentucky farm has been compared to that of Thoreau's to the forest — a place that nurtures his thinking about the value of physical labor, self-sufficiency, and communities of people living in harmony with the natural world.

To watch the video recording of this lecture by Wendell Berry and the interview by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Jeff Brenzel, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4c3GdB461s>

5. 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 the order form (with 20% discount), visit:

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

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 book 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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Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis

By Christiana Z. Peppard

Orbis Books, 2014

<http://www.amazon.com/Just-Water-Theology-Ethics-Global/dp/162698056X>

This book is an interdisciplinary analysis of the value of fresh water that generates timely and principled conclusions at the intersections of hydrology, ecology, ethics, theology, and Catholic social thought.

"By probing deeply into a crucial environmental problem, Christiana Peppard succeeds in opening up other interlaced and contested environmental debates in global agriculture, climate change, and energy use as well as complex ethical questions about human rights, economics and gender issues. Woven into the account, we find critical theological threads emerging from liberation theology and Roman Catholic social teaching as well as humility about humanity's place in the world, while affirming insights emerging from the natural sciences. This approach serves to make complex environmental issues more accessible to the reader, more manageable, and therefore provides a concrete basis for specific action. I heartily recommend this book for students and researchers alike." --Celia E. Deane-Drummond, University of Notre Dame

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Religion, Space, and the Environment

By Sigurd Bergmann

Transaction, 2013

<http://www.transactionpub.com/title/Religion%2C-Space%2C-and-the-Environment-978-1-4128-5257-9.html>

Religions often nurture important skills that help believers locate themselves in the world. Religious perceptions, practices, emotions, and beliefs are closely interwoven with the environments from which they emerge. Sigurd Bergmann's driving emphasis here is to explore religion not in relation to, but as a part of the spatiality and movement within the environment from which it arises and is nurtured. *Religion, Space, and the Environment* emerges from the author's experiences in different places and continents over the past decade. At the book's heart lie the questions of how space, place, and religion amalgamate and how lived space and lived religion influence each other. Bergmann explores how religion and the memory of our past impact our lives in urban spaces; how the sacred geographies in Mayan and northeast Asian lands compare to modern eco-spirituality; and how human images and practices of moving in, with, and through the land are interwoven with the processes of colonization and sacralizing, and the practices of power and visions of the sacred, among other topics.

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To See into the Life of Things: The Contemplation of Nature in Maximus the Confessor and His Predecessors

By Joshua Lollar

Brepols Publishers, 2013

http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503548937-1

Maximus the Confessor (580-662) is one of the great minds of the Christian tradition and his *Ambigua to John* are a collection of texts uniquely expressive of the speculative contours of his thought. They have not, however, received a synthetic treatment until now. This work provides such a synthetic treatment and argues that Maximus' central concern in the *Ambigua to John* is to articulate the nature of philosophy and, more precisely, the scope of the contemplation of nature within the philosophical life, where "philosophy," the love of wisdom, is nothing less than the love of the Divine. Part I of this study provides a thorough background in Greek philosophical and patristic philosophies of nature, showing how Maximus' predecessors understood knowledge of the world in relation to philosophical life, discourse, and praxis. Part II studies the contemplation of nature in the *Ambigua* and analyzes Maximus' account of human affectivity in the world, his account of the coherence of philosophical life (praxis and contemplation) as a response to this affectivity, his understanding of the relation between God and the world, and his reconciliation of these various aspects of philosophy in the Christian economy of salvation, which he understands as the renewal of nature and its contemplation.

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Walden's Shore: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Science

By Robert M. Thorson

Harvard University Press, 2014

<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674724785>

"Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward," Thoreau invites his readers in *Walden*, "till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*." *Walden's Shore* explores Thoreau's understanding of that hard reality, not as metaphor but as physical science. Robert M. Thorson is interested in Thoreau the rock and mineral collector, interpreter of landscapes, and field scientist whose compass and measuring stick were as important to him as his plant press. At *Walden's* climax, Thoreau asks us to imagine a "living earth" upon which all animal and plant life is parasitic. This book examines Thoreau's understanding of the geodynamics of that living earth, and how his understanding informed the writing of *Walden*.

The story unfolds against the ferment of natural science in the nineteenth century, as Natural Theology gave way to modern secular science. That era saw one of the great blunders in the history of American science—the rejection of glacial theory. Thorson demonstrates just how close Thoreau came to discovering a "theory of everything" that could have explained most of the landscape he saw from the doorway of his cabin at Walden. At pivotal moments in his career, Thoreau encountered the work of the geologist Charles Lyell and that of his protégé Charles Darwin. Thorson concludes that the inevitable path of Thoreau's thought was descendental, not transcendental, as he worked his way downward through the complexity of life to its inorganic origin, the living rock.

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Darkening of the Light: Witnessing the End of an Era

By Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

The Golden Sufi Center, 2013

http://www.goldensufi.org/book_desc_darkening.html

Over the last decade or more we have become increasingly aware of how our materialistic, energy-intensive civilization has been destroying the fragile balance of the web of life that has sustained humanity and all living beings for millennia. Yet, while spiritual teachings tell us that the events in the outer world are a reflection of changes taking place in the inner worlds, we appear to have little awareness of how this outer darkening is reflected within. This book, written between 2004 and the winter of 2012, tells the story of these inner changes that belong to our spiritual destiny and the fate of our planet. It is a witness to the darkening of the light of the sacred, reflected in our continued ecological destruction, and what this might mean to our shared destiny. With this darkening comes the danger that we may lose the opportunity for the global awakening that was possible at the beginning of the new millennium. This story of our collective destiny, however painful, needs to be heard if we are to take responsibility for the Earth and reclaim our sacred role as guardians of the planet.

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Integral Consciousness: From Cosmology to Ecology

Special Issue of *Integral Review*, Volume 9, No. 3 (September 2013)

California Institute of Integral Studies Special Issue Editor: Bahman Shirazi

Read this online issue at:

http://integral-review.org/current_issue/index.asp

Table of Contents:

- Editorial (Bahman Shiraz)
- Integrating Meditation into Higher Education: The Founding Mission of CIIS as an Education for the Whole Person (Joseph Subbiondo)
- The Quest for Integral Ecology (Sam Mickey, Adam Robbert, Laura Reddick)
- Toward an Integral Ecopsychology: In Service of Earth, Psyche, and Spirit (Adrian Villasenor-Galarza)
- Integral Ecofeminism: An Introduction (Chandra Alexandre)
- Loving Water: In Service of a New Water Ethic (Elizabeth McAnally)
- An Integral Perspective on Current Economic Challenges: Making Sense of Market Crashes (Pravir Malik)
- The Path of Initiation: The Integration of Psychological and Spiritual Development in Western Esoteric Thought (Gary Raucher)
- A New Creation on Earth: Death and Transformation in the Yoga of Mother Mirra Alfassa (Stephen Lerner Julich)
- Traditional Roots of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga (Debashish Banerji)
- The Metaphysical Instincts & Spiritual Bypassing in Integral Psychology (Bahman A.K. Shirazi)

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“Sustainability as a Global Faith? The Religious Dimensions of Sustainability and Personal Risk”

By Lucas Johnston

Journal of the American Academy of Religion, pp.1–23.

October 20, 2013

<http://jaar.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/10/19/jaarel.lft056.abstract>

Tracing the development of the religious dimensions of sustainability and sustainable development discourse, this article highlights the participation of religious individuals and groups in sustainability advocacy, and the manufacture of sustainability narratives which perform religious work. Since their inception, sustainability and its cognate, sustainable development, have been utilized in the public sphere to promote certain value sets and manage citizen populations. The religious dimensions of sustainability discourse have been some of the primary levers through which the social functions of sustainability have been realized. The term sustainability often acts as a shorthand reference to the core values, beliefs, and practices that particular individuals or groups would like to see persist over the long term. Focusing on the notion that it is largely the absence of conversations across these differing value structures and desirable futures that drives unsustainability, I highlight the work of nongovernmental leaders of sustainability movements who rely on what I have termed an ethic of personal risk.

6. New Films

The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism & Community

Directors and Writers: John Ankele and Anne Macksoud

Released in 2013

This film accepts the consensus of scientists that climate change has already arrived, and asks—what is keeping us from action? In discussions with thought leaders and activists, we explore how unlimited growth and greed are destroying the life support system of the planet, the social fabric of the society, and the lives of billions of people.

The film includes interviews with Bill McKibben, Joanna Macy, Gus Speth, Roger Payne, Herschelle Milford, Quincy Saul, Stephanie Kaza, Amy Seidl, and more.

“This film is deeply moving and profoundly engaging. Indeed, it has the potential to transform lives because it provides visions of how we should live in the midst of massive environmental challenges. I cannot recommend it more highly!” -- Mary Evelyn Tucker of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale

Bullfrog Films is the educational distributor for *The Wisdom to Survive*. It’s available for individual purchase on the Old Dog Documentaries website at:

<http://olddogdocumentaries.org/>

For the press release, visit:

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/news/item/new-documentary-asks-will-we-have-wisdom-to-survive/>

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Embrace

Documentary Film on Tibetan Folk Buddhism and Ecology

Directors: Dan Smyer Yu and Pema Tashi

Cinematographer: Sonthar Gyal

Sound/music: Dukar Tserang

Pre-production ethnographic work: Dan Smyer Yu

Released in 2011

This documentary presents the complex reciprocal saturation of human communities, gods, Buddha Dharma, and natural landscape marked with religious significance. Through the narratives of a father and a son, this film illustrates both the transcendental and inter-sentient dimensions of Tibetan sacred sites and of their ecological significance. It documents a ritualized relationship of people and the place of their dwelling and natural surroundings. The juxtaposition of the cinematic narratives of the father and the son brings the audience a new sublime height of eco-spiritual reflections on the present and future states of our Planet Earth.

More information is available at: <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/index.php?id=878>

The film is available online: <http://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/50479/Embrace>

7. Events

“The Great Work of Our Time: Picturing the Ecological Age”

With Angela Manno

One Spirit Learning Alliance, New York City, NY, USA

January 10, 2014

<http://onespiritinterfaith.org/the-great-work-of-our-time-picturing-the-ecological-age/>

“Ecology and Liturgy: The Jewish Feast of Tu BiShvat”

Presentation by Dr. Devorah Schoenfeld, Department of Theology

Loyola University, Chicago, IL, USA

January 15, 2014

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/item/ecology-and-liturgy-the-jewish-feast-of-tu-bishvat/>

Ecofilm Festival and Competition (TEFF 2014)

Birla Institute of Technology and Science-Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus, India

January 31 – February 1, 2014

www.teff.in

“Relationships with the World”

10th Conference on Current Pagan Studies

Claremont, CA, USA

February 8-9, 2014

<http://paganconference.com/call-for-papers/>

“Theology & Ecology Colloquium”

Loyola University Chicago/Marquette Graduate Student Colloquium

Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

February 15, 2014

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/item/theology-ecology-colloquium/>

For more events, visit:

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/calendar/>

8. Calls for Papers

“Natural Relationality and Environmental Awareness”

International Meeting

Centro Mariapoli, Via S. Giovanni Battista De La Salle, Castelgandolfo, Rome

April 4-6, 2014

Submission Deadline: February 2, 2014

<http://ecoone.org/ecoone%20convegno%202014/frontback-eng.pdf>

<http://ecoone.org/ecoone%20convegno%202014/hpen.html>

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

2014 International Big History Association Conference

Dominican University of California, San Rafael, CA, USA

August 6-10, 2014

Deadline for Submissions: February 10, 2014

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

9. Energy Vision Statement

The Energy Vision Statement was prepared by three communities of Catholic Sisters in Central Kentucky, all of whom have been leaders in opposing a pipeline that would transport hazardous natural gas liquids (resulting from the fracking activity in NY and PA) through KY. The same pipeline, if built, will also run through Clermont Co, OH, close to Grailville, OH.

It is a public statement that was developed in response to the development of natural gas pipelines, which will connect hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") operations in the northeast with chemical processing plants in the south. It speaks out against all plans for expanded extraction of fossil fuel or infrastructures such as pipelines that require the plundering of God's creation and the endangerment of human communities. The statement advocates instead for immediate regional and national plans for the transition to renewable sources of energy. If your faith community would like to sign on, please help that to happen ASAP. Individual signatures also welcome ASAP. The press release, with initial signers, was published Dec 6th, but signatures will continue to be received.

To read and sign the Energy Vision Statement and find media coverage, visit:

<http://www.lorettocommunity.org/energy/>

10. "Retreat into the Universe Story" (June 22-28, 2014 in Dittmer, MO, USA and July 21-26, 2014 in Wheatland, IA, USA)

IL Ritiro Franciscan Retreat Center, Dittmer, MO, USA
June 22 – 28, 2014

Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat, Wheatland, IA, USA
July 21 – 26, 2014

This silent retreat will include morning ritual and presentations and an optional sharing later. Deepen your awareness that the Universe is the primary revelation of the Divine. Awaken, perhaps again, a consciousness of the Sacred dimension of Earth. Experience the single integral community of Earth that includes every being – oak trees, deer, squirrels, humans – and ponder their rights to be recognized and revered.

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 out of the Universe Story

Option of Two Sites: The 90 acres of IL Ritiro, one hour west of St. Louis, MO or the 200 acres of Our Lady of the Prairie, 40 minutes west of Davenport, IA are suitable for contemplation, for walking, for quiet.

Contact:

IL Ritiro: Judith Best, SSND at jbestssnd@gmail.com

Our Lady of the Prairie: Kathleen Storms, SSND at kathleenstorms@yahoo.com

For the registration form and brochure, visit:
http://fore.research.yale.edu/files/US_Retreat_2014.pdf

11. Adamah: The Jewish Environmental Fellowship

Now in its tenth successful year, Adamah: The Jewish Environmental Fellowship is a three-month leadership training program in Falls Village, CT for Jewish adults ages 20-32 that integrates organic agriculture, farm-to-table living, Jewish learning, community building, and spiritual practice. A typical day is spent on our six-acre farm, in our commercial kitchen and on our goat pasture, helping to create a sustainable business that models ecological design, financial viability and social responsibility. Evenings are spent learning about Judaism and sustainability, building community and cultivating leadership skills. Our amazing staff and assortment of visiting faculty will help you listen to and follow your soul's yearning for ecological and spiritual wholeness, recraft a Jewish identity that sings to you, and build relationships and skills that will sustain you for the rest of your life.

2014 Fellowship Dates:

Spring 2014: April 6 - June 15

Summer 2014: June 11 - September 1

Fall 2014: August 27 - December 8

Applications for 2014 Fellowships are accepted and processed on a rolling basis. While we will continue to accept applicants until each fellowship is full, we strongly encourage folks to submit applications by the following dates:

- Spring: January 1, 2014
- Summer: February 1, 2014
- Fall: March 1, 2014

<http://www.hazon.org/adamah/adamah-fellowship/>

12. Job Announcement

Bloomberg Distinguished Professorship in Ethics and Global Food and Agricultural Policy

Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics, Baltimore, MD, USA

Applications will be reviewed beginning February 1, 2014, and applications will be accepted until a decision is made.

<http://www.bioethicsinstitute.org/about/employment-opportunities>

13. 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 17 (2013)

Articles:

- * Introduction to Special Issue: Synthetic Biology and the Notion of “Producing Life” in Different Cultures - Anna Deplazes-Zemp
- * How Do We See That Something Is Living? Synthetic Creatures and Phenomenology of Perception - Christoph Rehmann-Sutter
- * Biocentrism, Religion and Synthetic Biology - Robin Attfield
- * From Homo Faber to Homo Creator? A Theological-Ethical Expedition into the Anthropological Depths of Synthetic Biology - Matthias Braun, Jens Ried and Peter Dabrock
- * Playing God? Synthetic Biology from a Protestant Perspective - Christina Aus der Au
- * The Oromo Conception of Life: An Introduction - Workineh Kelbessa
- * Ethics of Synthetic Life: A Jaina Perspective - Christopher Key Chapple
- * Introduction to Special Issue: “Living Water” - Franz Krause and Veronica Strang
- * Keeping the Faith: Divine Protection and Flood Prevention in Modern Buddhist Ladakh - Andrea Butcher
- * From Living Water to the “Water of Death”: Implicating Social Resilience in Northeastern Siberia - Susan A. Crate
- * Water as a Vital Substance in Post-Socialist Kyrgyzstan - Stephanie J. Bunn
- * “Living Water” in Nguni Healing Traditions, South Africa - Penelope S. Bernard
- * Making Sense of Water Quality: Multispecies Encounters on the Mystic River - Caterina Scaramelli
- * Going Against the Flow: The Biopolitics of Dams and Diversions - Veronica Strang
- * Rapids on the “Stream of Life”: The Significance of Water Movement on the Kemi River - Franz Krause
- * On the Ethics of International Religious/Spiritual Gatherings and Academic Conferencing in the Era of Global Warming: A Case Study of the Parliament of The World’s Religions

Melbourne 2009 - Part 2 - Almut Beringer and Steven Douglas

* *The Least of My Brethren: Mining, Indigenous Peoples, and the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines* - William N. Holden

* *Extinction and Progress in Charles Kingsley's Alton Locke (1850)* - Laurence Talairach-Vielmas

Reviews:

* Laura M. Hartman. *The Christian Consumer: Living Faithfully in a Fragile World*

* William S. Hamrick and Jan Van der Veken. *Nature and Logos: A Whiteheadian Key to Merleau-Ponty's Fundamental Thought*

* Susan Power Bratton. *The Spirit of the Appalachian Trail: Community, Environment, and Belief on a Long-Distance Hiking Path*

* Larry Rasmussen. *Earth Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*

* Whitney A. Sanford. *Growing Stories from India: Religion and the Fate of Agriculture*

* Clifford Chalmers Cain (ed). *Many Heavens, One Earth: Readings on Religion and the Environment*

* Nancy Ellen Abrams and Joel R. Primack. *The New Universe and the Human Future: How a Shared Cosmology Could Transform the World*

* Donal Dorr. *Option for the Poor and the Earth: Catholic Social Teachings*

* Beningo P. Beltran. *Faith and Struggle on Smokey Mountain: Hope for a Planet in Peril*

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For the archive of previous Forum newsletters, visit:

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