

**The Forum on Religion and Ecology Newsletter**  
**10.1 (January 2016)**

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**1. Overview, by Elizabeth McAnally**

Hello!

Welcome to the January 2016 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, and more.

The Paris Climate Change Conference, also known as the 21st annual Conference of Parties (COP21), was held in Paris, France on November 30 to December 11, 2015. At this important conference, "representatives of 195 nations reached a landmark accord that will, for the first time, commit nearly every country to lowering planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions to help stave off the most drastic effects of climate change"

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/world/europe/climate-change-accord-paris.html>). Below you will find recent news articles about this conference. For more, see this helpful newsroom of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/>

In recent months, numerous religious traditions have shared climate change statements calling for action from religious communities, as well as from the government leaders at COP21. We have included some of these climate change statements below. For more climate change statements from the world's religions, visit: <http://fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/>

We also would like to share two audio recordings with you. The first is of a panel at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion on the topic of "The Moral and Political Dimensions of Climate Change." This panel was hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations' Religion and Foreign Policy Initiative and features Erin Lothes Biviano, Mitchell C. Hescox, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim. For more, visit: <http://www.cfr.org/climate-change/moral-political-dimensions-climate-change/p37322>

The second audio recording is of an interview with Mary Evelyn Tucker on Unity Online Radio. In this interview hosted by Rev. Kristin Powell, Mary Evelyn discusses the *Journey of the Universe* project, as well as Pope Francis' encyclical on climate change. You can listen here: [http://www.unity.fm/episode/Soulstream\\_121615](http://www.unity.fm/episode/Soulstream_121615)

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> 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. Paris Climate Change Conference (COP 21)

"Nations Approve Landmark Climate Accord in Paris"

By Coral Davenport

New York Times

December 12, 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/world/europe/climate-change-accord-paris.html>

LE BOURGET, France — With the sudden bang of a gavel Saturday night, representatives of 195 nations reached a landmark accord that will, for the first time, commit nearly every country to lowering planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions to help stave off the most drastic effects of climate change. The deal, which was met with an eruption of cheers and ovations from thousands of delegates gathered from around the world, represents a historic breakthrough on an issue that has foiled decades of international efforts to address climate change.

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“Scientists enlist the big gun to get climate action: Faith”

By Seth Borenstein, Associated Press

The Daily Mail

December 6, 2015

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3348252/Scientists-enlist-big-gun-climate-action-Faith.html>

PARIS (AP) — The cold hard numbers of science haven't spurred the world to curb runaway global warming. So as climate negotiators struggle in Paris, some scientists who appealed to the rational brain are enlisting what many would consider a higher power: the majesty of faith.

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“Praise and plaudits from the best of COP21”

By Donna Schaper

National Catholic Reporter

December 22, 2015

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/praise-and-plaudits-best-cop21>

After Paris and its enormous invigoration of the environmental, scientific and religious communities, it is time to figure out who is who and what is what. My big takeaways involve all three of these communities at their environmental -- and strategic -- best.

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### **3. Climate Change Statements from the World's Religions**

World bishops' appeal to COP 21 negotiating parties

October 26, 2015

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/287076328/World-bishops-appeal-to-COP-21-negotiating-parties>

Black Church Climate Change Statement

October 29, 2015

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

To the Jewish People, to all Communities of Spirit, and to the World: A Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis

October 29, 2015

<https://theshalomcenter.org/RabbinicLetterClimate>

Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change

International Islamic Climate Change Symposium

August 2015

<http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-on-global-climate-change/>

Buddhist Climate Statement to World Leaders

Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective

October 29, 2015

<http://gbccc.org/>

Hindu Declaration on Climate Change

November 23, 2015

<http://www.hinduclimatedeclaration2015.org/>

Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples Council Statement

United Nations Convention on Climate Change

COP21 Paris, France

November 30 - December 11, 2015

[http://spiret.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Formal-Statement\\_IndigenousEldersandMedicinePeoples\\_COP21.pdf](http://spiret.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Formal-Statement_IndigenousEldersandMedicinePeoples_COP21.pdf)

Shared Vision, Shared Volition: Choosing Our Global Future Together

A statement of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, France

November 23, 2015

<https://www.bic.org/statements/shared-vision-shared-volition-choosing-our-global-future-together#R6qsM7ezQYimqIBe.97>

Statement of Faith and Spiritual Leaders on the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21 in Paris in December 2015

October 20, 2015

[http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/COP21\\_Statement\\_englisch2.pdf](http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/COP21_Statement_englisch2.pdf)

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#### **4. Audio Recording and Transcript for “The Moral and Political Dimensions of Climate Change” (Panel at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion)**

Erin Lothes Biviano, assistant professor of theology at the College of Saint Elizabeth, Mitchell C. Hescox, president and CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network, Mary Evelyn Tucker, codirector of the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, and John Grim, codirector of the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, discuss international efforts to address climate change,

including faith-based approaches to environmental justice. This meeting took place on November 23, 2015 at the American Academy of Religion 2015 Annual Meeting, as part of the Council on Foreign Relations' Religion and Foreign Policy Initiative (<http://www.cfr.org/religion>).

To listen to the audio and read the transcript, visit:

<http://www.cfr.org/climate-change/moral-political-dimensions-climate-change/p37322>

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## **5. “Parliament of the World's Religions” - Interview with Mary Evelyn Tucker on Unity Online Radio**

“Parliament of the World's Religions”

Interview with Mary Evelyn Tucker on Soulstream, with Rev. Kristin Powell

Unity Online Radio (December 16, 2015)

[http://www.unity.fm/episode/Soulstream\\_121615](http://www.unity.fm/episode/Soulstream_121615)

In this interview, Mary Evelyn Tucker shares with contagious and grounded optimism on the timely blend of spirituality and ecology. Feel the pulse of the *Journey of the Universe*, a film and program co-created with Brian Swimme, rejoice in the Pope's encyclical on climate change, and get inspired by how our spiritual paths converge with science and ecology to create a new earth together.

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## **6. New Publications**

*The Cosmic Common Good: Religious Grounds for Ecological Ethics*

By Daniel P. Scheid

Oxford University Press, 2016

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-cosmic-common-good-9780199359431?cc=us&lang=en&>

As ecological degradation continues to threaten permanent and dramatic changes for life on our planet, the question of how we can protect our imperiled Earth has become more pressing than ever before. In this book, Daniel Scheid draws on Catholic social thought to construct what he calls the "cosmic common good," a new norm for interreligious ecological ethics. This ethical vision sees humans as an intimate part of the greater whole of the cosmos, emphasizes the simultaneous instrumental and intrinsic value of nature, and affirms the integral connection between religious practice and the pursuit of the common good. When ecologically reoriented, Catholic social thought can point the way toward several principles of the cosmic common good, such as the virtue of Earth solidarity and the promotion of Earth rights. These are rooted in the classical doctrines of creation in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, and in Thomas Berry's interpretation of the evolutionary cosmic story. The cosmic common good can also be found in Hindu, Buddhist, and American Indian religious traditions. By placing a Catholic cosmic common good in dialogue with Hindu dharmic ecology, Buddhist interdependence, and American Indian balance with all our relations, Scheid constructs a theologically authentic moral framework that re-envision's humanity's role in the universe.

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*Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*

By Leah D. Schade

Chalice Press, 2015

<http://www.chalicepress.com/Creation-Crisis-Preaching-P1550.aspx>

How can we proclaim justice for God's Creation in the face of global warming? How does fracking fit with "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's?" *Creation-Crisis Preaching* works with the premise that all of Creation, including humankind, needs to hear the Good News of Jesus' resurrection in this age in which humanity is "crucifying" Creation. Informed by years of experience as an environmental activist and minister, Leah Schade equips preachers to interpret the Bible through a "green" lens, become rooted in environmental theology, and learn how to understand their preaching context in terms of the particular political, cultural, and biotic setting of their congregation. *Creation-Crisis Preaching* provides both theoretical grounding and practical tips for preachers to create environmental sermons that are relevant, courageous, creative, pastoral, and inspiring.

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*The Toda Landscape: Explorations in Cultural Ecology*

By Tarun Chhabra

Harvard Oriental Series 79

Harvard University Press, 2015

<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674088504>

The Todas are the oldest inhabitants of the Nilgiri Hills of South India. With their quaint barrel-vaulted architecture, embroidered cloaks, and long-horned buffaloes, they have fascinated the world ever since civilization stepped into the Nilgiris two centuries ago. Their culture revolves around these herds, with each of the six grades of dairy-temple having its corresponding herd of sacred buffaloes. A Toda prayer consists of chant words addressed to sacred natural landmarks such as nearby peaks, slopes, thickets, trees, rocks, meadows, pools, and streams. The Todas represent a rare example of an indigenous culture that has remained generally vegetarian. The Prologue highlights the journey that led to Tarun Chhabra's being accepted as an "insider." The thirteen chapters provide detailed ethnographic descriptions of sacred dairy-temple institutions; the Toda relationship with honey; the intricacies of their attire and embroidery motifs; details related to seasonal migrations; settlement patterns; sacred geography and traditional architecture; a spirit's journey to the afterworld; and ethnobotany. The four appendices focus on the Toda relationship with their flora and fauna, lists of landscape terms, and the all-important prayers for major hamlets. The book includes significant new data and represents a major breakthrough in Toda studies.

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*Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*

By Donovan Schaefer

Duke University Press, 2015

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/religious-affects>

In *Religious Affects* Donovan O. Schaefer challenges the notion that religion is inextricably linked to language and belief, proposing instead that it is primarily driven by affects. Drawing on affect theory, evolutionary biology, and poststructuralist theory, Schaefer builds on the recent materialist shift in religious studies to relocate religious practices in the affective realm—an insight that helps us better understand how religion is lived in conjunction with systems of power. Schaefer explores the extent to which nonhuman animals have the capacity to practice religion, linking human forms of religion and power through a new analysis of the chimpanzee waterfall dance as observed by Jane Goodall. In this compelling case for the use of affect theory in religious studies, Schaefer provides a new model for mapping relations between religion, politics, species, globalization, secularism, race, and ethics.

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*Beastly Morality: Animals as Ethical Agents*

Edited by Jonathan K. Crane

Columbia University Press, 2015

<http://cup.columbia.edu/book/9780231174169>

We have come to regard nonhuman animals as beings of concern, and we even grant them some legal protections. But until we understand animals as moral agents in and of themselves, they will be nothing more than distant recipients of our largesse. Featuring original essays by philosophers, ethicists, religionists, and ethologists, including Marc Bekoff, Frans de Waal, and Elisabetta Palagi, this collection demonstrates the ability of animals to operate morally, process ideas of good and bad, and think seriously about sociality and virtue. Envisioning nonhuman animals as distinct moral agents marks a paradigm shift in animal studies, as well as philosophy itself. Drawing not only on ethics and religion but also on law, sociology, and cognitive science, the essays in this collection test long-held certainties about moral boundaries and behaviors and prove that nonhuman animals possess complex reasoning capacities, sophisticated empathic sociality, and dynamic and enduring self-conceptions. Rather than claim animal morality is the same as human morality, this book builds an appreciation of the variety and character of animal sensitivities and perceptions across multiple disciplines, moving animal welfarism in promising new directions.

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*Stations of the Cross: Climate Change*

By Mary Button

<http://stations2016.com/>

*Stations of the Cross: Climate Change* is a collection of 14 drawings that illustrate various aspects of the biodiversity crisis including deforestation, desertification, and ocean acidification.

These drawings combine images of those creatures on the brink of extinction due to our exploitation of the Earth with drawings of hands. These hands tell the story of the Passion through gestures. All 14 drawings will be released in the form of a coloring book. Perfect for Lenten devotion. *Stations of the Cross: Climate Change* is an invitation for individuals and communities to engage in creative contemplation for the salvation of the Earth.

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## **7. Call for Papers**

“Archaeology and Environmental Ethics”

World Archaeology 48(4)

Edited by Julia Shaw

Submission deadline: January 31, 2016

<http://explore.tandfonline.com/cfp/ah/rwar-archaeology-and-environmental-ethics>

“Wonder & the Natural World”

Indiana University Bloomington, IN, USA

Hosted by the Consortium for the Study of Religion, Ethics, and Society (CSRES)

June 20 – 23, 2016

Submission deadline: February 1, 2016

<https://www.indiana.edu/~iucweb/wonderandthenaturalworld/>

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## **8. Events**

“Climate Ethics and Climate Economics: Discounting the Future”

Oxford University, Martin School, Oxford, UK

January 13-14, 2016

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

“Religion, Science and the Future”

Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.religionandnature.com/society/pdf/ISSRNC_CFP-2016.pdf)

“Twelfth International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability”

Portland State University, Portland, OR, USA

January 21-23, 2016

<http://onsustainability.com/2016-conference>



“Seventh Annual Earth Care Summit”  
University of Portland, Portland, OR, USA  
January 31, 2016  
[http://www.emoregon.org/emo\\_events.php](http://www.emoregon.org/emo_events.php)

“Religion and Ecology Summit: Connecting Possibilities”  
California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA, USA  
Keynote address by Mary Evelyn Tucker  
Hosted by the Ecology, Spirituality, and Religion graduate program  
March 11, 2015  
<http://www.ciis.edu/academics/graduate-programs/ecology-spirituality-and-religion/religion-and-ecology-summit-connecting-possibilities>

“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](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/>

Workshop on *Journey of the Universe* and High School Teaching  
Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, NJ, USA  
June 16-19, 2016  
For more information, contact: [journeyoftheuniverse@lawrenceville.org](mailto:journeyoftheuniverse@lawrenceville.org)

“Climate Justice”  
This is the 9th retreat in the Earth-Honoring Faith series.  
Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, NM, USA  
June 19-25, 2016  
Flyer: [http://fore.yale.edu/files/2016\\_Earth-Honoring\\_Faith.pdf](http://fore.yale.edu/files/2016_Earth-Honoring_Faith.pdf)  
<https://www.ghostranch.org/retreat/earth-honoring-faith-climate-justice/>

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

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## 9. Video of Thomas Berry: “The Universe and the University”

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 a conference lecture by Thomas Berry entitled “The Universe and the University.”

You can watch this lecture here:

Part 1

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

Part 2

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li\\_ndLSRoyc&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li_ndLSRoyc&feature=youtu.be)

Part 3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCT4TmLOz0U&feature=youtu.be>

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## **10. *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](http://brill.com/wo)

For the online edition, visit:

<http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/15685357/19/3>

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- 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/>

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