President's Corner
John Grim & Mary Evelyn Tucker, November 2016

Religion, Ecology and Our Planetary Future

We are living in one of the most challenging periods in history—a time when various groups are fiercely claiming particular ethnic, cultural, religious, and national identities—when conflict is evident in many parts of the world. This conflict is being expressed between individuals and nation states, but also between humans and the Earth itself. The assault on the Earth is almost without limits. Many feel this will result in our spiraling downward, unless we can avert ecological breakdown by discovering new roles for humans as caretakers of Earth, not simply takers of its resources. As Thomas Berry foresaw, such changes in human roles will require a new story of who we are and how we live on this Earth. The field of religion and ecology gives some insight into meaningful cultural roles in the anthropocene period of human impact. Cosmology and ecology, drawing on Journey of the Universe, provides a vision of humans as planetary beings participating in an epic story. All of this is unfolding as modernity radically transforms itself.

The promises of modernity have been endless—economic comfort, leisure time, participatory government, and individual freedoms. But these promises appear unattainable for many, as the inequity of distribution in major commercial societies, such as the United States and China, become more evident. Moreover, the militarism fostered by the United States has led to a destructive arms race around the world, now even larger than during the cold war. There is a looming sense of uncertainty not only about the incoming administration in the US, but also about our larger planetary future. We are awash in criticisms from a wide spectrum of political pressures. However, we also need enduring collaborative visions that are healing and sustaining. This need is for activating human energies in relation to the dynamics of Earth processes. This is the enduring vision of Teilhard
de Chardin and Thomas Berry. And, this is where religious perspectives and depth narratives like the *Journey of the Universe* can play significant orienting roles.

The upheaval that we are experiencing has an uneasy feel to it because there are so few viable ways forward that seem to have authenticity and traction. Whatever provides grounding becomes a lightning rod for withering criticism as imposed power or metanarratives that deny the stories of others. Where are the forums in which we narrate stories that speak to one another without arousing unproductive antagonism? Our current political and economic institutions foster competitive and consumptive exchanges rather than co-operative and mutually-flourishing interactions for the whole Earth community. In these ways our institutions are failing us. We need not elaborate that here in detail. However, our academic institutions with their siloed approach to knowledge are inadequate to the task of transformation. In higher education there is much talk about the need for interdisciplinary courses, but the specialized training and reward systems of academia do not lend themselves to this approach.

This is why bringing forth a new field of religion and ecology and a fresh understanding of cosmology and ecology has been such a challenge in many contexts, both academic and non-academic. However, cosmology and ecology has found vigorous expression in the *Journey of the Universe* project. Indeed, these materials are now available in massive open online courses (MOOCs) from Yale via Coursera. Over 10,000 people around the world are already participating in these courses.

Moreover, in the last two decades the field of religion and ecology has emerged within academia. This was celebrated in October 2016 with a conference at Harvard’s Center for the Study of World Religions. This marked the 20-year anniversary of when the World Religions and Ecology series was held there, from 1996 to 1998.

Moreover, recent publications mark the rapid expansion of the field. Just this year the *Routledge Handbook on Religion and Ecology*, edited by Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim was published. The *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology*, edited by John Hart, was also released. The numbers of individual publications by scholars in this field is too numerous to elaborate.

In addition, there are seven new positions in religion and ecology this year at major US colleges and universities. Many people have contributed to the emergence of this new field often against opposition, skepticism, and indifference.

As we reexamine the traditions of the world’s cultures we seek fresh sources of ecological wisdom for our time. For example, revivals of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism are underway in China and some of this is directed at creating “ecological civilization.” A question for us is: Can we assist—Chinese and non-Chinese alike—in encouraging the modern transformation of these traditions for environmental concerns? This is a question for all the world’s philosophical and religious traditions. We are inheriting the wisdom traditions of Asia and the west, as well as those of indigenous peoples in the Americas, the Pacific region, and Africa. These traditions are being reconstructed in the fire of change that is so great as to require each of the world’s wisdom traditions to enter new phases in responding to social and ecological challenges. As a field, then, religion and ecology has a variety of global expressions. It gives glimpses into the dynamic and differentiated encounters with nature both historically and at present. Even as this field develops we are aware that the generative matrix of the natural world is unraveling at our own peril.

The challenge is: how can these various cultural and religious perspectives be brought forward amid the search for common ground for the Earth community? Could this grounding be
our sense of participating in the story of the unfolding universe?

Beyond our differences is the call of the Earth itself to a shared future for coming generations. And this will require the efforts of all of us—scholars and activists, spiritual seekers and cultural reformers, religious and non-religious alike. Cosmology comes together with religion, ecology and justice.

Clearly, the religious traditions in their modern transformations of social justice have special gifts to offer our ecological discussions at this moment in history. The times will demand standing up to power and greed, as in the example of the Standing Rock Lakota encamped on the high plains of North Dakota to protect their water, land, and sacred sites. In that setting the very name, Stone Camp, reminds us of the Lakota cosmological concept of *skan*, namely, the dynamic transformation within every reality. Lakota thinkers have traditionally understood this vibrant movement as manifest in stone. Now, Western cosmology actively understands all is in movement, from the geology of the Earth to the edges of black holes in galaxies. It is in this sense that our understanding of deep time is aligning humans with transformative change in the universe. Religions have also had their own religious understandings of deep time, namely, of cosmogony and cosmology.

**Summary**

We all acknowledge that religions have their problems and their promise. They are often otherworldly-oriented or doctrinaire and intolerant. They are not THE answer, but one part of the solutions being offered. And their sheer size would indicate that they cannot be ignored. There are more than a billion Muslims, a billion Hindus, a billion Confucians, and two billion Christians. Indeed, the United Nations Environment Programme speaks of religions as the largest Non-Governmental Organizations on the planet and is open to working with religious communities, as the Forum on Religion and Ecology has been doing since 1987.

Moreover, we recognize that broader spiritualities are part of this discussion. Not simply institutional forms of religion or the texts or dogmas of traditions, but also the lived practices of people around the world. These are the religious cosmologies and religious ecologies deeply woven into daily life. We recognize elite culture and folk culture can seem quite different and yet they typically co-exist and mutually shape one another. Finally, we acknowledge the syncretic, mixed, and intertwined nature of these traditions—hybridity abounds in Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and especially in East Asia where the three traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism were often labeled as one. There are also key dialogue partners with the religions that, while numerous, can be suggested as: science, education, economics, and policy. There are new collaborations with scientists, evident in Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. Amazingly, the past, current, and future presidents of the Ecological Society of America endorsed the message of the encyclical bringing together social justice with eco-justice.

Similarly, in academia, courses are being taught on issues that didn’t exist 20 years ago such as climate change and human behavior, religion and animals, sustainable food, and environmental humanities.

Though slow to change, and loath to consider immeasurable externalities, even economics has considered the possibility of a new economics. Yet, the ecological economics of Richard Norgaard and Juliet Schor, and the Next System of Gus Speth, as well as the Great Transition thinking of Paul Raskin, opens new prospects.

Thus, even as we prepare for a turning away from such concerns at the national governing level in the United States, these dialogue partners explore local and global economic policies, sustainability science studies, innovative governance, and eco-justice.
In these contexts, then, and from diverse thinkers, cosmology and ecology emerges both as a science-based story and as a meaningful narrative of complex interdependence of genetic, biological, geological, and cosmological forces. Deep quests for understanding the shared dynamic character of the community of life on Earth have come to the fore. The insights of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry have helped birth these quests and we are experiencing the fruits of their vision.

**Cosmology, Ecology, and Justice in *Laudato Si***

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim
Yale University, Forum on Religion and Ecology

The enormous problems we are now facing as a human community with regard to environmental degradation and social inequity are highlighted throughout *Laudato Si*. As well, the sense of our destiny as linked to that of the Earth and all creation is noted in many passages. Our larger cosmic story is in the background of this encyclical along with our wanton destruction of nature in the foreground along with the attendant human suffering. These interconnected themes of cosmology, ecology, and justice will be discussed in this talk.

The encyclical confirms the understanding of Catholic thinkers, Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry, that our fate is bound up with nature and that there is a need to ignite human energy toward creating a flourishing future. In other words, at this moment in history a profound wonder at creation and a tremendous sorrow at what is being lost, co-exist deeply in the human soul and psyche. The encyclical is asking: How can we find our way forward in the face of such human suffering and diminishment of ecosystems? We suggest that a position bringing together the profound “grammar of nature” with the language of eco-justice opens up a pathway of inspiring humans for the wellbeing of both people and the planet.

How do cosmology and ecology and justice come together in the encyclical?

Francis draws on Pope Benedict who presents the "grammar of nature", which refers to the deeper cosmological structures of creation that evoke awe and reverence saying:

> …the natural environment is more than raw material to be manipulated at our pleasure; it is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a 'grammar,' which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation. Today much harm is done to development precisely as a result of these distorted notions. Reducing nature merely to a collection of contingent data ends up doing violence to the environment and even encouraging activity that fails to respect human nature itself. (*Caritas in Veritate*, 48)

This echoes Thomas Berry’s well-known phrase “The universe is not a collection of objects but a communion of subjects.” By this he means there is interiority not only in humans, but also in all species and in the ecosystem itself. This is what makes for a sacred universe, which Berry observes we need to respect. This is the Logos, the inner ordering principle of all reality.

In this spirit, the Pope evokes Mother Earth and the “Canticle to Brother Sun and Sister Moon” and thus places the encyclical precisely in
the tradition of Franciscan nature mysticism. This Franciscan spirit evokes awe that can lead to action and reverence that can lead to responsibility. With Francis’ special commitment to the poor there is a unique blending of cosmology and ecology and justice in the message of the encyclical.

**Cosmological and Evolutionary Perspectives**

There are also echoes in the encyclical of the influence of two significant Catholic thinkers of the 20th century, namely, the Jesuit scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) and the cultural historian Thomas Berry (1914–2009). (See [http://teilharddechardin.org](http://teilharddechardin.org); and [http://thomasberry.org](http://thomasberry.org)) Berry was a cultural historian who worked in the lineage of Teilhard and had a strong influence on Leonardo Boff and other eco-theologians.

Both of these priests saw something akin to the "grammar of nature" as reflecting an evolutionary unfolding of Earth's ecosystems. This included the inner patterning of things as well as emergent properties and self-organizing dynamics leading to greater complexification of evolution leading to human self-reflection. There is clearly a sacred dimension to the universe as the sacramental dimension of Catholicism reflects. Teilhard spoke of it as the “divine milieu” in which we live and have our being.

Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit priest and paleontologist whose thinking about evolution led to his exile from Europe to China in the late 1920s. Of particular import is Teilhard's understanding of the human phenomenon as arising from, and deeply connected to, the dynamic, unfolding universe. Teilhard felt that if we don’t sense this connection we would lose our way, our purpose for living.

He observes:

Humans have every right to be anxious about their fate so long as they feel themselves to be lost and lonely in the midst of the mass of created things. But let them once discover that their fate is bound up with the fate of nature itself and immediately, joyously, they will begin again their forward march. For it will denote in them not a critical sense but a malady of the spirit if they were doubtful of the value and the hopes of an entire world.” 1

Pope Francis has drawn on the same notion to describe a dynamic cosmological and ecological relationship of humans with all of life. He writes:

…as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate, and humble respect. …God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.” (Section 89)

There are echoes here of cultural historian, Thomas Berry, who, following Teilhard, situated the human as arising from, and dependent on, this long evolutionary journey. He wrote that the loss of a species was the loss of a divine voice. He notes that:

At such a moment, [as the present] a new revolutionary experience is needed, an experience wherein human consciousness awakens to the grandeur and sacred quality of Earth processes. This awakening is our human participation in the dream of Earth...2

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2 Thomas Berry, “Reinventing the Human at the Species Level” in [The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth](http://www.orbisbooks.org/books/earth), Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, eds. (Orbis Books: Maryknoll NY, 2009), 123.
From this cosmological perspective, Berry calls on humans to participate in the Great Work of ecological transformation, as does Pope Francis—building new ecological economics, new educational and political systems, and new religious and spiritual communities that are aligned with Earth's capacities and limits.

It is this evolutionary understanding of Earth's systems, so central to Teilhard and Berry, which provides a broad context for the Pope's own cosmological and ecological thinking.

**Journey of the Universe**

Indeed, this is the integrative perspective of *Journey of the Universe*, which narrates the epic story of evolution in film and book form. This film and book that I wrote with cosmologist Brian Swimme is deeply inspired by the thought of Teilhard and Berry and supports the need for an integral ecology. We are now doing free online classes on *Journey of the Universe* and Thomas Berry. This cosmological perspective resituates the human as part of the vast unfolding universe, and thus responsible for the continuity of the life systems of the planet. As the *Journey Conversations*, namely interviews, indicate, this framework brings together new models for the wellbeing of the Earth Community in cosmology, ecology, and justice. With a change of consciousness, can come a change of conscience. This integrated perspective for humans promises to have a rippling effect on environmental issues such as climate change. Without this sense of mutually enhancing human–Earth relations in an evolving universe, climate discussions can become simply business as usual amidst policy proposals, market-based schemes, and technological fixes. In this broader cosmological spirit, the encyclical calls on communities and individuals to awaken to the beauty of creation and to engage in action for climate justice. This is the heart of integral ecology where people and planet are seen as one.

**Social Justice and Ecological Justice in a Cosmological Context**

What distinguishes the Pope's perspective, then, is the linking of environmental and climate discussions with issues of social justice, poverty, and economic inequality—themes often missing from the official climate change reports until fairly recently. This has the potential to transform the debate by connecting environmental science and policy with a century of social justice teachings from the Christian churches. Ecology and equity are inextricably linked, says Pope Francis. That is his message not just for Christians but for all of humanity as well. It clearly had an important effect on bringing about the Paris agreement in December.

**Ecology and Justice Series on Integral Ecology**

To enhance this dialogue, John Grim and I have been editorial advisors in the *Orbis Series on Ecology and Justice* for two decades. There are 20 books in this series that has been trying to build bridges between these perspectives. Ecology was dismissed by some theologians as involving simply wilderness preservation or the rights of trees; while poverty amelioration was sometimes viewed by environmentalists as secondary to preserving ecosystems. These concerns are coming together now in religious and environmental circles, as they are clearly

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linked. Moreover, cosmology has been part of this thinking with books of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme.

In this regard it is worth noting that two of the other advisors in the Orbis series were major influences on the encyclical, namely, the Irish Columban priest who served many years among the Tboli people in the Philippines, Sean McDonagh, and the Brazilian liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff.

Boff’s book *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* is in the Orbis series, and the title is quoted frequently in the encyclical. Boff was deeply influenced by Thomas Berry’s “dream of the Earth and cry of the Earth.” He realized, as did other liberation theologians after reading Berry, there is no liberation for humans without liberation of the Earth from exploitation. Leonardo thus has woven into his writings a profound appreciation for the cosmological perspective of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme as presented in their book, *The Universe Story*. As well, Boff has brought this evolutionary framework into the Earth Charter movement where he is active as a Commissioner from Latin America. The Earth Charter is quoted in the encyclical.

**Earth Charter:**

**Cosmology, Ecology, Justice, and Peace**

Those of us on the three-year drafting committee of the Earth Charter, which was released in 2000, tried to bring these elements together of cosmology, ecology, justice, and peace. The preface to the Charter intentionally includes the cosmological lines: “We are part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life…. Earth has provided the conditions necessary to life’s evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend on preserving the biosphere…”

The three sections of the Charter are:

**Ecological integrity**

Everything, including human well-being depends on the health of ecosystems. We are now seeing environmental refuges and the largest migrations since World War II because of environmental degradation, drought, and climate change;

**Social and economic justice**

We can’t create functional economies based on massive inequalities such as have emerged in the last several decades around the world;

**Democracy, non-violence and peace**

We need genuinely democratic political systems along with a culture of peace and non-violence to insure long-term sustainability.

This integrated ecology also points toward hope. That is reflected in the Pope’s quote in the encyclical from the Earth Charter: “As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning...Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.” (207, p. 100)

**Conclusion**

Thus the publication of the papal encyclical is a unique opportunity to scale up and move forward in linking cosmology, ecology, and justice. That is because it provides a renewed moral force and shared ethical commitment regarding environmental issues, especially climate change. It also highlights the fact that we have a special kinship with nature and are responsible for its continuity for future generations. Indeed, the flourishing of Earth, *Our Common Home*, may

5 This is also the work of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University. See http://fore.yale.edu
depend on how humans heed this moral call to "ecological conversion." The cosmological understanding is indispensable to this conversion, namely seeing ourselves as part of a sacred universe that has been birthed out of deep time is a major step in this direction. So, too, understanding ecology means seeing ourselves as part of an interdependent Earth community. And embracing eco-justice within this perspective is a critical way forward for all humans who hope to respond to those most in need in present and future generations. As the encyclical concludes: “May our struggles and concerns for the planet never take away the joy of our hope.”

Sermon for Pentecost, 2016
All Saint’s Church, Millington, NJ
Rev. Franklin Vilas, D.Min

Today, as we live further into the year 2016 of the Christian era, we find that our Episcopal Church seems to be in deep trouble. Numbers of worshipers in the United States have greatly diminished, and many of those who do attend Sunday services may appear in Church only once or twice a month.

The numbers of children in Sunday education classes have greatly diminished, and sporadic attendance makes for little deep learning of the Christian tradition. Parishes in the dioceses of Newark and New Jersey continue to close, as dwindling congregations can no longer maintain the required bud-gets for survival.

This is true not only of the Episcopal Church, but of other mainline denominations as well. Those churches that still have large numbers in attendance tend to be fundamentalist organizations that ignore the findings of science that are inevitably driving the direction of the human race.

Many programs have developed to try to boost the numbers of church attendance. Some are successful for a while, but the general trends indicate that organized Christianity as we have known it is in trouble. Why is this so and what can be done about it?

I believe that in addition to the obvious social trends that have been impacting the mainline denominations, there is an added theological factor. Though acknowledging the truths discovered about the universe by modern science, our teaching and preaching has continued to assume the picture of Creation that underlies the historic faith of the Bible. The result is that our God is too small—and Jesus is too small. Faith depends on story—in this case the story of the origin of the human race. But the story in the book of Genesis no longer reflects reality as we know it, so that for recent generations the very foundations of the Christian Faith have been shaken.

We need a new story on which to rest the Christian experience. We need the story of the Universe as it has emerged in the last century into human consciousness. In the last several years a film has been circulating throughout the country and abroad, entitled Journey of the Universe. Written and produced by the mathematical cosmologist Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, this film traces the story of the unfolding universe from the “Big Bang” through the development of galaxies and stars to the unique flowering of life on Planet Earth.

It traces the development of mammals, of consciousness in human beings and the growth of culture to the present time. In the space of an hour, this film replaces the Genesis story with one of much greater scope and power. It elevates our image of the Creator from that of an old man above the clouds to the infinite power behind all that is in an expanding universe inconceivable to those who fashioned what we know as the Old Testament.
It is a Creation story to capture and inspire the minds of those generations living in the 21st century. And it captures once more the awesome reality of the nature of Jesus that inspired St. Paul. In the light of the unfolding story of the Journey of the Universe, listen to these words from the Epistle to the Colossians:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all Creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, — all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And from today’s reading: “For in him the whole fullness of the deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is head of every ruler and authority.”

It is clear that Paul is not here speaking only of the historical human being, Jesus of Nazareth. He is speaking of that reality which we know as the Christ, and which the Dominican Priest Matthew Fox has called “The Cosmic Christ.” He is speaking of the formative energy behind the Universe. For Paul, the idea of the Creation was limited to Genesis, for which the Earth itself was the entire cosmos.

That was large enough. But are we as modern Christians able to allow our faith to expand to include the Universe as we now know it? We have been through a period in history where many have felt that the findings of science have reduced reality to material existence alone. But recent scientific discoveries have pushed back those frontiers, revealing the intricate mysteries of quantum physics, DNA and the human genome.

The mystery of the inner dimension of the process of evolution that explodes into dynamic reality in human consciousness has yet to be understood. The human psyche and the nature of Spirit still lie beyond the scope of our understanding. Rather than eliminating religion, these mysteries indicate the existence of a higher power of creative intelligence — what we human beings have always called “God” by many names.

It has always been our Christian belief that the intelligence and power behind all that is was focused in a special way in the human being we know as Jesus of Nazareth. In him, we have proclaimed, the Logos, the original force of Creation, was pleased to dwell. As Paul says in Colossians: He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

How this can be so has been the subject of speculation by many theologians in the last century. Paul Tillich, the great German theologian, introduced the concept of “The Ground of Being” — God as the underlying context of the Universe itself.

Raimon Panikkar, another of the great modern theologians, has written:

When we say that “Christ is the symbol of the whole of reality,” we intend to say that not only are “all the treasures of divinity” included in Christ, but “all the mysteries of man(kind)” as well as the thickness of the universe — also hidden in him. He is not only the “first-born” but the “only begotten,” the symbol of reality itself.

The expansion of our understanding of God the Creator and of the Cosmic Christ brings a new dimension of excitement and depth to our traditional beliefs. As the film Journey of the Universe has traveled around the nation, it has been accompanied by educational programs for children that have exposed them to the wonderful new story of Creation.

The impact on children and young people has been dramatic, as their eyes are opened more fully to the beauty and the immensity of the universe of which they are a part. This vision can grasp us and lift us to an awareness of God in a way that traditional organized creeds and teachings formed in another age cannot.
From within this expanded understanding of God, we may look again at the Jesus of history and see in him not only the Cosmic Christ present at the beginning, but the astounding truth that the nature of the energy behind the unfolding universe is Love. As we move about the face of our planet, we are a product of that creative, loving energy.

And recognizing this, we may find it in ourselves, in our deepest soul. Paul describes this as the “riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory.” This reality can bring what Teilhard calls Zest into our lives, opening them in a new way.

Understanding this, we may return to our liturgy with new vigor, offering our worship to a dimension of the Spirit which can renew our vision, excite our souls and energize our discipleship. Bringing the vision of Jesus of Nazareth into our own history can excite and empower a new generation of Christians.

I believe that this vision is the future of Christianity. If we wish to remain relevant as a Church, our task is to understand, pursue and incorporate it into our common life.

**Notable Books**


The moral values and interpretive systems of religions are crucially involved in how people imagine the challenges of sustainability and how societies mobilize to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being.

The *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* provides the most comprehensive and authoritative overview of the field. It encourages both appreciative and critical angles regarding religious traditions, communities, attitude, and practices. It presents contrasting ways of thinking about "religion" and about "ecology" and about ways of connecting the two terms. Written by a team of leading international experts, the *Handbook* discusses dynamics of change within religious traditions as well as their roles in responding to global challenges such as climate change, water, conservation, food and population. It explores the interpretations of indigenous traditions regarding modern environmental problems drawing on such concepts as lifeway and indigenous knowledge. This volume uniquely intersects the field of religion and ecology with new directions within the humanities and the sciences.

This interdisciplinary volume is an essential reference for scholars and students across the social sciences and humanities and for all those looking to understand the significance of religion in environmental studies and policy.

**Testimonials**

“The great wisdom traditions arose as reformations and transformations of the beliefs and cultures of their day. Among their heirs are some who would now use them to defend established cultural practices and outdated views, and for all too many people, this has come to be understood as "religion." This book makes clear that these traditions continue to motivate and inspire thoughtful adherents to respond creatively to new challenges, including the overwhelming dangers that human excess has brought to the biosphere. It is the values that these traditions
inculcate more than the value-free facts generated in universities that have a chance to motivate people to change direction. This volume can be our collective global guide to hope.”

John B. Cobb, Jr., Center for Process Studies, Claremont

“This definitive and engaging treatment of the potentially powerful intersection of religion and ecology may well surprise you. Concepts of stewardship cut across diverse religious traditions, shedding new light on present-day challenges.”

Jane Lubchenco, Distinguished University Professor, Oregon State University, and former Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

“This Routledge Handbook is the most comprehensive treatment of religion and ecology to date. And the most instructive and trustworthy as well, given that all the authors are internationally-renowned scholars on the traditions and topics they address. For both personal reference and classroom teaching, this is the volume to use.”

Larry Rasmussen, Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, New York City

“Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim have edited an important book on the interrelations of religion and ecology. This is a book that should be on everyone’s shelf who is concerned with these key issues.”

Rosemary Radford Ruether, Claremont School of Religion

“Even for those who think of themselves as more inclined to action than contemplation, this remarkable collection, skillfully assembled and introduced by the editors, provides ready access to the wisdom needed for today’s great challenges.”

Gus Speth, Vermont Law School, Former Dean of Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

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<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>Mike Hulme, King’s College, London</td>
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<td>Conservation and Restoration</td>
<td>Gretel van Wieren, Michigan State University</td>
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<td>Food and Agriculture</td>
<td>Whitney Sanford, University of Florida</td>
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<td>Christiana Peppard, Fordham University</td>
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<td>Animals</td>
<td>Paul Waldau, Canisius College</td>
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<td>Population</td>
<td>Robert Wyman, Yale University &amp; Guigui Yao, Jianghan University</td>
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<td>Consumption</td>
<td>Laura Hartman, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh</td>
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<td>Gender Injustice</td>
<td>Heather Eaton, St Paul’s University</td>
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<td>Environmental Justice</td>
<td>David Pellow, University of California, Santa Barbara, Pengfei Guo, Minzu University of China and University of Minnesota</td>
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### Part 7 Disciplinary Intersections

Introduction: Mary Evelyn Tucker, Yale University

**Environmental Humanities**

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<td>Subhankar Banerjee, Port Townsend, WA</td>
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**Environmental Sciences**

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<td>Policy</td>
<td>Maria Ivanova, John McCormack, School of Policy &amp; Global Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston</td>
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<td>John Nagle, Notre Dame Law School</td>
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<td>Richard Norgaard, University of California, Berkeley, Emeritus With Jessica Goddard and Jalel Sager</td>
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<td>Nalini Nadkarni, University of Utah</td>
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Please join us for the Annual Meeting of the
American Teilhard Association

Saturday May 20, 2017
Lunch: 12:00 p.m; Talk: 1:45 p.m.

In the refectory at
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway at 121st St., New York, NY

John Grim will be speaking on:
"Cosmology and Ecology: the Influence of Teilhard on Berry"

This talk will explore the thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on Thomas Berry. Among these influences are: the innovative narrative approach in Teilhard’s book, *The Human Phenomenon*; the significance of evolution in defining the role of the human; cosmogenesis as the ongoing creative processes of the universe and Earth. This talk will illustrate the connection between cosmology and cosmogenesis on the one hand and ecology and interdependence on the other. We will conclude with reflections on human energy and the zest for life that also engaged Teilhard and Thomas.


He is the President of the American Teilhard Association.

For more information and to register for the event, go to: http://www.teilharddechardin.org/index.php/event
Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, Senior Lecturers and Research Scholars at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies are currently offering four six-week online courses. These are featured as a specialization under the theme of "Journey of the Universe: A Story for our Times." This specialization includes two courses on *Journey of the Universe* and a course on the *Worldview of Thomas Berry*. Each of these courses can be taken independently, followed by an *Integrating Capstone* course. These are MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) available on Coursera to anyone, anywhere on the planet. This is the first MOOC specialization for Yale and the first MOOCs for the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Learners may audit these courses **FREE OF CHARGE** (with the exception of the capstone course). Or learners may register for all of the courses for a small fee and upon completion, receive a specialization certificate. The courses do not have to be completed within the six week period, rather, learners may finish at their own pace.

**Courses:**
- *Journey of the Universe*: The Unfolding of Life
- *Journey Conversations*: Weaving Knowledge and Action
- The Worldview of Thomas Berry: The Flourishing of the Earth Community
- Integrating Capstone: Living Cosmology (only available as part of the specialization certificate—not available to audit)

**Upcoming sessions:**
- December 19, 2016 - February 6, 2017
- January 16, 2017 - March 6, 2017
- February 13, 2017 - April 3, 2017

A person can sign up for the class anytime.

For more details and to register, go to: [https://www.coursera.org/specializations/journey-of-the-universe](https://www.coursera.org/specializations/journey-of-the-universe)
Praise for the Journey of the Universe: A Story for Our Times online courses (from course participants):

“While I have taken several dozen online courses, I have never before been moved to want to participate on a deeper level as I have with this series. [This course] made a deep impression on my thinking and my feelings, and I sincerely hope that I will find ways to further my understanding of [this] work as well as to develop my own independent thinking in the direction [the instructors] have pioneered. I am given fresh hope and faith in the idea of being a part of this vitally important, and vitally potent, undertaking.”

"I am a retired university lecturer from Australia, and a life-long learner. The Journey of the Universe was the first professionally presented online course that I have undertaken. I loved everything about it; the book, the film, the additional resources. Most importantly, the integrated vision of the evolution of the universe, and the principles and processes of evolution from the original flaring forth, through to the evolution of Earth, and humanity as it is now, and what it may be in the future. I am thrilled by the multi-level examples of interconnectedness, and your orientation of bringing it all back to me/us. It is just what I needed - the deepening of my understanding of 'humanity's roots', in order to expand 'horizontally' in my perception of global events in the context of wonder and possibility for the future of earth community. I love the integration of science, humanities and the spirituality underlying world religious systems; i love the heart-felt, poetic language of your story of the journey(s).”

"I would really like to say thank you for providing this course as it is one of the most profound and momentous experiences of my life. It has given me a much greater understand of who I am and where I live. My view has been expanded exponentially. It also, importantly, gives me hope. My goal is to dedicate my life's work to promoting a flourishing future for all life and hopefully making some sort of small difference for future generations, of all kinds.”

"It's beautiful! I've never described any Coursera courses this way. This course guides us to widen our perspective and enhances our connection to the world around us. I believe it truly make us better beings. Thank you!“

Praise for Journey of the Universe:

"This is one of the most remarkable films I have ever seen."
- Thomas E. Lovejoy, Ph.D., Scientist and Founder of the PBS series Nature Professor, George Mason University

"This story of the universe has the potential to change our civilization."
- Gus Speth, Vermont Law School, Former Director, United Nations Development Programme, Co-founder of National Resources Defense Council and World Resources Institute

"Journey of the Universe uses stunning imagery to foster an understanding of our evolutionary origins and the urgency of protecting the diversity of life and environments on our home planet."
- Derek Briggs, Ph.D., Director, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

"This is the film that so many of us have been waiting for: a clear, wondrous telling of the Universe Story. The science is rigorous and engaging. The film is mind-blowing in all respects."
- Ursula Goodenough, Ph.D., Biology Department, Washington University, Author of Sacred Depths of Nature

"A remarkable film...While science itself is rooted in rigor and dispassion, its findings can inspire wonder, even reverence. I think the film is a great experiment. It is also beautifully filmed, and, refreshingly, largely a "woe-is-me/shame-on-you"-free zone. I hope it gets wide viewing."
- Andrew Revkin, Journalist, Author, “Dot Earth” blogger for The New York Times
We welcome suggestions of relevant ideas, books, news, events and contributions of articles for this newsletter. The editor is Tara Trapani. The Teilhard Perspective newsletter along with the biannual Teilhard Studies pamphlet and Annual Meeting notices are available through membership. Please contact us at: American Teilhard Association, c/o John Grim, 29 Spoke Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525. Annual membership is $35.

The Association President is Dr. John Grim, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University, 195 Prospect Street, New Haven CT 06520. Email john.grim@yale.edu. Vice Presidents are Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, maryevelyn.tucker@yale.edu, and Dr. Brian Thomas Swimme, California Institute for Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. For Publications and other information, please email Tara Trapani at: tcmk@aya.yale.edu.

American Teilhard Association, Thomas Berry, and Journey of the Universe Websites

At the new ATA site www.teilharddechardin.org can be found a Biography, List of Writings, Pictures and Quotes, Life Timeline, ATA Events, Teilhard Studies with first page, recent full Teilhard Perspectives, Membership info, Links, and a Brian Thomas Swimme interview on Teilhard.


A new site www.journeyoftheuniverse.org introduces this title film, book and educational series by Brian Thomas Swimme, Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and an advisory board to carry forward in multimedia fashion the inspiration of Pierre Teilhard and Thomas Berry.

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