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President's Corner

John Grim & Mary Evelyn Tucker, September 2017

Daring to Dream of the Roles of Religion and Planetary Civilization

As statements proliferate describing and denying human-induced climate change, it becomes more and more evident that we are making macrophase changes to the planet with microphase wisdom. Urban development of major cities is being reconsidered as we see macrophase alterations of neighborhoods suddenly reshaped by major storms following and flowing along the routes of microphase planning. We are not fully aware of the scale of the damage we are doing, but we are not yet capable of stemming the tide of destruction.

For decades, environmental issues were considered solely the domain of scientists, lawyers, and policy makers. Now the ethical dimensions of the environmental crisis are becoming more obvious. What is our moral responsibility toward future generations? How

can we ensure equitable development that does not destroy the environment? Can religious and cultural perspectives help solve environmental challenges?

Among environmentalists, a conviction



deepens: though science and policy approaches are clearly necessary, they are not sufficient to do the job of transforming human consciousness and behavior for a sustainable future. Values and ethics, religion and spirituality are important factors

in this transformation. In 1947, historian Arnold Toynbee declared: "The twentieth century will be chiefly remembered by future generations not as an era of political conflicts or technical innovations but as an age in which human society dared to think of the welfare of the whole human race as a practical objective."

We might expand these statements to declare—as did Aldo Leopold—that the twenty-first century will be remembered by this extension of our moral concerns not only to

humans, but to other species and ecosystems as well—the Earth community as a whole. From social justice to eco-justice, the movement of human care pushes out in ever widening concentric circles. The future of our withering planet, a commitment to its protection and restoration, may depend on the largeness of our embrace. Can we also think of this as an extension of Teilhard de Chardin’s sense of the human *noosphere* embracing the planet?

Our challenge now is to identify the vision and values that will spark a transformation toward creating a multicultural planetary civilization. A sustainable future requires not just managerial or legislative approaches—the saving of forests or fisheries—but a vision of that future, evoking depths of empathy, compassion, and sacrifice for the welfare of coming generations. We are called to a new intergenerational consciousness and conscience. Teilhard’s dynamic evolutionary vision of life can help us navigate forward.

But solutions must inspire participation and action rather than frighten or disempower people. This is the value of Teilhard’s notion of activating human energy and a zest for life. The next generation is searching for ways to contribute to a positive future. Life in all its variety and beauty calls to us for a response—a new integrated understanding of who we are as humans. This is not only about stewardship of the Earth, but about embracing our embeddedness in nature in radical, fresh, and enlivening ways. Humans, Earth, and the rest of life are bound in a single story and destiny as Teilhard saw in *The Human Phenomenon*. It is no longer a question of “saving the environment,” as if it was something “out there,” apart from us. We humans are the environment, and it is us—shaping our minds, nourishing our bodies, refreshing our spirit.

The task of articulating an integrated vision and identifying effective values requires new language, broader framing, inspiring images, captivating metaphors, and, most of all, new stories and dreams. As cultural historian Thomas Berry says: “If a society’s cultural world—the

dreams that have guided it to a certain point—become dysfunctional, the society must go back and dream again.” What does that mean when dreams seem shaped by advertised and manufactured desires drawing on the somatic drives of a two hundred thousand year old species?

Currently, our environmental dreaming meets another complex impasse. There’s a puzzling disconnection between our growing awareness of environmental problems and our ability to change our present direction. We have failed to translate facts about the environmental crisis into effective action in the United States and beyond. We know that the human heart is not changed by facts alone, but by engaging visions and empowering values. Humans need to see the big picture and feel their actions can make a difference. Teilhard understood this well, as did Thomas Berry in his sense of the Great Work.

Signs of Hope: Religions Embrace the Earth Community

Against these imposing obstacles, we must learn to cultivate long-term perspective and persistence, as well as a sense of history, mystery, ritual, and humor. And despite frustrating trends, hopeful dreams are stirring, especially within religious communities, which have traditionally contributed to liberating movements for social justice and human rights. The Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology has been highlighting these efforts for two decades, both within academia and beyond (www.fore.yale.edu).

Until recently, religious communities have been so absorbed in internal sectarian affairs that they were unaware of the magnitude of the environmental crisis at hand. To be sure, the natural world figures prominently in the major religions: God’s creation of material reality in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; the manifestation of the divine in the karmic processes underlying the recycling of matter in Hinduism and Jainism; the interdependence of life in Buddhism; the meditation among Pacific

Polynesian Peoples on the *mana*, or sacred power, manifested in the world; and the *Dao* (the Way) that courses through nature in Confucianism and Daoism. Despite those rich themes regarding nature, many religions turned from the turbulent world in a redemptive flight to a serene, transcendent afterlife.

As scholars and theologians explore environmental ethics, religions are starting to find their voices regarding the environment. The monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are formulating original eco-theologies and eco-justice practices regarding stewardship and care for creation. Hinduism and Jainism in South Asia, and Buddhism in both Asia and the West, have undertaken projects of ecological restoration. In China there is a movement called “Ecological Civilization” drawing on the traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism to explore and restore ancient ideals of human-Earth respect. Indigenous peoples bring to the discussion alternative ways of knowing and engaging the natural world with gratitude. Gwich’in people, for example, are fighting to preserve the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from the current administration’s push to open that area to drilling. All of those religious traditions are moving forward to find the language, symbols, rituals, and ethics for encouraging protection of bioregions and species. Religions are beginning to generate the energy needed for restoring the Earth in such practices as tree planting, coral-reef preservation, and river cleanup. A major Interfaith Rainforest Initiative was launched in Oslo in June 2017 at a conference sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme and the Norwegian government.

In the United States, the greening of churches and synagogues leads religious communities to search out sustainable building materials and renewable energy sources. Many religious leaders, including evangelicals, are focusing on climate change as a moral issue that

will disproportionately hurt the poor around the world. In North and South America, native peoples are speaking out about the negative effects of resource extraction and ever-expanding oil pipelines. The Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has written books and led several international symposia on religion, science, and the environment. Pope Francis’ stirring encyclical *Laudato Si*, is one of the most significant contributions with its call for an integral ecology that responds to “the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.” Together Francis and Bartholomew issued a new call to action on September 1, 2017.

And finally, a conviction is emerging in some quarters that we need a new “species identity” to rally humanity to a stronger sense of solidarity than nationhood, faith, or family can muster. It means coming to understand our place within this vast field of force we call nature and evolutionary history. It means embracing a new story, a universe story, one that evokes awe, wonder, and responsibility, and inspires humans to influence evolution in benign directions. This is what the Emmy award winning *Journey of the Universe* film and book offer (www.journeyoftheuniverse.org). And this project is inspired by Teilhard’s evolutionary insights and hope (for online classes on Journey of the Universe and Thomas Berry, see <https://www.coursera.org/specializations/journey-of-the-universe>).

With an emerging sense of global responsibility comes an emerging global ethics, such as that contained in the *Earth Charter*. This is a document which outlines the complex interdependency of humans and nature and provides an integrated vision of three related areas for a viable future: ecological integrity; social and economic justice; and democracy, non-violence, and peace.

As all these examples illustrate, a many-faceted alliance of religion and ecology along with a new planetary ethics is emerging. This is a new moment for the world’s religions, and they

have a vital role to play in the emergence of their planetary phase. Attitudes are being reexamined with alertness to the future of the whole community of life, not just humans. The context for these changes is the immense unfolding of the evolution process that Teilhard identified in his writings and life work. The urgency for activating planetary commitment cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the future flourishing of the Earth community may depend on it.

What the World Needs Now is a New Story Based on an *Integral Ecology*

By James D. Trifone

I recently attended a week-long conference "*Earth Honoring Faith: Journey of the Universe*" hosted at the Ghost Ranch in Abiquiú, New Mexico. The conference focused on developing a new worldview that embraces the wisdom from both science and religion to better understand how to re-connect humanity with Nature. Its theme stemmed from the inspirational book and Emmy award-winning documentary *Journey of the Universe* [JOTU] co-written by cosmologist Brian Thomas Swimme along with Mary Evelyn Tucker. In addition, Tucker and her husband were executive producers of JOTU. The film weaves together the insights gleaned from modern science with the enduring wisdom from the world's religions to view Cosmic and Earth evolution as a profound process of creativity, connection and interdependence. The film instills a deep sense of belonging and participation that invites us to embrace a more meaningful understanding of our place and role in the story of the universe. JOTU tells a story situating humanity as one of millions of interdependent species borne within the womb



of the Cosmos. All matter can be traced to the prodigious energies used to forge every known element either within the fusion furnaces of stars during their "lives" or when they have reached the end of their billion-year lifespan culminating with a billowing fireworks-like display of kaleidoscopic plume of gas and dust in the wake of a supernova explosion. Therefore, as Carl Sagan iterated decades ago, we are all "*star stuff*" and, as such, kindred spirits with all of creation.

Religious leaders, environmental and social activists, as well as educators attended the conference whose presenters' task was to weave together scientific findings and religious wisdom to:

- (1) *emphasize that we are one human family connected to each other and all there is and;*
- (2) *engender a discussion of constructively responding to the ecological, political, social, economic and educational crises we currently face as a global family.*

Towards this end, the presentations featured a cadre of eminent religious and scientific scholars, including Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim co-founders and co-directors with of Yale's Forum on Religion and Ecology. They are both on the faculty of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, as well as Yale Divinity School and the Department of Religious Studies. Tucker specializes in Asian religions while Grim specializes in Native American religions. Other presenters included William Brown, who is the William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary; Reverend Betty Holley, who is Professor of Environmental Ethics & African American Religious Studies at Payne Seminary; Julianne Lutz Warren who is an ecological thinker, creative writer, and author of a biography of Aldo Leopold; and Larry Rasmussen, who is Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus at Union Theological Seminary and author of the award-winning volume *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*. Rasmussen has also served as the

organizer of Ghost Ranch's decade-long project on Earth-Honoring Faith.

Following a viewing of JOTU Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim facilitated a lively discussion focusing on how the film provides a framework for stimulating the creation of a New Story. This was further emphasized later in the week after viewing several interviews on the JOTU companion video series, *Conversations*, which underscored the importance of understanding the "Big History" approach, ecological economics and indigenous ways of knowing to fully appreciate what needs to be considered in creating a New Story. Reverend Betty Holley provided the audience with inspirational biblical scriptures, poetry and songs as a means for developing ecological consciousness while Biblical scholar, William Brown, gave a presentation¹ that drew insights from the famous song in Ecclesiastes "*A Time For Everything*."² Brown stated that the verses' opposite pairings (e.g. a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot...) reminded him of a pendulum swinging from one extreme to the other. What this brought to mind was the dialectic between *extinction* and the opposing process of *emergence* or re-birth. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of each mass-extinction, like the Phoenix arising from the ashes, life not only persisted but also flourished in abundance and diversity.

Scientists now concur that we have reached the end of the Cenozoic geological period, during which time the Earth witnessed the adaptive radiation of thousands of mammalian species including our own only a few hundred thousand years ago. A study, recently published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, confirms what many scientists have believed for some time:

The resulting biological annihilation obviously will have serious ecological, economic and social consequences. Humanity will eventually pay a very high

price for the decimation of the only assemblage of life that we know of in the universe. (Ceballos, G; Ehrlich, P.; and Dirzo, R. 2017, paragraph 18).

We are now immersed in a new epoch characterized by "*biological annihilation*" of wildlife that the Earth has not experienced since the last mass extinction millions of years ago. There have been five mass extinctions of life on Earth over the course of the past 3.6 billion years, all of which can be attributed to natural processes. However, unlike mass extinctions of past eons, this new one is due to overpopulation and overconsumption, as well as the intervention in natural processes of a single species-*Homo sapiens*.

Therefore scientists are in agreement that Earth has entered into what is now called the Anthropocene epoch [the prefix "Anthro" refers to human]. The Anthropocene is so named because the planet's landscape, air and water systems are being transfigured and negatively impacted while its plant and animal inhabitants were decimated due to the human predilection to survive at the expense of everything else. Nonetheless, as the geological record has revealed, the Earth is resilient and has survived past mass extinctions and therefore will survive and thrive with or without us. Thus, there is hope in recognizing the creative, renewing and fecund nature of our planet wherein the emergence of new species will continue to evolve and replace extinct species for ages to come. However, if we want to continue journeying with Mother Earth we need to recognize that this *emergence-extinction* dialectic is neither pendulum-like nor cyclical. Rather this dialectic depicts the spiraling and evolving of "time and place" creating new contexts. We need to acknowledge that we live in what author, Duane Elgin, refers to as a "*living universe*" in his book by the same name (Elgin, 2009). It is a difference between viewing it as a dead and static state of "being" and recognizing it as a living and dynamic state of "becoming." Henceforth, rather than viewing ourselves as

human "beings" it appears more accurate to perceive ourselves as human "*becomings*" who have reached a critical juncture, or what Malcolm Gladwell refers to as a "tipping point" in our evolution. Whether our species continues the journey depends on whether or not we choose to consciously make changes in how we view ourselves and interact with the landscape, air, water and myriad species that Mother Nature has spun on her loom into one grand tapestry that we perceive as the "*web of life*."

The time has come to reinterpret the 18th century Enlightenment values of *life, liberty and pursuit of happiness* through the lens of interconnectedness or what Vietnamese and Buddhist poet, Thich Nhat Hanh, refers to as "inter-being" [i.e. to interdependently exist with others]. In another presentation,³ William Brown provided deep insight into the nature of the relevance of biblical verses in passages from both Genesis and Job regarding the relationship of between "awe," "wonder" and "wisdom." What the world needs today is to experience "*wonder*" within the sacred natural world we call home. As Brown discussed, wonder or awe literally takes one's breath away. In awe's wake one's breath is restored through the process of inspiration. Since the etymological roots can be traced to the word "spirit," being awe-struck leaves us transformed and able to see things anew that as a consequence. One could argue that awe leaves us *re-spirited* and thus, enlightened to perceive what before had only been overlooked or unseen. Therefore, what the world needs now is a new story filled with *wonder* along with the *wisdom* that emerges when taking time to observe and appreciate the natural beauty and elegance in the form and structure of our environs. Humans need to finally recognize and acknowledge that *we are entangled in an interdependent "web of life."* Moreover, it behooves us to begin behaving like a "family" member rather than a stranger to our global inhabitants, as well as resolve to fully participate as trusted guardians rather than plunderers of our planet and Her resources.

The new crises created during the human age of modernity require now, more than ever, a New Story of interdependence and spirituality that spawns new forms of social, spiritual and environmental activism based on:

- (1) *embracing ecological integrity;*
- (2) *fostering social, economic and restorative justice and democracy;*
- (3) *non-violence and Peace;*
- (4) *valuing, respecting and honoring the spiritual connection between humans and the Earth;*
- (5) *integrating science and ethics;*
- (6) *viewing the universe as a "living," creative and evolving system;*
- (7) *activating human energy for ecological and social change;*
- (8) *acknowledging humans as "trustees" rather than stewards of the earth;*
- (9) *embracing a broadened ethics among humans and non-humans; and*
- (10) *espousing an integral ecology whose values include:*
 - (1) *reverence for the earth community;*
 - (2) *respect for humans and all species;*
 - (3) *restraint in use of natural resources;*
 - (4) *retribution of technology and aid; and*
 - (5) *responsibility for the future of life and restoration of ecosystems.*⁴

The Earth Charter began as a United Nations initiative, but was carried forward and completed by a global civil society initiative in the last decade of the 20th century. The Charter provides an ethical framework requisite to creating what has been referred to by many as a *just, sustainable and peaceful global society for the 21st century* and, as such, can serve as a primer on writing a New Story. The Preamble of the Earth Charter begins with a sobering notion:

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile,

*the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.*⁵

Pope Francis proposes in his recent Encyclical that we embrace an *integral ecology* as a new paradigm of justice; an ecology that respects the human, social and the environmental aspects of our world. Pope Francis stated:

*We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.*⁶

The inherent wisdom in this papal document is thus aligned with those espoused by others, most notably His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Therefore, the religious and scientific communities are united in their appeal to usher in a new accord that promotes embracing an integral ecology founded on interconnectedness and inter-dependence of the Earth community. JOTU's message is that we are all "star stuff" and therefore, interrelated and interdependent. We, as interdependent members of a global community, are ALL on the same journey as *One* with the Universe. Therefore, in order to connect the message inherent in JOTU with both the Earth

Charter and the Encyclical we, as a global society, need to adopt a new set of global-centric values that speak to the entire *Earth community*. It is a shift in mindset from focusing on the needs, desires and wants of the "*self*" to those of "*Self*." Getting there will require being open to dialogue and therefore listening to each other and co-evolving new values that support the Earth Charter's guiding principles for nature, human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.

¹ Notes from Dr. William Brown's presentation on "Apocalyptic Wonder."

² Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 Verses 1-8, New International Version

³ Notes from William Brown's presentation "*Cosmic Wonder*"

⁴ John Grim and ME Tucker, *Ecology and Religion*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2014.

⁵ The Earth Charter, (Paragraph 1) <http://earthcharter.org/discover/the-earth-charter/>

⁶ Encyclical Letter Laudato Si of the Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home: Chapter 4: *Integral Ecology* (Paragraph 139) http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

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Dr. James Trifone is the Academic Director for The Graduate Institute's Master of Arts in Learning and Thinking Degree Program in Bethany, CT. learn.edu

Joint Message of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for the World Day of Prayer for Creation, September 1, 2017



The following is the Joint Message of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for World Day of Prayer for Creation:

Joint Message

The story of creation presents us with a panoramic view of the world. Scripture reveals that, “in the beginning,” God intended humanity to cooperate in the preservation and protection of the natural environment. At first, as we read in Genesis, “no plant of the field was yet in the earth

and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground” (2:5). The earth was entrusted to us as a sublime gift and legacy, for which all of us share responsibility until, “in the end,” all things in heaven and on earth will be restored in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10). Our human dignity and welfare are deeply connected to our care for the whole of creation.

However, “in the meantime,” the history of the world presents a very different context. It reveals a morally decaying scenario where our attitude and behaviour towards creation obscures our calling as God’s co-operators. Our propensity to interrupt the world’s delicate and balanced ecosystems, our insatiable desire to manipulate and control the planet’s limited resources, and our greed for limitless profit in markets—all these have alienated us from the original purpose of creation. We no longer respect nature as a shared gift; instead, we regard it as a private possession. We no longer associate with nature in order to sustain it; instead, we lord over it to support our own constructs.

The consequences of this alternative worldview are tragic and lasting. The human environment and the natural environment are deteriorating together, and this deterioration of the planet weighs upon the most vulnerable of its people. The impact of climate change affects, first and foremost, those who live in poverty in every corner of the globe. Our obligation to use the earth’s goods responsibly implies the recognition of and respect for all people and all living creatures. The urgent call and challenge to care for creation are an invitation for all of humanity to work towards sustainable and integral development.

Therefore, united by the same concern for God’s creation and acknowledging the earth as a shared good, we fervently invite all people of goodwill

to dedicate a time of prayer for the environment on 1 September. On this occasion, we wish to offer thanks to the loving Creator for the noble gift of creation and to pledge commitment to its care and preservation for the sake of future generations. After all, we know that we labour in vain if the Lord is not by our side (cf. *Ps* 126-127), if prayer is not at the centre of our reflection and celebration. Indeed, an objective of our prayer is to change the way we perceive the world in order to change the way we relate to the world. The goal of our promise is to be courageous in embracing greater simplicity and solidarity in our lives.

We urgently appeal to those in positions of social and economic, as well as political and cultural, responsibility to hear the cry of the earth and to attend to the needs of the marginalized, but above all to respond to the plea of millions and support the consensus of the world for the healing of our wounded creation. We are convinced that there can be no sincere and enduring resolution to the challenge of the ecological crisis and climate change unless the response is concerted and collective, unless the responsibility is shared and accountable, unless we give priority to solidarity and service.

From the Vatican and from the Phanar, 1
September 2017

*Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch
Bartholomew*

The Challenge of Creating “Ecological Civilization” in China

By Mary Evelyn Tucker

In the last decade the Chinese government has realized the need to create not just a prosperous and technologically sophisticated society but an

“ecological civilization” based on its cultural and religious traditions. In the sacred mountains of Henan, Yale Professor Mary Evelyn Tucker recently participated in the Songshan Forum, an annual meeting that has become part of this effort.



The plane arrived in one of the world’s most polluted cities, Zhengzhou, in western China. My husband, John Grim, and I were here for the Songshan Forum focused broadly on “Ecological Civilization” held in mid-September in Dengfeng. This is in Henan, a province of some 94 million people. If Henan were a nation-state it would be the world’s 12th-largest economy. China’s rapid modernization in a few short decades—on a scale unfathomable to most Americans—has resulted in staggering environmental problems, which are evident here.

Henan is in the midst of a severe drought, as are many parts of China. We saw the burnt-out crops of corn and wheat. The local river, now channeled into concrete basins, has dried up from a lack of runoff from the surrounding mountains. We feel the air thick with smog and particulate matter. At times it is hard to breathe. It is now obvious that the price to pay for modernization is indeed high in China.

The air, water, and soil are polluted. Food is tainted with pesticides. Water for drinking or irrigation is diminishing. Infant formula has been

contaminated and children have died. Families are trying to buy safe formula from abroad. The health of the Chinese people is being severely compromised. Everything about contemporary China invites rethinking “economic progress” and reimagining appropriate limits to growth.

What happens when more than a billion people seek the fruits of modernity—electricity, cars, refrigerators, television, cell phones? Sustainability and equity, along with food and water, are challenged on a vast, indeed planetary scale. China’s resource demands are depleting forests and fisheries, along with oil and coal, around the world. China is drawing on sources across North America, including the tar sands in Canada. Even more will be extracted there if the proposed Keystone pipeline is built through the U.S.

Ecological Civilization



The environmental and social problems seem intractable. How can the life-support systems, which give us food and water, be preserved? Where can we find traction for sustainability? Clearly we need science, policy, law, technology, and

economics to solve these issues. But spiritual and ethical perspectives of the world’s religions must also be brought to bear. And so it is against great odds that some Chinese are trying to reconfigure their assumptions of endless growth and extraction and find a path toward a sustainable future. This is why we have flown 8,000 miles in 24 hours from New York to Shanghai and on to the heartland of the ancient Yellow River valley civilization of China.

Why now? Why here? The pressing answer is that pervasive pollution across China is putting

the entire nation at risk. In the last decade the Chinese have realized the need to create not just a prosperous and technologically sophisticated society, but an “ecological civilization” based on the cultural and religious traditions of China. The Songshan Forum, which has been meeting yearly since 2011, is part of this effort. The setting of the conference, Songshan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the sacred mountains of traditional China. Here the three religions of China—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—have given unique expression to their interwoven history. At Songshan there is not only the famous Shaolin Buddhist Temple, so closely associated with the “meritorious actions” (kung-fu) of the martial arts, but also the Confucian Songyang Academy and the Zhongyue Daoist temple. Now, the region’s majestic mountains are often hidden in sulfurous acidity rather than the misty clouds of the traditional Song Dynasty landscape painters. But a revival of China’s religious traditions, especially Confucianism, is underway, with significant implications for environmental awareness.

These traditions were nearly obliterated in the Cultural Revolution under Mao from 1966 to 1976. He sought to destroy the past and create a new socialist future for China, with devastating impact on both society and the environment. Four decades later, politicians, academics, journalists, and ordinary people are exploring how Confucian moral philosophy and ethical concerns can be resuscitated to strengthen a sustainable future.

Confucian Revival

In November 2012, the government added the goal of “establishing ecological civilization” to the Chinese constitution. Numerous policy papers have been written on this and conferences organized on how to realize this long-range goal. Several years ago, the governor of Henan and his ministers attended the Songshan Forum, where his finance minister called for an innovative “circular economy” that leaves no waste through the processes of production, consumption, and

recycling. While “ecological civilization” sometimes has lofty sounding goals and minority people wonder about their role, efforts such as this for an efficacious industrial ecology are noteworthy.

Academics are exploring Confucianism and have translated books about religion by western scholars into Chinese. This includes the three volumes on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism from the Harvard conference series on world religions and ecology we organized from 1996-98. A book on Confucius by media professor Yu Dan has sold over 10 million copies. One of the leading scholars of the Confucian revival is Tu Weiming, formerly at Harvard, and now directing the Institute for the Advanced Studies in Humanities at Beijing University. He has been the principle academic organizer of the Songshan Forum since its founding and an inspiration to many on the role on Confucianism within modernity.

The 2017 Songshan Forum underscored the urgency of China’s environmental challenges and the potential of its Confucian heritage. This is within the context of worldwide environmental challenges exacerbated by climate change. The conference included a morning at the 1,000-year-old Confucian Academy. It was a beautiful day with uncharacteristically clear skies, a brisk wind, and the rhythmic chorus of cicadas. Tu Weiming and three other Confucian scholars, along with a Russian scholar and myself, addressed more than 150 people on aspects of Confucianism for social inclusivity and ecological sustainability. I emphasized Confucianism’s comprehensive cosmological worldview, its high regard for the value of nature, its relational view of humans as partners with nature.

This has been a long journey for me into the study of Confucianism and Confucian-influenced societies such as Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Singapore. It began in 1973-74 when I went to Japan to teach at a women’s university, and it continued in my Ph.D. studies at Columbia University. I was fascinated

by how these Confucian-based countries organized their societies in a communitarian manner and managed their environments with government oversight. Though ideals were not always realized historically or at present, studying the religious traditions of Asia has broadened my understanding of the variety of environmental ethics in cultures around the world.

It has been sobering to watch China over the last four decades struggle to feed large numbers of people and have fresh water for drinking, irrigation, and hydroelectric power. Veering now toward unsustainability and facing 100,000 environmental protests a year, the Chinese government and some of its people are trying to steer a different course.

The Great Triad

Thus in the midst of immense challenges, Confucian ecological philosophy and environmental ethics are emerging. A revival of Confucian

values is growing.

The future of our planet may well depend on the pace of that

growth—not in material wealth, but in moral values that return us all to the essential Confucian

virtue of

humaneness. This virtue implies that people belong to a larger whole, the great triad of “Heaven, Earth, and Humans.” Humans are part



Mary Evelyn Tucker & Tu Weiming

of the processes of the cosmos and of nature and are responsible for completing the triad. They can do this by creating the foundations for humane government, harmonious societies, sustainable economies, flourishing agriculture, and moral education. No wonder there is a growing interest in a new Confucianism for contemporary China. No doubt there is something we in the West can learn from this rediscovery as well.

THE SIX PROPOSITIONS

In 1925 the controversial Jesuit priest and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was ordered to sign “The Six Propositions.” This Vatican document contained rigidly conservative teachings on original sin and human origins. Until now, its content has been secret. The document will be made public for the first time and the issues surrounding it will be presented with interpretation and discussion. *Inquisition* dramatizes Teilhard’s dilemma: forced to believe in either the Bible or science.

“The Six Propositions” will be a one-day conference on Thursday, February 22 from 11 a.m.–4.30 p.m at New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh. It will include the first staged reading of *INQUISITION* by Paul Bentley. The event is free, but ticketed. To register and for more information contact: david.grumett@ed.ac.uk

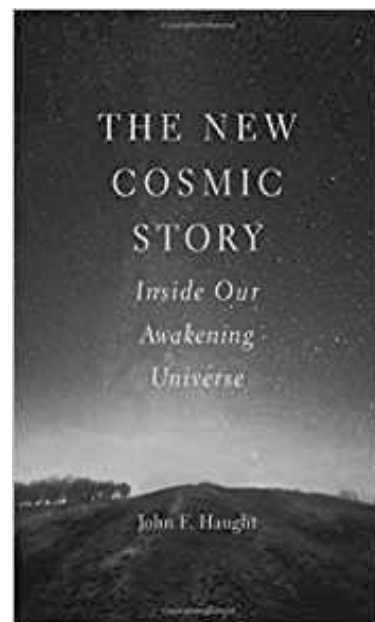


Notable Books & Publications

John F. Haught, *The New Cosmic Story: Inside Our Awakening Universe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, October 2017).

The following is adapted from the book’s Introduction:

Over the past two centuries scientists have learned that the universe is a story still being told. New scientific awareness of the long cosmic preamble to human history has inspired attempts recently to connect the relatively short span of our own existence to the longer epic of the universe. These efforts, known as Big History, try to tell the story of *everything* that has taken place in the past, including what was going on in the universe long before Homo sapiens arrived.



Big History scholars locate—and deflate—the human story by placing it against the backdrop of the universe’s spatial and temporal immensity. This is a useful point of view, but not the only one. The universe, after all, includes *subjects*, hidden centers of experience whose significance cannot be measured by science or captured by purely historical reporting. What is needed, I believe, is a narrative that tells the whole cosmic story, inside as well as outside.

Startlingly absent from Big History so far, for example, is a sense of how religion fits into the

cosmic story. *The New Cosmic Story* is an attempt to address this omission. In it I argue that we cannot expect to understand well what is going on in cosmic history apart from a careful examination of what goes on in the interior striving of life that reaches the summit of its intensity in humanity's spiritual adventures.

The story of the universe, I observe, is no less about emerging subjectivity than about the movement of atoms, molecules, cells, and social groups. From the start, the cosmic story has carried with it, at least faintly, a scientifically inaccessible lining of "insideness." The cosmos *is* in fact a story of awakening subjectivity. As far as we can tell, subjectivity burns most feverishly in humans, but it has also been emerging more quietly in the story of life—and implicitly throughout the whole cosmic journey—for billions of years prior to our own recent arrival. The cool detachment of science, however, never feels fully the heat of inner experience and the dramatic quality of its emergence.

In the case of humans, the emergence of subjectivity has become palpably manifest in our many passions, our sense of freedom, ethical aspiration, and aesthetic sensitivity—but especially in our religious longing for meaning and truth. With the relatively recent arrival of distinctly religious experience in cosmic history, the universe is awakening to horizons previously unknown. The emergence of religious subjectivity is just as much part of the cosmic story as is the formation of atoms and galaxies. In *The New Cosmic Story* I reflect on the cosmic meaning of religion as well as on the religious meaning of the cosmos. From the perspective of physics the cosmos may look like a process of heat exchanges and energy transformations, but if we look deep inside we shall see that the universe has given rise, at least on Earth, to beings eager to understand where they came from, where they are going, and what they should be doing with their lives.

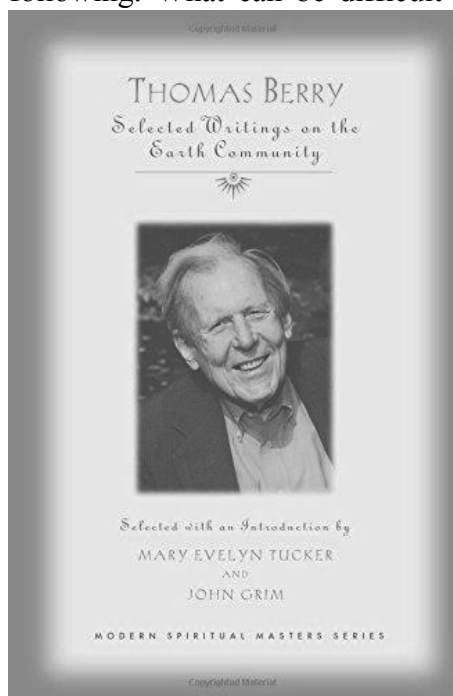
Religion is still a relevant set of responses to these questions. In each chapter I therefore focus on one of twelve aspects of religion common to many traditions, asking what each distinct trait means in the context of an unfinished universe. Religious traditions are not all saying the same thing, but even with all their differences they have common interests and dispositions worth highlighting. They all assume, for example, the existence of an interior life and of the need to undergo awakening and transformation. They nourish a sense of obligation, and they all idealize "rightness." They speak symbolically about evil, perishing, purpose, everlastingness, happiness, and transcendence. Only against the backdrop of these constants do the variables among religious tradition show up at all. By situating the common attributes of religion inside a universe that is still awakening, I argue that we can come to see all of them—and the universe itself—in a whole new light.

Available for purchase at Yale University Press:
<https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300217032/new-cosmic-story>
or Amazon:
<https://www.amazon.com/New-Cosmic-Story-Awakening-Universe/dp/030021703X>

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, eds. *Thomas Berry: Selected Writings on the Earth Community*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014.

This volume was featured in Times Higher Education on August 24, 2017:

“The prophetic voice of the American eco-philosopher Thomas Berry (1914-2009) is still too little known. Yet his creative engagement with the great ecological crises of our time and his new understanding of the history of evolution as a story in whose further development humans are critically involved attracts an ever larger international following. What can be difficult is to find one’s way around his numerous works. The editors of this book, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, have done a marvelous job of presenting the heart of Berry’s thought.



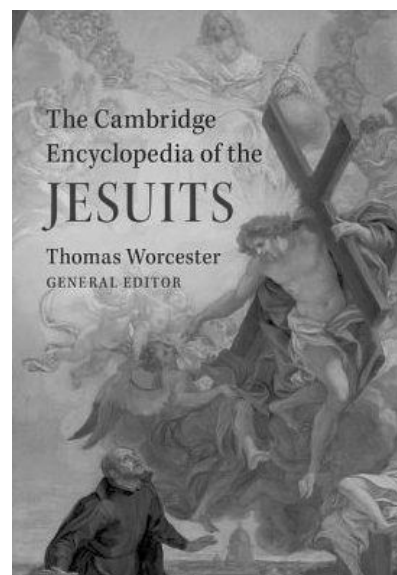
We hear about ‘Living a New Story’ and ‘The Great Work’ and the wisdom required from human beings to live in a mutually enhancing relationship with Earth and the Earth community. This is a most inspiring read to which I shall return again and again.”

~ Ursula King, emeritus professor of theology and religious studies, University of Bristol

Thomas Worcester, ed. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Founded in 1540 by Ignatius of Loyola, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) has been praised as a saintly god-send and condemned as the work of Satan. With some 600 entries written by 110 authors—those inside and outside the order—this encyclopedia opens up the complexities of Jesuit history and explores the current life and work of this Catholic religious order and its global vocation.

Approximately 230 entries are biographies, focusing on key people in Jesuit history, while the majority of the entries focus on Jesuit ideals, concepts, terminology, places, institutions, and events. With some 70 illustrations



highlighting the centrality of visual images in Jesuit life, this encyclopedia is a comprehensive volume providing accessible and authoritative coverage of the Jesuits' life and work across the continents during the last five centuries.

Dedicated with joy and in gratitude, to Pope Francis, who is a Jesuit priest and formerly a scientist, this 876-page tome includes approximately 600 entries, one of which is a short biography of Teilhard, “Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre, SJ (1881-1955)”: 774-80, written by Kathleen Duffy.



American Teilhard Association

Saturday May 19, 2018

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

Kathleen Duffy, SSJ will be speaking on:

"Drawn to Follow the Road of Fire: Teilhard and Struggle"

Soon after completing his service as a stretcher bearer in World War I, Teilhard described one of his mystical visions in an essay entitled "The Spiritual Power of Matter." In this essay, he shares how he, like the patriarchs and prophets of old, became aware that he was being drawn to follow the road of fire. Little did he know at the time how intense his future struggles would be or how profound the suffering that his commitment would require. Still, he remained faithful, understanding that, as a participant in an evolutionary world, he should expect and embrace struggle as the price to be paid for progress. It was this evolutionary spirituality that also animated and sustained his hope in the future of our world despite the difficulties that beset humanity in every age. In this lecture, we walk with Teilhard along his road of fire to learn how to deal with the struggles that are ours.

Kathleen Duffy, SSJ is Professor of Physics at Chestnut Hill College, where she directs the Interdisciplinary Honors Program and the Institute for Religion and Science. She is editor of Teilhard Studies and serves on the Advisory Boards of the American Teilhard Association and Cosmos and Creation. Her present research deals with the way Teilhard de Chardin's religious writings connect with modern science. She has published several book chapters and articles on these topics, an edited volume of essays entitled Rediscovering Teilhard's Fire (St. Joseph's University Press, 2010), and Teilhard's Mysticism: Seeing the Inner Face of Evolution (Orbis Books, 2014).

American Teilhard Association Annual Meeting 2018

To pre-register, please complete the following form and mail with check or money order to:
American Teilhard Association c/o John Grim, 29 Spoke Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

I wish to reserve _____ places for the Luncheon and Talk @ \$30.00 ea \$ _____

I wish to reserve _____ places for the Talk only @ \$10.00 ea \$ _____

I enclose a contribution to the Hospitality Fund \$ _____

Or register and pay online at: <http://www.teilharddechardin.org/index.php/event>

Please note that no tickets will be sent; names will be held on the reservation list at the door.

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Teilhard Perspective

TEILHARD PERSPECTIVE is published by the American Teilhard Association, a non-profit organization whose goals are to explore philosophical, scientific, religious, social and environmental concerns in light of Teilhard's vision and to clarify the role of the human phenomenon in this emerging understanding of the cosmos.

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.

The Thomas Berry site www.thomasberry.org offers a Biography by Mary Evelyn Tucker, a John Grim essay: "Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry's Vision," Writings by Thomas Berry, comments on his *The Great Work*, Films about or inspired by, and a List of Books.

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.

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.