



Celebrating 30 Years of Religion and Ecology

Friday, October 16, 2026
Yale Divinity School



YALE FORUM ON
RELIGION AND ECOLOGY



Yale Center for
Environmental Justice

Celebrating Three Decades of Our Shared Work

The original premise of our work in religion and ecology is that we need to identify environmental ethics from the world's religions that arise from various cultural contexts. In other words, such ethics will be different in Asia than in the West or among Indigenous Traditions. Thus, at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR) we organized a series of 10 conferences on Religions of the World and Ecology from 1996-1998. The papers were published in a book series from Harvard (1997-2004).

With the help of many other scholars and environmentalists a new field of study in academia and a moral force for change in society was born. While there was no academic field of study in 1996 there are now some 30 graduate programs in religion and ecology in North America. Three of them are PhD Programs. Moreover, there are hundreds of grassroots engaged projects and interfaith efforts that embody the moral force of religion and ecology. For example, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative is an innovative project that honors Indigenous voices for protection of rainforests. On a worldwide level there is now \$40 trillion in the divestment movement from oil and gas and 40% of that is from the religious communities.

The critique that we felt of religion from skeptical, positivistic scientists is still present. We share some of the concern, namely that religions have their problems, as is evident historically and at present. But they also have their promise in contributing to the moral force of change in issues such as abolition of slavery and the extension of civil rights. That is the hope that the environmental movement will grow by including the ethical component in making the shift toward a viable future for people and the planet.

Now we are beginning to see openings in which science understands there are multiple ways of managing ecosystems, for example, that include traditional environmental knowledge (TEK). Moreover, change is happening as the next generation of students and faculty understand that religion, ethics, and culture need to be included in solutions to environmental problems. That may be because some 85% of the world's people identify as religious. Their influence as leaders and members of institutions and communities is substantial. They have significant educational, financial, social, and political influence that can be used for transformation toward the wellbeing of the Earth community. This conference provides inspiring examples as how the field and force of religion and ecology has blossomed in the last thirty years.

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

Conference Program

Sessions held in the Old Refectory at Yale Divinity School

Yale Land Statement

Yale University acknowledges that indigenous peoples and nations, including Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Niantic, and the Quinnipiac and other Algonquian-speaking peoples, have stewarded through generations the lands and waterways of what is now Connecticut.

9:00AM REGISTRATION

In the Old Refectory

10:00AM LIVING VILLAGE TOUR & DISCUSSION

Gather by the main entrance to the Living Village

11:30AM-12:00PM SERVICE IN MARQUAND CHAPEL

THEME: "CRY OF THE EARTH; CRY OF THE POOR"

This term arises from liberation theologian, Leonard's Boff book of the same title in Orbis' Ecology and Justice series. This book influenced Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

Organizers: Rev. Dr. Awet Andemicael and Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright, with student input and participation

12:00PM LUNCH

In the Old Refectory

12:45PM OPENING COMMENTS

Gerald Torres, Yale Center for Environmental Justice

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

1:00-1:30PM PLANETARY PERSPECTIVES

Dan Smyer Yu, The Global South Studies Center, The University of Cologne, Germany

Dekila Chungyalpa, Loka Initiative, University of Wisconsin

Chantal Elkin, Faith and Nature Hub

1:30-2:30PM YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL FACULTY

Chair: Jennifer Herdt, Living Village and Ecotheology

Greg Mobley, Creation Care in the Bible

Carolyn Sharp, Ecological Witness as Public Theology

Ryan Darr, Valuing Biodiversity

Clifton Granby, Environmental Justice

2:30-2:45PM BREAK

2:45-3:30PM CURRENT ENGAGED PROJECTS

Participants: [Fletcher Harper](#), Greenfaith; [Lisa Dahill](#), Hartford International University; [Terri Eickel](#), [Interreligious Ecojustice Network](#); [Jim Robinson](#), Iona University

3:30-4:15PM ECOTHEOLOGY AND ECOJUSTICE IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS

[Heather Eaton](#), St. Paul's University, Ottawa
[Karenn Gore](#), Union Theological Seminary, NYC
[Elizabeth Allison](#), California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco
[Christopher Key Chapple](#), Loyola Marymount University

4:15-5:30PM YDS ALUMNAE REFLECTIONS

Presenting: [Rev. Dr. Jim Antal](#), [Rev. Stephanie Johnson](#), [Russell Powell](#), [Nailah Garard](#), [Rachel Field](#), [Blair Nelsen](#)

5:45-7:00PM DINNER

7:00PM SCREENING OF [JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE](#)

Introduction and Discussion: [John Grim](#), Sam King, and [Heather Eaton](#)