

FORUM ON RELIGION AND ECOLOGY AT YALE

The Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale is the largest international multireligious project of its kind. With its conferences, publications, and website (<http://fore.yale.edu>), it is engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns. The forum recognizes that religions need to be in dialogue with other disciplines (e.g., science, economics, and policy) in seeking comprehensive solutions to both global and local environmental problems. The cofounders and codirectors of the forum and the series editors for the World Religions and Ecology series are John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker.

The forum arose from a series of ten conferences on the world's religions and ecology held at Harvard from 1996 to 1998, which resulted in ten volumes distributed by Harvard University Press. Several of these volumes have been translated into other languages, including Chinese.

One of the principal objectives of the Forum on Religion and Ecology was to help create a new field of study that will assist environmental policy. Since its creation, the forum has played an active role in promoting the study of religion and ecology as an emerging field of study and a force for transformation. Courses are now taught at colleges and high schools across North America and in some universities in Europe. Canada, Australia, and Europe now have their own forums on religion and ecology. Moreover, a new force of religious environmentalism is growing in churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques around the world. Now every major religion has statements on the importance of ecological protection, and hundreds of grassroots projects have emerged. The Forum on Religion and Ecology has played an active role in these developments. The work of the forum includes:

Joint master's degree program at Yale The Yale School of the Environment (YSE) and Yale Divinity School (YDS) offer a joint master's degree program in religion and ecology—the first of its kind in North America. It is aimed at students who wish to integrate the study of environmental issues and religious communities in their professional careers and at those who wish to study the cultural and ethical dimensions of environmental problems. The joint degree is supported by co-appointed faculty and by the forum.

This degree program provides an opportunity to study in two independent schools at Yale University, each with its own integrity. Students work toward both a Master of Environmental Management (M.E.M.) degree at YSE and either a Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) or Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree at YDS. Within these schools, they are encouraged to take courses in environmental ethics and in religion and ecology. Students have the opportunity to work with faculty in both schools, as well as with a number of co-appointed faculty members.

Publications The forum has helped to create a new field of research and teaching in religion and ecology that has implications for environmental policy.

- The forum, with its scholarly network, published the ten-volume World Religions and Ecology series from Harvard.
- In 2014 the forum published the book *Ecology and Religion*, by John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, in a YSE series from Island Press.
- The forum has supported the first journal in the field, *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*.
- It produced a *Daedalus* volume, *Religion and Ecology: Can the Climate Change?*, which was the first discussion of world religions and the ethics of climate change.
- The forum's founders have also served as editors for the twenty-volume Ecology and Justice series from Orbis Books.
- The encyclopedia *The Spirit of Sustainability* (Berkshire Publishers, 2009), edited by Willis Jenkins of the University of Virginia and Whitney Bauman of Florida International University, was also a project of the forum.
- Tucker and Grim have also edited a number of volumes by the late cultural historian Thomas Berry: *The Sacred Universe* (Columbia University Press, 2009), *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth* (Orbis Books, 2009), *Evening Thoughts* (Sierra Club Books, 2006), and *The Great Work* (Random House, 1999).

Conferences The forum has organized many conferences, including “Renewing Hope: Pathways of Grassroots Religious Environmentalism” (YSE and YDS, 2007), the Forum on Religion and Ecology's 10th Anniversary Symposium (Yale Club of New York, 2008), and the Thomas Berry Memorial (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, 2009). The forum cosponsored the conference “Environmental Dis/locations: Environmental Justice and Climate Change” (YSE & YDS, 2010) and organized an interdisciplinary conference for the premiere of the film *Journey of the Universe* at YSE (2011). It has also assisted in organizing the Thomas Berry Award and Lecture since 1998. The forum organized with TERI University an interdisciplinary workshop focused on the Yamuna River and held in Delhi and Vrindavan in north India (2011). In 2012 the forum organized a conference between YSE and YDS titled “Religion and Environmental Stewardship.”

In addition, the forum participates in interdisciplinary conferences worldwide, including conferences with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); the Dialogue of Civilizations; the Earth Dialogues led by Gorbachev; the Earth Charter; the Religion, Science, and the Environment Symposia, led by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Bartholomew; and the Parliament of World Religions.

Website The forum's website is a world-class international site for research, education, engagement, and outreach in the field of religion and ecology. It contains detailed information on the world's religions and their ecological contributions; resources that address environmental issues related to ethics, economics, policy, and ecological sciences; syllabi and lists of educational videos and CD-ROMs; links to programs and institutions related to environmental education; and a variety of other resources for educators. The site provides current information on news, publications, and events related to world religions and ecology. This is available in a monthly online newsletter that is distributed to some 12,000 people. See <http://fore.yale.edu>.

Films The forum was a principal adviser for the film *Renewal: Inspiring Stories from America's Religious Environmental Movement* (2007), and it collaborated with evolutionary philosopher Brian Swimme on the Emmy Award-winning film *Journey of the Universe* (2011), which was broadcast on PBS. The latter project includes a book published by Yale University Press, a twenty-part DVD series of interviews, curricular materials, and a website, <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org>.