

Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture

A Précis

The question animating this journal can be simply put.

What are the relationships among human beings, their diverse religions, and the earth's living systems?

This question raises a host of others. The answers are difficult and complex because they are intertwined with and complicated by a host of cultural, environmental, and religious variables. The fundamental goal of this journal is to explore without oversimplifying the dynamic relations between human beings, their religions, and the natural environment. A related objective is to contribute to the ongoing appraisal of the question: What constitutes an ethically appropriate relationship between our own species and the natural worlds we inhabit?

Given the diversity of the variables and complexity of the issues the journal must be dramatically collaborative and unusually interdisciplinary. Below is a three-fold outline of the types of thematic issues and individual articles, and the various scholarly approaches they represent, that we envision publishing. After this is a list of thematic issues that are either in development or that we think hold promise, and about which we wish to solicit indications of interest. Our hope in presenting this list is not only to encourage scholars who could submit articles or suggest specific special issues in these areas, but to provide further information of the wide range of discussion and analysis envisioned for this journal, while sparking further brainstorming, collaborations, research, and submissions.

Types of Special Issues and Articles

There are often blurred and overlapping lines among the following approaches to the study of religion and nature. Nevertheless, the following provides a sense of the range of approaches, subjects, and themes that the journal will explore.

- 1) **Constructive and Normative Studies.** Religious and ethical perspectives human obligations to ecosystems and other living things. Examples include:
 - a. Research rooted in religious and philosophical investigations of a traditions understanding of what constitutes the proper relationships between human beings (and their social structures) and the Earth's living systems.
 - b. Analyses or articulation of ethical arguments from one or more religious perspectives, including "world religions," "nature religions," "new religious movements," "lived religion," and so on. In other words, these thematic issues and articles may explore any religious form of nature-related spirituality.

- c. Perspectives on and debates engaging postmodern theory and the “social construction of nature;” and related to domestic and international law, political philosophies, and public policies.
- 2) **Social Scientific and Cultural Studies.** Qualitative or Quantitative analyses spotlighting the religion variable in human/environment relations. Examples include:
- a. Research grounded in cultural studies, ecological anthropology; environmental history, cultural geography, sociology, political science; historical ecology; and social movement theory (to name a few).
 - b. Analyses of the relationships between nature-related religious perceptions and values and human behaviors that impact nature, including the consumption of natural resources, breeding and fertility rates, lifestyle and livelihood choices, and social organization and forms of political mobilization.
 - c. Analyses of the role of nature-related religion in environmental degradation, protection or restoration; or in precipitating or exacerbating social conflict, or in ameliorating such conflict.
- 3) **Natural Science Studies.** Research exploring through any branch of the natural sciences the connections between humans and the living systems upon which they depend. Examples Include:
- a. Research grounded in cognitive science or evolutionary biology.
 - b. Analyses of theories that purport to reveal the natural, evolutionary roots of religious and ethical beliefs, values and behaviors, such as “sociobiology.”
 - c. Analyses of the role of natural science in religious thought and behavior, such as those exploring how scientific narratives and cosmologies are being integrated into religious belief systems, and how environmental “conservation sciences” can assume a religious dimension in their formulation and practice.
 - d. Critical reflections on the theoretical, philosophical, practical aspects of ecological science for religious traditions and ethical debates.

Special Issues and Articles (Examples)

A list of ideas for special issues or articles follows. While some of the following special issues ideas are in the works, others are envisioned but do not yet have a designated guest editor or commitments from writers. This list is far from exhaustive and is intended to help potential guest editors and authors to think about issues and articles they might propose and submit.

- The “Nature Religion” construction in the History of Religion and contemporary discourse.
- Christianity and Environmental Action: empirical studies of lifestyles and political mobilization.
- Religion and Environment in [insert regional focus here, e.g., North Africa, Oceania, Eastern Europe, the Andes, Antarctica, etc.]: a regional special issue

- Ecotourism and/as Religion
- Religion and the History of Environmental Ethics
- “Animism,” Ethnobotany and Environmentalism in Latin America
- Are animals religious?: recent ethological speculation on the possibility of religion and ethics among non-human organisms.
- The Arts, Nature, & Religion
- Survey Research: Its past and potential in the study of nature and religion
- Cultural Revitalization and Ecological Action among Indigenous People: a historical introduction
- Ritual, Meaning and Ecology: critical perspectives on the ecological anthropology of Roy Rappaport
- Environmental Law, Religion and Ethics
- Christian Ecotheology from the past and into the future
- Ecotheology and Pneumatology: Putting the Holy Spirit Back in Nature?
- Gendering Earth and Nature as Mother: A Global Tour
- Religion and Animal Welfare, Rights, and Liberationism
- Have and if so how and to what extent have [insert one: Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism, Shinto, Jainism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Bahai Faith, the Church of Jesus Christ/LDS] turned green?
- Lynn White, Jr. – Can he (finally) rest in peace?
- “Ecoterrorism” and Pagan Environmentalism?
- Paganism and Ethnic Nationalism in the Baltic States
- Adventure Sports and Nature Spirituality
- The History of Religion & Environmental Concern in Europe and America in the 20th Century
- Indigenous Languages, Environment, and Globalization’s assault on Diversity.
- Kabbalah and the prospects for a robust Jewish Environmentalism
- Astrology and New Age Nature Religion
- Death practices and ecological systems
- Ritualizing, Religion Theory, and Green Consciousness
- Drumming, ecstatic states, and environmental consciousness
- Mountaineering, Spirituality, and Environmental History
- Ancestors and Human Habitats: recasting ancestors as environmental benefactors in African Traditional and other Indigenous Religions.
- Syncretism & Bricolage & Controversy in Nature-Related Religiosity
- Abrahamic Religions and Paganism: perspectives on the possibility of a theological/theological rapprochement
- Is Islam the most environmental religion on Earth?
- [Name Religious Tradition] and [Name Issue]
- The Globalization of Nature Religion
- “Wonder toward Nature” and Wondering about the Origin and Persistence of Religion
- Environmental Science and Nature Religion
- Animism and Literature

- Sacred [Architecture, Design, Agriculture, or??]
- Hunting, Politics, and Nature Spirituality
- Religion and Nature in Motion Pictures
- The Environmental, Religious, and Cultural Impacts of Theme Parks: From Disney to Sea Worlds and Beyond
- Cosmvision and Ecology among Indigenous Amazonian Peoples
- Religion and Green Social Philosophy.
- Spirituality and Nature Writing.
- Food and Agriculture.
- United Nations Institutions and the Greening of Religion
- Green Ritualizing and Conservation Science and Practice: from Conservation Biology to Restoration Ecology and Butterfly Gardens
- Ecological Change and the Medicinal Use of Plants and Animals
- Apocalypticism and Environmental Science
- Roman Catholic Holy Orders and the greening of religion?
- Environmental Historians and Religion: Whose side are they on?
- Trans-Atlantic-Pacific influences in the evolution of environmental movements and nature-related religion
- Religion, Environmental Action, and Environmental Art

Please contact the editors if you would be interested in contributing to (1) a special issue along the lines of any of these issues, or (2) with your own idea for a special issue. Unsolicited articles that fall within the broad scope of the journal are also welcomed. All articles received, including solicited articles, will be subject to external peer review in the usual way for academic journals.

Editors and Scholarly Associations

To meet the demand to make this a truly interdisciplinary and global journal, editorial support must draw on scholars from diverse disciplines and regions. The journal aims to include discussions from the East as well as the West, and from the South as well as the North. Additionally, to the fullest extent possible, the journal will pursue relationships with, advice, and special issues, from scholarly associations, such as the European Network for the Study of Religion and the Environment and the Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture in North America. Specifically, beginning in 2007, the journal will be structured as follows.

- Editor-in-Chief: Bron Taylor, The University of Florida (USA)
- Consulting Editor: Celia Deane-Drummond, Chester College (United Kingdom)
- Executive Editors, Editorial Board, Book Review Editors (in development).

The journal will be published four times a year in March, June, September and December, beginning March 2007. For further information write to the editors at journal@religionandnature.com