

CALL FOR PAPERS: RELIGION & CLIMATE CHANGE

Expressions of interest are requested by 15 February, 2011; Papers by August 2011

Anthropogenic climate change is among the most significant and far-reaching social issues of our time. Although climate scientists are near unanimous about potentially catastrophic consequences, mobilizing a meaningful response has proven to be a real challenge. Among the significant but understudied responses has been that of religious groups. Numerous statements on climate change by faith-based actors and institutionalized religious groups have occurred in recent years. However, far less research has been published about actually faith-shaped action by religious institutions, groups and individuals. Papers are requested for a special issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* (JSRNC) on “Religion and Climate Change” and a possible book.

Papers that examine the topic from social science perspectives, drawing on case studies or other empirical methodologies, are sought for the special issue. Depending on the response, we may also pursue book publication. Papers may address the topic on scales ranging from global to local, and from any social science discipline, including but not limited to sociology, geography, history, cultural studies, native studies, anthropology, political science, and religious studies. The special issue also aims for geographical and religious diversity.

Religion has ongoing significance at individual, national and global levels, and a continuing role in ethical discourse and the shaping of normative responses to social problems. Religious bodies also have an influence in the public sphere beyond their impact on individual adherents' worldviews and practices. Cultural imaginaries and political action are among the effects of religious action, intentionally or incidentally. Religiously-based environmental perspectives are highly contested. On one hand, religious environmentalism presents alternative ways of conceptualizing the human-environment relationship, potentially adding to cultural repertoires as citizens try to address environmental degradation, as Roger Gottlieb contended in *A Greener Faith* (2006). On the other hand, religious perspectives and institutions may be among the barriers to addressing significant issues such as climate change.

In this social context, what the major religions of the world say and do about climate change matters a great deal. Environmentalist and nature-based spiritualities outside of the so-called world religions, such as those described by Taylor in *Dark Green Religion* (2010), are also of interest. This special issue will contribute to broader theorizing of the institutional and practical responses to climate change, the relevance of religion in contemporary societies, the cultural impacts of social movements, and the relationship of normative discourses and lived practice, as well as societal innovation in response to the climate change challenge.

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A word about the breadth of the kinds of research and manuscripts that will be of interest for the special issue:

“Religion” can be conceived in many ways. In this call for expressions of interest, we choose not to impose our own understanding of “religion,” but rather, expect that authors do so themselves in the work eventually submitted. For information on the flexible definition of religion shaping the JSRNC, see the introduction to the journal, which is located at <http://www.religionandnature.com/journal/sample.htm>. There, one can also find links to the journal’s style guidelines and submission procedures, and other pertinent information.

In addition, the papers in this issue will be united by two aspects of a “social scientific” perspective. First, spirituality and religion are irrevocably social – even at the individual level – if only that people’s notions of spirituality, religion or faith cannot be disassociated from their social influences. This understanding undercuts the common assumption that religion is only a matter of private, interior experience. Instead, we view it as a communally enacted or social practice. Second, the papers should be founded in empirical and theoretical work in the social sciences, although they may be informed by work in philosophy, theology or natural science. We understand “empirical” in a manner that encompasses any method of systematic data collection – ethnographic, discourse analysis, survey, interview, network analysis, mixed-method, action research, etc.

Sample topics include:

- Systematic analysis of pro-environmental or anti-environmental religious responses to climate change;
- Religious reaction to climate science;
- Political engagements of religious actors;
- Influence of environmental perspectives on religious beliefs, and vice versa;
- Climate justice activism and religious institutions;
- Religious engagement on North-South equity;
- Climate change and religiously-based international development organizations;
- Climate refugees;
- Political ecology and environmental justice;
- Conflict resolution, peace-building and climate adaptation;
- Education and climate change that engages congregations, temples, etc;
- Interfaith coalitions around climate change;
- “Dark” green religion and “light green” religious differences on climate change;

Interested scholars should send a 200-500 word prospectus for a paper contribution, along with a short biography up to 150 words (may include a website link if available) to the editors listed below. Please send expressions of interest by 31 January 2011. In paper proposals please describe the methodological approach you would expect to take and the argument(s) likely to be

advanced. Potential authors will be contacted by the end of February. The deadline for essays will be 31 July 2011 although early submissions are welcomed. Depending on the peer-review process, it is possible that the issue could appear as early as December 2011 (JSRNC 5/4). Decisions on a possible book consisting of articles accepted for the journal issue and other promising submissions will be made at a later date.

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The JSRNC is a quarterly, interdisciplinary, peer-refereed journal, which has been publishing since 2007. It is affiliated with the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, and published by Equinox, a high quality academic press based in London. The founding editor is [Bron Taylor](#). Further information about the journal, including guidelines for preparing manuscripts for submission, as well as samples of the diverse types of articles the JSRNC publishes, can be found at <http://www.religionandnature.com/journal>.