

# Exploring Religion, Nature, & Culture

## An Inaugural Conference for the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

### Call for Papers and Panel Sessions

You are cordially invited to submit paper and session proposals for the Inaugural Conference of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, to be held at the University of Florida, in Gainesville, 6-9 April 2006.

**The mission of the Society is to promote critical, interdisciplinary inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse cultures, environments, and religious beliefs and practices.**

We are especially interested in proposals that explore the history of scholarly inquiry into the above-mentioned relationships, and that reflect on where this increasingly interdisciplinary field should go from here. All papers and sessions that cohere with the mission of the society are welcome. These can include research grounded in at least four broad areas of inquiry, including:

- 1) **Biophysical Sciences.** Research exploring through any branch of the natural sciences the connections between humans and the living systems upon which they depend, including research grounded in cognitive science, evolutionary biology, sociobiology, analyses of the role of natural science in religious thought, or critical reflections on the theoretical, philosophical, practical aspects of ecological science for religious traditions and ethical debates.
- 2) **Social Sciences.** Qualitative or quantitative analyses spotlighting the role of belief systems in human/environment relations, including research grounded in anthropology, geography, political science, psychology, or sociology. Other possibilities include analysis of human valuations and behaviors that impact the biophysical environment (i.e., studies of consumption, population, or political mobilization), and the role of nature-related religion in environmental protection or restoration, conflict exacerbation or resolution.
- 3) **Humanities.** Studies exploring the religion in nature/human relationships in philosophy, literature (including sacred texts), art, and history.
- 4) **Constructive and Normative Studies.** Religious and ethical perspectives concerning human obligations to ecosystems and other living things, including research on religious and philosophical investigations of the human/nature interface, or ethical analysis or argument rooted in some aspect of nature religion or world religious tradition.

*Papers and Panels (including unusually or creatively structured sessions) are also encouraged in areas that do not directly fall into the above categories.*

Yale University's Stephen Kellert and the University of California's Carolyn Merchant will be among the featured speakers. A complete list of confirmed speakers will be provided and updated at the society website. By mid December 2005, there are already 50 confirmed participants.

Paper proposals should be submitted with a title and an abstract of no more than 250 words. Session proposals should include a title, a maximum 500 word description, and if individual papers are proposed, individual titles and abstracts for them. Session length may vary, but plan on two hour sessions.

**For questions, or to request further information, please contact either one of the conference co-chairs:**

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**Please send all paper and panel proposals to Laura Hobgood-Oster as soon as possible and no later than 15 January 2006: [hoboster@southwestern.edu](mailto:hoboster@southwestern.edu)**

Online registration and housing information will be available in January 2006, at [www.religionandnature.com/society](http://www.religionandnature.com/society).

The cost of registration is yet to be determined and will be affected by fundraising and attendance projections. The current estimate is \$150.00. Lodging will be available at the University of Florida/Hilton Hotel for \$129.00/night. Grants for partial reimbursements may be available, especially for international participants.

Sponsors include: the University of Florida's College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, School of Nature Resources and the Environment, Land Use and Environmental Change Institute, Center for African Studies, Center for Latin American Studies, Center for European Studies, France-Florida Research Institute, Department of Religion (and its Graduate Program in Religion and Nature), and FOREST (The Florida Organization on Religion, Environmental Science, and Technology).

Further information and background on the Society initiative and this planned conference are available at [www.religionandnature.com/society](http://www.religionandnature.com/society).

To receive future announcements or to contact Society organizers, send an email to [society@religionandnature.com](mailto:society@religionandnature.com)