

YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL News Release

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Leading scholars and Religious Environmentalists to Address Pressing Issues at Yale Conference on Religion and Ecology

NEW HAVEN, CT—A major conference exploring the emerging alliance of religion and ecology will be held at Yale University, February 28 - March 2, when engaged scholars and grassroots religious environmentalists meet to share ideas and strategies about work taking place across the U.S. and Canada. The conference is organized by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, co-directors of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, and sponsored by the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Yale Divinity School.

The conference, “Renewing Hope: Pathways of Religious Environmentalism,” comes at a time of increasing awareness of climate change and global warming, amid growing momentum to address these environmental challenges from within the religious traditions. For instance, Pope Benedict XVI will address the moral dimensions of climate change at the United Nations in April, and the evangelical community in the United States has been lobbying to highlight the effects of climate change on the poor.

Sallie McFague of the Vancouver School of Theology, a leading thinker for many years on the subject of religion and the environment, will deliver the conference's opening lecture on the topic “A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming.”

“This conference promises to underscore how much common ground exists between the faith and environmental communities,” said Yale Divinity School Dean Harold Attridge. “These synergies have tremendous potential, and a conference like this is a small but important step toward realizing proper stewardship of God's creation.”

Highlighting the conference is a premiere of *Renewal*, a new film focusing on religious environmental work in several Jewish, Christian, and Islamic communities. Leading environmentalist and author Bill McKibben says of *Renewal*, “The religious environmental movement is potentially key to dealing with the greatest problem humans have ever faced, and it has never been captured in more breadth and force than in *Renewal*.”

McFague's lecture on Thursday, Feb. 28 at 6:30 p.m. and the screening of *Renewal* on Friday, Feb. 29 at 6:30 p.m., are both free and open to the public, although other aspects of the conference require prior registration. The lecture and screening will take place at Sterling Divinity Quadrangle, 409 Prospect St., New Haven.

In breakout sessions over the four-day event, scholars, theologians, and other religious leaders will examine the resources of their traditions for environmental ethics and practice. In addition, pressing issues related to water, climate change, energy, and eco-design will be discussed with expert facilitators.

The conference will culminate in a gala dinner featuring local and organic food. Gus Speth, dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, will address conference participants and suggest that religious communities are key partners with science and policy in creating a sustainable future.

Speth said, “The religions have a key role to play in helping to moderate values and inspire action for environmental protection, restoration, and renewal.”

Conference organizers expect one outcome of the meeting to be the creation of new networks inspiring creative intersections of religion and ecology.

Plans are to provide live streaming of at least two of the conference sessions—McFague’s Thursday evening address and a panel presentation on Friday afternoon—on the Yale Divinity School web site at <http://www.yale.edu/divinity/video/index.shtml>.

For complete, up-to-date conference details go to:
http://www.yale.edu/divinity/news/071128_news_renewing.shtml

For further information on religion and ecology see:
<http://www.yale.edu/religionandecology>

CONTACTS:

Gustav Spohn, Director of Communications and Publications, Yale Divinity School, 203-432-3466, gus.spohn@yale.edu

David DeFusco, Director of Communications, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, 203-436-4842, david.defusco@yale.edu

Tara C. Maguire Knopick, The Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, tcmk@ava.yale.edu

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