



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Barcelona 2008



IUCN Media Advisory

Sustainability Dialogue /Thursday 9th October 2008 / 09:30 – 11:00

Spirituality and Conservation

The Story

Religious and spiritual traditions are fundamental drivers of human behaviour. In different ways, possibly all religious and spiritual traditions have something significant to say about our relationship with nature, but in many cases this wisdom seems to have eroded over time. The spirituality of indigenous and traditional peoples has been key in maintaining and supporting stewardship practices, but it is also affected by many factors – including religious intolerance. Can faiths and spiritual traditions of the world engage more deeply in safeguarding life on Earth? Recent experiences seem to show a very positive development in this direction, with notable examples from many religious and spiritual traditions – but much remains to be done. Can the conservation community be more helpful in engaging with religious and spiritual traditions for better caring for the planet? IUCN wants to offer the opportunity for dialogue between faith and spiritual traditions and the conservation community, and to promote greater engagement and collaboration for sustainable living on a sustainable planet.

Key Issues

- How do the value systems of religious and spiritual traditions support conservation?
- Do religious and spiritual traditions have special role to play in addressing urgent environmental problems such as climate change?
- What kind of support can religious and spiritual traditions realistically offer to promote sustainable living on a sustainable planet?
- What lessons are being learned about the engagement of religious and spiritual traditions on environmental issues?
- What is the relevance of the ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue for the conservation community?

Panelists

1. Prof. Mary Evelyn Tucker (Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University, USA)
 2. Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar (Former Vice President of Iran, Tehran City Councillor)
 3. Mr. Jonathan Rose (The Garrison Institute, USA)
 4. Bishop Geoffrey Davies (Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute, South Africa)
 5. Mr Satish Kumar (Editor, Resurgence Magazine, India-UK)
 6. Ms Stella Simiyu (A Rocha International Trustee and Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, Kenya)
- Moderator: Prof. John Grim (Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University, USA)

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Lead Organisers:

- IUCN: Senior Adviser on Social Policy
- IUCN/ WCPA “Delos Initiative” of the Task Force on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas
- Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University, USA

Related events:**Press Conference**

9th October, 12:00 – 12:30, Main Press Conference Room.

Spirituality and Conservation - Meet the Leaders from the Sustainability Dialogue

9th October, 13:30 – 14:30, Futures Pavilion

Focal Points

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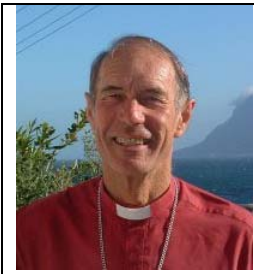

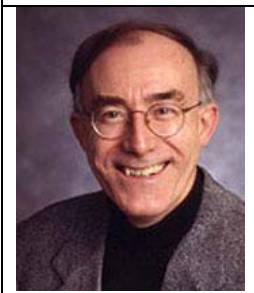
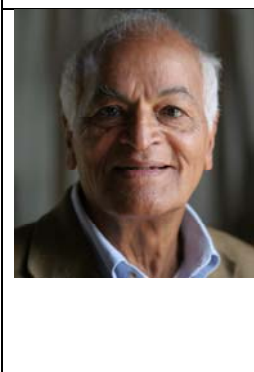
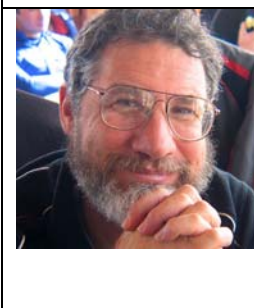
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Speakers

	<p>Bishop Geoffrey Davies Coordinator and founder member of the Southern African Faith Communities' Environmental Institute (SAFCEI) which works to raise awareness of environmental issues such as climate change among different faith Communities. One of the overseas marchers in Christian Aid's Cut the Carbon march around the UK to draw attention to global warming and the urgent issue of reducing our carbon footprint.</p>
	<p>Masoumeh Ebtekar Appointed by president Khatami in 1997, she became Iran's first woman Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment. During her inspired 8 years' tenure, Iran experienced an era of environmental awakening across all sectors. In 2006 she returned to her academic work as Professor of Immunology. She was awarded the 2006 UNEP Champion of the Earth Special Award. Head of the Centre for Peace and the Environment (NGO). In 2007 she was elected as Tehran City Councillor.</p>
	<p>John Grim Senior Lecturer and Scholar at Yale University. Co-Director and Founder with Mary Evelyn Tucker of the Forum on Religion and Ecology, and series editor of "World Religions and Ecology", from Harvard Divinity School's Center for the Study of World Religions. As a professor of religion John taught courses in Native American and Indigenous religions, religion and ecology, ritual, and mysticism in the world's religions. President of the American Teilhard Association.</p>
	<p>Satish Kumar Joined the Jain monks at the age of 9. Later campaigner for land reform, working to turn Gandhi's vision of a peaceful world into reality. Adventurous pilgrimages. Founder and editor ever since 1973 of <i>Resurgence</i>, a magazine which has been described as the artistic and spiritual voice of the green movement in Great Britain. He also founded The Small School in Hartland, Founder and Director of Programme of the Schumacher College, an international centre for the study of ecological and spiritual values. Honorary Doctorates in Education and in Literature. Visiting Professor of Global Awareness at Webster University, Missouri. International lectures and workshops on reverential ecology, holistic education and voluntary simplicity.</p>
	<p>Jonathan Rose Co-founder and chair of the Board of the Garrison Institute which seeks to apply the transformative power of contemplation to today's pressing social and environmental problems. Founder and president of Jonathan Rose Companies LLC, a multi-disciplinary real estate development, planning, consulting and investment firm, as a leading green urban solutions provider. Trustee and chair of several organizations including the Urban Land Institute and its Climate and Energy Committee. Board member of the American Museum of Natural History. Awards from a wide range of organizations, including Global Green USA.</p>

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Stella Simiyu

Member of the national committee of ARocha Kenya and international Trustee of ARocha International, a Christian nature conservation organisation. Active member of the Nairobi Chapel in Kenya. Stella Simiyu works with Botanic Gardens Conservation International, seconded to the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to support the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. Formerly a Research Scientist with the National Museums of Kenya, she works in plant conservation, policy, capacity building and networking. Active in the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and several committees.



Mary Evelyn Tucker

Senior Lecturer and Research Scholar at Yale University. Co-founder and co-director with John Grim of the Forum on Religion and Ecology. Together they organized a series of conferences on "World Religions and Ecology" at the Center of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School and edited ten volumes from the conference. Recipient of several awards for her work in Religion and Ecology. Author of several books including *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase*. Member of the Interfaith Partnership for the Environment at UNEP and of the Earth Charter International Council.

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