

The 12<sup>th</sup> in a series on Alternative Perspectives & Global Concerns

**Conference call for proposals**

**Faith and the Future:**

**Religious and Interfaith responses to Ecological Crises**

**La Salle University, Bogota, Colombia**

**May 22-23, 2017**

“When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praised the Lord for all his creatures and worship him in union with them”. This marvelous statement by Pope Francis on *Care for our Common Home*, opens our mind to the necessity of including a faith perspective in the struggle for the preservation of our ecological systems. This timely Papal encyclical on ecology was quickly welcomed by environmentalists, critical thinkers, ethicists, non-catholic believers (such as the Anglican faith, which has also issued several declarations on the topic of the environment), as well as non-Christian believers among them Muslims. Interestingly, as the Pope himself has indicated in the encyclical, mystical Islam has a deep history of discovering God in all visible things. Interestingly, at around the same time, several Islamic institutions issued the “Islamic Declaration on Climate Change” urging action on this issue. Finally, indigenous peoples in every continent have called for the preservation of ecosystems from a religious perspective: for example, the Mamos of the Colombian Sierra Nevada prophesy that the environmental destruction wrought by the “little brother” (meaning western civilization) will cause him to seek help from the “big brothers” (indigenous peoples). How much common ground could be found among Pope Francis’ encyclical, the Islamic declarations, and indigenous ecological spirituality?

This conference will explore the common ground and overlapping beliefs regarding the unity of humanity and nature. Hence, it aims at discussing and presenting this mystical unity for the future of humanity. The topics to be explored include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Faith and resilience to environmental disasters
2. Recovering the unity of humanity and nature
3. Faith and solidarity in the face of the economic impact of environmental disasters
4. Faith as the language of the oppressed, in the face of environmental inequality and racism
5. The current ecological disasters affecting the oneness of humanity with nature
6. Expression of mystical Oneness: from the sacred texts to real life
7. Interfaith dialogue, perennial philosophy, and the common wisdom
8. Interfaith dialogue and solidarity
9. Humans and the mystery of the universe
10. Common destiny in an era of globality
11. Spirituality and voluntary simplicity
12. The role of academia in achieving human and ecological oneness
13. Spirituality and global development
14. Cases from Latin America
15. Non-theistic Spirituality and the Environment

We invite proposals for 30-minute individual presentations. We also encourage panel submission of three papers (each panel totaling 105 minutes). Please include a brief description of the panel as well as

individual abstracts for each of the papers.

For individual papers, please send an abstract, maximum length of 300 words and a short bio of 150 words by December 30, 2016. Notifications of acceptance will be made by the conference committee by the end of January, 2017.

Depending on budgetary availability, a selection of the conference contributions will be published in a volume with the working title: *Interfaith and Ecological Concerns: Challenges and Pathways for Future Collaboration*.

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