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**Editor's Introduction:  
Special Issues—Past and Future\***

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In 2006 a number of scholars set out to create a society and journal devoted to illuminating the relationships between what people variously understand to be religion, nature, and culture. We sought to do so from a wide variety of disciplinary, regional, and chronological perspectives. A central part of our strategy was to commission scholars to prepare special issues that would diversify the discussion and thus make it robustly interdisciplinary. Our editors not only dreamed up special issues and recruited experts to develop them, we threw open the doors to proposals from scholars to develop their own special interests.

We are pleased with the results so far. During the first five years of publication our special issues have considered the spiritual and ethical dimensions in Aldo Leopold's ecological philosophy; 'ecotopia' and the religious imagination; the motion picture *Avatar* and nature spirituality; the contested meanings of trees and forests in Indian Hinduism; the evolutionary origins and explanations for religious belief and practice; Christianity, scripture, and ethics in the work of James A. Nash; the religious lives of Amazonian plants; African sacred ecologies; animism and nature conservation among indigenous peoples; astrology, religion, and nature; and we began the *JSRNC* in 2007 with two special issues that explored a host of theoretical issues at the nexus of religion, nature, and culture.

The special issue in your hands, ably edited by Robin Globus Veldman, Andrew Szasz, and Randolph Haluza-DeLay, exemplifies the strength of our special issue efforts. Several issues ago (vol. 5.3), I urged an intensification of social-scientific research into understanding the role of religion in the quest for environmentally sustainable societies. Our current issue

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takes a significant step in this direction, by focusing on the role of religion in fraught debates and responses to climate change and perceptions about it. Like many of our best issues, it poses as many questions as it answers, while demonstrating how important resolving these sorts of questions might well be. I hope the *JSRNC* will see more special issues devoted to whether, to what extent, and under what sort of circumstances religion promotes or hinders mobilization to address contemporary environmental problems.

While I commend this issue to you, let me also pose some questions for my scholarly colleagues: What special issues would you like to read? What disciplines, regions, and time periods are as yet underrepresented? What special issues might you propose and develop in the coming years to enrich the current discussion? While we do have a number of special issues in development, and we continue to receive a regular stream of individual articles and reviews, it is also a good time to brainstorm future directions of the journal. I hope a number of you will soon be in touch to discuss your ideas in this regard. In the meantime, I hope you will find our latest issue of the *JSRNC* as valuable and interesting as I have.

*Bron Taylor*  
*Editor in Chief*