

Title: Religion and Sustainability: Religious Discourses Working For and Against a Sustainable Future

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Abstract: This topical lunch invites participants to consider how religious communities and the discourses they produce both hinder and enhance efforts to promote sustainable practices. In what ways do the religious ideas with which people are broadly familiar (and not just arcane religious ideas known only to a few elites or scholars of a tradition) -- ideas such as stewardship, the sacred natural world, apocalyptic thought, etc. -- serve to motivate people in their attitudes toward their material culture and the natural world? What models do we have in our current discussions and existing religious communities (including small intentional communities) of creating a culture of sustainable living where religious communities have played an active role in fostering these developments? Conversely, what concrete examples do we have of religious discourses of the "end of the world" contributing to a disregard for sustainable practice? Do religious ideologies hinder (even at a governmental level) efforts to create sustainable practices? How can religious communities, with their abilities to build cohesion, foster passion and provide common purpose, play a role in fostering the necessary culture shift toward a more sustainable future? How, and if at all, can we as scholars engage these communities?