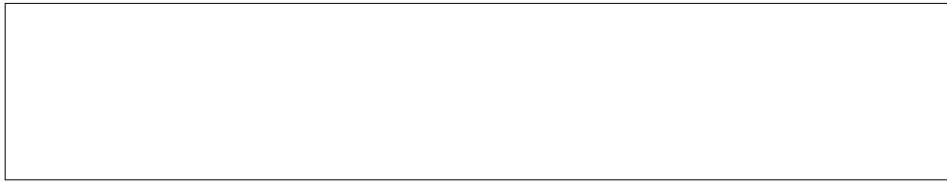




# ***Process Perspectives***

**Process Insight and  
Community Access Television**  
*by Jack Coogan*



*See "Access" continued on page 3*





Newsletter of the Center for Process Studies

 *Process Perspectives*  
*a relational worldview for the common good*

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*...anyone in the community can use this medium to speak out on issues of common concern.*

In contemplating issues facing the contemporary world, one is struck by the original ways in which process conceptualities address many of these, and may therefore well ask a question central to classical rhetorical theory: How can we make these useful ideas effective in the world? And in our time, a media-driven age, how can we begin to introduce these ideas into larger societal and political conversations conducted through the media? For those of us who live in communities with cable systems, and most of us now do, community access channels offer a simple and inexpensive entry into these conversations.

Community access was born out of an awareness that in technologically advanced societies, there has been a tendency to consolidate media control in fewer and fewer hands, a tendency which seems not only to be continuing but recently also to be accelerating. When thirty years ago community television antenna systems began to coalesce into the first cable distribution systems, progressive thinkers saw the opportunity to buck this trend to some degree: local communities franchised cable systems, and as part of the franchise agreement could insist that a few cable channels be set aside to give voice to individuals living in those communities. Often these channels have been run as an extension of the style of the town meeting: within the limits of libel or obscenity, anyone in the community can use this medium to speak out on issues of common concern.

As might be expected, the ethos of the 1980s has had a corrosive effect on this enterprise, an effect intensified by the market triumphalism of the 1990s, but many access programs are still in place and functioning well, often in communities which realize that lively local dialog powerfully supports all other community activities.

If you live in such a place and would like to explore possibilities for using its access program to bring process ideas into its larger dialog, you might begin by calling the general manager of your cable system and requesting information about its access program.

If the cable system has a community access manager, then a brief meeting will often provide the information you need. There are several approaches to working successfully with access, depending on the resources and programs at hand.

If the access channel has a continuing talk show, this will often provide a good forum for discussing process issues. One way to begin is to meet with its host, to identify issues which the community perceives as significant, and which can helpfully be addressed from a process perspective in language readily comprehensible to the viewer. Here as at every point in the communications process, attention to the interests and needs of the audience and care in presenting information so that it is seen as relevant to these interests and needs is basic to success.

If the access channel does not have an existing talk show, many sponsoring cable companies will make a television studio available, often with a few key staff members, so that community persons can produce their own shows. Here, a good plan is to select a dialog partner, and to prepare topical conversations which raise and address issues in the manner described above. A limitation





### EDITOR'S NOTES

In *Roots and Wings*, Jay McDaniel reminds us that we are "connected beings, bound together with others in a seamless web of life . . . As we open ourselves to rich connections, we realize that we ourselves, at our deepest core, are interbeings among interbeings." *Process Perspectives* hopes to facilitate this essential relatedness and therefore this issue includes submissions from many of our members, international associates, and advisors. Several responded to our invitation to write about "What Process Means to Me" and two of those articles are included in this issue. Jack Coogan, a member of our advisory council, contributed the lead article which is a useful and practical guide on how to utilize community access in your area.

This is *your* publication, your networking tool. Please feel free to contact us often with your news. We are particularly interested in getting any news about awards, seminars, conferences, and other events emphasizing process themes. We hope others of you will share what process means to you. As we continue to open ourselves to rich connections we hope to be able to produce a more interactive, dialogic publication. My heartfelt thanks to those who contributed to this issue.---June D. Watkins, Editor.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ms. Watkins,

I just received the latest issue of the newsletter and wanted to compliment you and the staff for its new format. As someone who has now been involved, one way or another with CPS and Process Thought for almost 30 years, it is a delight to see evermore attractive publications coming out of Claremont. Not that the other newsletters were not attractive, but I am constantly in awe of what can be done with modern desktop publishing.

**John Berthrong,**  
Associate Dean for Academic and  
Administrative Affairs, Boston University;  
and Director, Institute for Dialogue Among  
Religious Traditions.

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### **Process Perspectives**

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The Center for Process Studies

*a relational worldview for the common good*

Volume 20:2      Fall 1996

**Editor**

June D. Watkins

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"Access" continued from page 1

of talk shows is their essentially static visual character, so the introduction of appropriate visual material is always welcome.

If the access channel cannot make studio space available, you may find that the latest generation of consumer-grade video equipment used skillfully can produce excellent results, and can often be used in settings which are visually more interesting and relevant than the typical television studio. The considerations suggested above continue to apply: the importance of addressing issues perceived to be of community concern, the intrinsic interest of lively, informed dialog, the value of introducing relevant visual elements. The additional challenge is supplying whatever technical support the community access program cannot provide; Cliff Roth's *The Low Budget Video Bible* (rev. second edition, 1995, from Desktop Video Systems, Box 668, Peck Slip Station, New York, NY, 10272) may be of help.

Finally, if local production resources are insufficient, *Process and Faith* has several simple videos which introduce themes and issues related to Process Thought, and which may be borrowed for use on community access television. Here again, you might wish locally to prepare brief introductions and conclusions for the programs which focus on issues of community concern and suggest ways in which ideas and perspectives presented in these videos can address such issues. More information about the videos may be obtained by writing *Process and Faith*, 1325 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA, 91711.

One may ask why in working with television, one should commit time and energy to formats such as community access which command relatively small audiences, especially since one of the striking resources of the me-

dium is its ability to address simultaneously hundreds of thousands or millions of viewers--a relevant question, pointing to the continuing challenge to find ways to influence the mass media most familiar to these large audiences, which indeed are constructed by the media.

But most persons who work in them are well aware that the social and economic environments of these media not only control the ways in which ideas are expressed, but also the kinds of ideas which in fact can be expressed, and this makes it difficult to use them to introduce novel ways of thinking into the larger societal conversation.

Community access television is more comparable to the traditions of the printed word in this respect, accommodating a wider range of perspective and opinion and welcoming fresh ideas and fresh ways of conceptualizing issues. And it is often watched by persons impatient with the limited range of conventional television and seeking some alternative--that is, an audience more likely initially to be interested in learning about Process Thought, to think about ideas presented, and to be active in community life in a critically reflective manner. These are among the reasons, given an appropriate setting and leadership, that access can be an effective modality for introducing Process Thought to our communities in ways which eventually can touch and improve the fabric of their common life.



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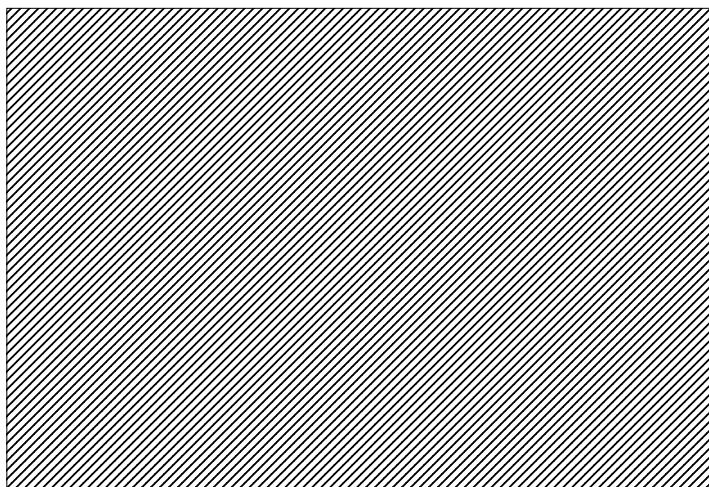
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## Charles Birch: Self-Organizing Systems and Evolution

Seminar reviewed by Michael Zbaraschuk

On July 8, 1996, Charles Birch, Emeritus Professor of Biology at the University of Sydney, former Templeton Prize Winner, and author of numerous publications on biology and theology (including *The Liberation of Life*, with John Cobb), presented a seminar on "Self Organizing Systems and Evolution" in the Davis Lounge on the Claremont School of Theology Campus. Professor Birch's remarks covered the inability of Darwinist and Neo-Darwinist theories to convincingly explain the origin of life from non-life, the usefulness of new research in biology being done on self-organizing systems to help explain life's existence, and the compatibility of this new research with the general direction of Whitehead's philosophy of organism.

Professor Birch's lecture began by outlining the atmosphere in which this new research on self-organizing systems is taking place: one of animosity, in which many evolutionary biologists are hostile to any kind of meaning or purpose, any philosophy or religion. These evolutionary biologists have been mainly concerned with "dotting the i's and crossing the t's" of Neo-Darwinism, and this concept of "self-organization," already an established idea in chemistry and physics, runs counter to their entire program. This self-organization seems to take place on very low levels, such as proteins organizing into bacteriophages. Professor Birch noted that this type of organization is very different from the organization which arises from genetics. He then gave a couple of examples of research into termite mounds and army ants which show that a greater degree of organization can arise from a lesser degree.

The challenge to Neo-Darwinism was the part Professor Birch detailed next. Neo-Darwinism holds that within a random system of order, some things have a greater degree of survivability, and that they are the ones that carry on into

the future. This motif of "Chance—Struggle—Natural selection" was hard for early critics, especially theists, to accept. Charles Kingsley, an early critic of Darwinism, pointed out that "God makes things that make themselves." The notion of self-organization is just this "making of oneself" that Kingsley pointed to. Neo-Darwinism is a theory of about what happens to objects, whereas the new research into self-organization points us to what Darwin "recognized and then forgot" — that "evolution is more than just the evolution of objects — it is also the evolution of subjects," according to Professor Birch. He encourages us to "think from the top down" in attempting to understand life, and notes that it is beginning to show up in biological thinking as well.

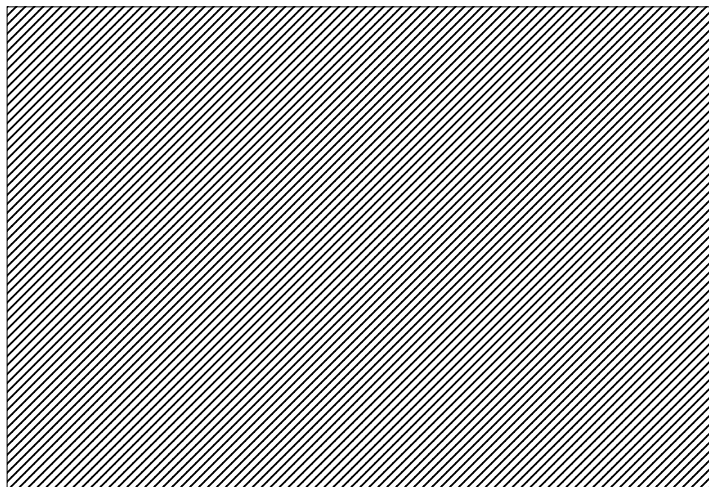
Professor Birch went on to show that most biologists, even Neo-Darwinists, recognize that consciousness or mentality arrives in the evolution of life fairly late, that it was an emergent phenomenon, not always there. What Professor Birch wants to point out is that this is foreign to the modern thinking which gave rise to Neo-Darwinism itself. He quotes Paul Davies as likening this to "pasting consciousness on protons and electrons." Professor Birch finds Whitehead's philosophy of organism, which allows subjectivity all the way down the scale of complexity, to be a more consistent way of understanding the phenomenon of self-organization. He says that "looking at the evolution as the mechanical evolution of objects, and *also* as the evolution of subjects, makes more sense."

A spirited debate followed Professor Birch's lecture, with John Cobb, David Griffin, Rob Valenza, Bill McClellan and Mark Germine (as well as several others) contributing to the discussion.



**Whitehead  
provides  
a basis for the  
successful  
integration of  
scientific  
and  
religious  
beliefs**





## David Butt: Linguistics and Process Thought

Seminar reviewed by John Quiring

On Thursday, June 6, a seminar on process thought and linguistics was given in Claremont by Dr. David Butt. Butt is Senior Lecturer in Linguistics in the School of English, Linguistics and Media at Macquarie University, Sydney Australia. The full title of Butt's presentation was "The Textual Dimensions of a Relational Universe: A. N. Whitehead's *Process and Reality* and the 'whole of "Harmonium"' in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens."

The issue Butt addressed was the difficulty of "representing change in symbols." He holds a process view of reality and appreciates Whitehead and Stevens. His concern, however, was to demonstrate, through semiotic analysis, ways in which the styles of expression of Whitehead and Stevens at times frustrated the process vision they were seeking to convey.

Both Whitehead and Stevens entertained a relational view of the world, a view of things working together relationally, of all things flowing and changing. But in their attempts to make visible the implicate order of this relational world, they have occasionally frustrated their audiences and readers. Butt sought to explain, for example, the precipitous drop-off in attendance at Whitehead's Gifford Lectures in 1927. His suggestion was that the audience encountered unrelieved abstraction without a map or plan. But more importantly, "Whitehead's grammar is not a grammar of happening." This presumably derives from Whitehead's mathematical orientation. Similarly with Stevens, "the definiteness of the world is eroded through the grammar." Though

Stevens found possibilities of expression that Whitehead did not, he occasionally "loses you in a pileup of clauses." Bafflement can also accumulate through analogies that presuppose that others have all read the same things.

In short, we need to seek "better discourse strategies that offer greater likelihood of describing process." One suggestion was that due to the popularity of sports, we might be able to learn a thing or two from the typically "processive description" of such down-to-earth activities.

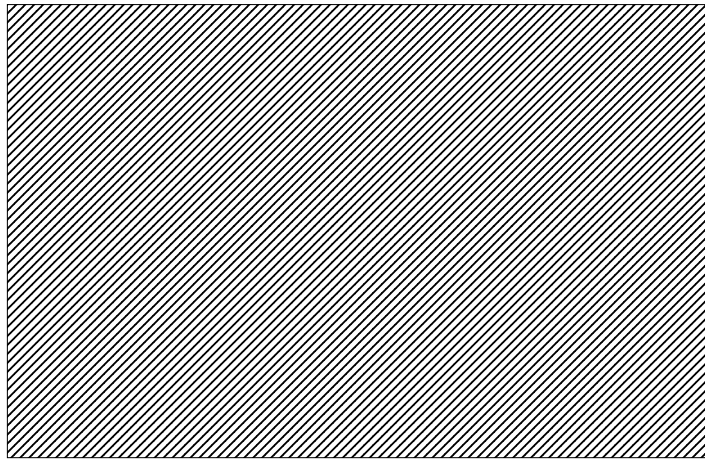


*[we need]  
better discourse  
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process.*

### Call for papers: Process Psychology

Papers are currently being gathered for a volume on process psychology edited by Mark Germin, M.D. for a volume in a series edited by Jason Brown on cognition and behavior. They are looking for papers using the process philosophical perspective of Whitehead and others to shed light on the psychological problems of experience, sensation, perception, memory, cognition, consciousness, psychological time, mental process, and free-will. Critical papers drawing on on such topics as misplaced concreteness in current cognitive, behavioral, and biological theories of mind are welcome, as well as papers addressing Eastern thought in relation to mental process or the feminist perspective regarding the ontology of mind. The topic of feelingful prehension and internal relations would be especially apt. They are not looking for papers relating specifically to process theology or which emphasize or expound any secular religion, but East/West intergrations which stress process applications to spiritual psychology are welcome. An integration of feminism and East/West thought with respect to unconscious process would, for example, be appropriate. Papers should be of typical journal length and format. The CPS journal *Process Studies* may be used as a guide to format. The CPS orientation towards a "holistic-relational worldview for the common good" will be emphasized, and we hope to advance this perspective. Prospective authors should submit abstracts before Dec. 31, 1996 and completed papers anytime before May 1, 1997. Queries, abstracts, and papers should be addressed to: Mark Germin, M.D. P.O. Box 716, Loma Linda, CA 92354. E-mail: mgermine@delphi.com





## Rosemary R. Ruether: Ecofeminist Theology

*Seminar reviewed by Marit Trelstad*

On September 26, 1996, Dr. Rosemary Radford Ruether delivered an address entitled, "Some Issues in Ecofeminist Theology" which was based on her paper of a similar title, "Ecological Crisis: God's Presence in Nature?" Dr. Mary Elizabeth Moore responded to Ruether's talk with questions about how an ecological spirituality translates into practical action.

Rosemary Ruether began her talk by posing two main questions: How does our current ecological crisis affect our understanding of God and, specifically, how do we understand the concept of a "God in history" or a God who is present in nature in light of the precarious survival of our planet as we know it? Throughout her lecture, Ruether raised questions concerning our past conceptions of God and their role in justifying human destruction of the environment. Responding to her own challenge of composing a more ecologically adequate Christian theology, she proposed theological shifts which could respond to ecofeminist and deep ecologist critiques and, at the same time, urge us toward a more respectful relationship with nature. Citing statistics on exponential population growth, extinction of species, increasing percentages of impoverished people, war, energy use, and the effects of NAFTA and GAT in lowering environmental standards internationally, Ruether explained that the pain or discomfort these serious crises produce will not begin to effect rich people before it has reached holocaust proportions for the poor. Following this, she asked how we can think theologically about the possible extinction of human life. Does God have larger plans beyond us or are we, as Jewish and Christian traditions have often claimed, God's primary representatives and vehicle of salvation to the earth? In light of our destruction of the planet, are human beings still to be considered the epitome of all creation?

If the future holds an increase of pollution, poverty and pain,

how can we speak of God? If trends continue along the path they are now, we may choose to envision a punitive or wrathful God. In response to our carelessness and greed, we may understand God as punishing us for all of our sins, and therefore we drink poisoned water, breathe foul air, and increasing numbers of

humans starve. She stated that, indeed, this does seem like punishment and, in all of this ugliness, the face of human sin is easy to discern. But, in this vision of a punitive God, where is the representation of God's justice? The people who are most responsible or guilty appear to get off "scott free" or, if they are ever effected, they are the last to feel the effects of their actions. Ruether asked, "What kind of God punishes the wicked by first decimating the innocent?" The hungry are not filled with good things and the rich are not sent away.

In a hierarchical, male-dominated world, many theological efforts have justified the rapacious power of the mighty, and thus a lot of environmentally concerned people have soundly placed blame on the shoulders of "the sort of religious world view that has imagined a patriarchal, anthropocentric,

punitive God." Too often biblical religions have encouraged human beings to dominate and compete with the rest of creation. In response to this, ecofeminist theology and deep ecologists say that we must invoke a spirituality of kinship with all living things so that we understand ourselves as integrally connected to the matrix of life. An ecological spirituality is humble in the sense of respecting the limits of the human niche in relation to the rest of creation. Relatively recent in the process of creation, humans must understand themselves as interdependent with the life that set the stage for their arrival and which supports them in their present and future endeavors. Humbly acknowledging our dependence on the rest of creation, we should know that we are in a system of mutual flourishing or destruction, rather than under-

*How can  
we think  
theologically  
about the  
possible  
extinction  
of human  
life?*





standing ourselves as fundamentally competitive with all other creatures.

Injurious to forming a new sense of ecological spirituality, patriarchal thought has encouraged people to search for one answer or one place to blame for our current dilemmas. While the critiques of biblical religious traditions are accurate in many ways, the scriptures are far more nuanced and they do not exclusively offer a dominating, anthropocentric image of the Divine. Within the biblical text, one finds that dualistic thinking, linear history, and a transcendent God are balanced by a multiplicity of patterns of thought, an understanding of a cyclical time of restoration, and a highly immanent God. From within its panoply of images of the Divine, one can find many possible resources for an ecological theology. Creation, redemption, restoration, and sabbath renewal are recurrent themes throughout the Bible. While nature itself is not divine, the themes of fertility of field and womb continuously emphasize the judging or blessing presence of God in all of nature.

Ruether emphasized that, throughout Hebrew scripture, nature is animate and thus God interacts with an agential creation. Hebrew, Classical Christian and Greco-Roman thought assumed that soul or life permeated all living things at different levels. In the book of Job, God spells out the limits of human knowledge about life and the created world while mountains dance and flowers speak. There is an assumed I-Thou relationship between God and nature. On the opposite end of the spectrum, our current roots in Cartesian thought often lead us to see nature in terms of mechanism and manipulation rather than compassion or companionship. Ruether stated that we do not need to divinize nature to respect our fellow creature's Thou-I experience with God. Acknowledging the agency of all creation on one hand and the powerful position of humankind on the other, we are called to a respectful stewardship. While deep ecologists have criticized the concept of stewardship for continuing harmful, dominant imagery, Ruether stated that we must acknowledge the immense destructive power our species currently has at its fingertips. Stewardship must suffer this responsibility with a humble attitude of respect for the rest of creation and our niche within the broader scheme.

Building on the understanding of an animate, agential natural world, Ruether states that biblical thought has two views of creation which may be helpful in constructing an ecological spirituality: a sense of a covenantal ethics and a sacramental spirituality and cosmology. Covenantal ethics is founded in a community of people who agree to compile their

efforts in dismantling accumulated injustices. An emphasis on restoration and a cyclical, continuous review of our work is similar to the sabbath claimed every seven years in the Hebrew Scripture. In keeping with the idea that no one religious tradition or resource can provide all the elements of an ecological spirituality, Native American traditions can encourage Christians to relearn a sense of kinship with the earth and the community we live in. A sacramental cosmology is founded in the belief that all creation is grounded in and filled with God's spirit, wisdom and life. Various Asian traditions have also written extensively on this concept of cosmic awe. At all points, our religious understanding must also step side by side with the evolutionary and environmental knowledge available today.

Drawing from a dialogue with world religions, the biblical traditions also offer their unique element of prophetic justice. Ecological spirituality must have this element of demanding a broad based justice for all fellow creatures. Ruether critiques the forms of ecological spirituality which

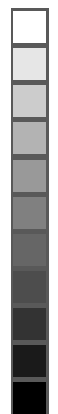
have created a consumer spirituality for the affluent in our society who want to "groove on Gaia" and have a mystical communion with nature while ignoring this crucial element of justice. While some people may claim that New Age spirituality is helpful in the categories of restoration and a sacramental cosmology, Ruether claims that it is often too much of a pleasant turn on, or frolic with nature rather than a serious confrontation with the cost of environmental destruction and policy for people on the underside of the economic scale. There must be justice and a rightful share of nature for all, not just one set of people who flourish and enjoy going "outdoors."

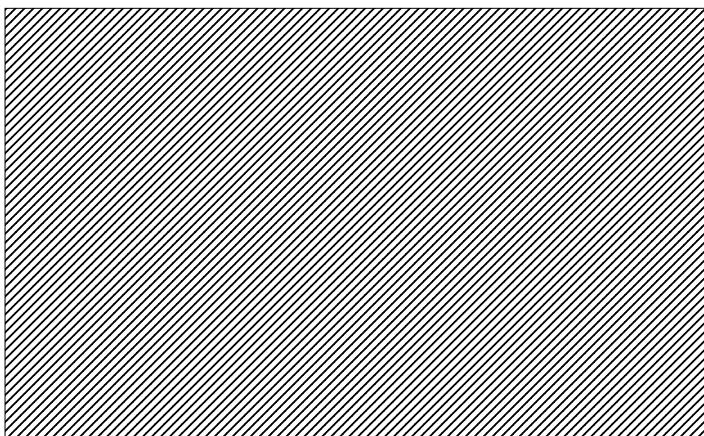
For Christian theology, these views of creation and the Creator God must be woven to an understanding of the

Redeemer God. Creation and redemption are both important and they function to knit a "vision of divine presence which both underlies and sustains evolutionary development and also rises to new levels of redemptive consciousness and compassion for all creatures in covenantal community together." What does this redeemed new creation look like? We have images of the face of God in nature "in the silent weeping of a God who suffers with the dying bird and the dying child, and also rises in insurgent new life that cracks the asphalt of our cities and of our hearts with impertinent dandelions."



*Nature is  
animate and  
thus God  
interacts with  
an agential  
creation.*





## Bruce Epperly: Christian/New Age Dialogue

Seminar reviewed by June Watkins

On July 25, 1996, Bruce Epperly presented a paper entitled "Christianity and the New Age Movement in Creative Transformation: A Postmodern Christian Vision." The CPS sponsored event took place at the Davis Community Center in Claremont.

Epperly analyzed the popular new age movement and liberal and mainstream Christianity, offering correctives to each. According to Epperly, "in the last decades of the twentieth century liberal and mainstream Christianity has lost its spiritual vigor as it has conformed itself to the linear, closed-system, mechanistic world view of the modern era." Fundamentalism in particular, while experiencing healthy growth, seems to be characterized by "social denial, psychological inflexibility, and culture imperialism" and therefore does not offer the hope for Christianity's future. An area which represents hope for enlivening Christianity is dialogue with the new age movement.

Christian response to the new age movement so far ranges from total dismissal to open attacks and claims that the new age is dangerous and demonic. Epperly hopes to "build bridges between Christianity and the new age which would enable Christians, influenced by the new age movement, to find a way to affirm the insights of the new age movement in the context of their commitment to a vital and dynamic Christian faith, and new agers, alienated from the institutional church, to experience the power of God anew in open and vital churches for a more productive dialogue in the future."

The new age movement provides a viable spiritual option for millions of people and "like the fundamentalist, charismatic and evangelical movements of the past fifty years-is an attempt to breathe new life into the dry bones of modern Christianity." The new age is grounded in the vision of a positively transformed universe. New age practitioners focus on personal spirituality and eschatology as the basis for radical planetary transformation. Epperly asserts that in many ways the new age, "resembles the unbridled spirituality of the early Christian church [and is]. . . a younger sibling to Christianity, bringing vitality to many of its

original insights in the same way that Christianity, as a younger sibling to Judaism, embodied a vital and life-giving stream of the elder sibling's faith."

Common beliefs held by new age practitioners are: the unity of all life, the power of the mind to shape reality, the reality of the spiritual world and its impact on our lives, and the reality of the afterlife viewed optimistically as a learning and growing experience. Epperly suggests that these characteristics can become vehicles to challenge and breathe new life into the "dry bones of faith." To this list of contributions by the new age movement, Epperly adds the reclaiming and updating of spiritual technologies, and finally, the visions of the Aquarian age as reminders that Jesus and his disciples also spoke of a new age.

Just as Epperly views the new age movement as one offering hope to Christianity's dry bones, he also discusses some inherent problems with the movement, some of which could be alleviated with the help of liberal and mainline Christian churches. Among those problems is the fact that the movement in its present form is vague and amorphous. This leads to an eclecticism and a tendency for practitioners to utilize whatever works "even if it seems to conflict with the other beliefs they hold." New age practitioners have been labeled as "flaky" and/or "narcissistic," given the emphasis on individual spiritual growth.

Epperly's main objective is to revive the dry bones of mainstream Christianity by helping Christians to remember the "wellsprings of faith in dynamic multi-dimensional, mystical encounters with God." This could be accomplished with a creative synthesis of historic mystical Christianity and social liberalism and global concern with the lively, multi-dimensional, and unbounded spirituality of the new age movement. This radical move could enliven struggling churches. "The wind of God's wisdom calls us beyond the boundaries of now lifeless traditions to share in the risky adventure of new birth and new life as partners in God's own adventurous quest."



**Radical  
times call  
for radical  
transformation**



## Help Us Celebrate Charles Hartshorne's 100th Birthday!



The Center for Process Studies is gearing up for Charles Hartshorne's 100th Birthday Celebration this year in Austin, Texas. Two of our Co-Directors, John Cobb and David Griffin, will be traveling at different times to Austin for the commemorative festivities. You can also honor Hartshorne and his contribution to philosophy by purchasing the *Hartshorne Membership*. Your generous contribution supports the Center's work for the common good. With your Hartshorne membership you will receive these yearly standard benefits for life:

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The Hartshorne membership is yours for \$1,000. The money goes directly toward the endowment fund to help CPS for years to come. This contribution is tax deductible if the check is made out to CST/Center for Process Studies. Please return your money order payable in US dollars, or check or draft drawn on a US bank. Send to:

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**Deadline: Feb. 1, 1997**  
for inclusion in the  
Spring 1997  
*Process Perspectives*



## Concrete Experience and Methodology: An Application of Process Thought

by Santiago Sia, Professor of Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

In November 1989 the Japan Society for Process Studies organized an International Symposium on Process Thought on the theme "Process Thought: What Does it Mean to Me?" In response to their invitation I wrote an essay describing how process thought had served as a conceptual framework for me. The papers from that conference were subsequently published in a special issue of *Process Studies* (Winter 1990).

In that paper I had stated that the process mode of thinking would probably continue to be the main conceptuality that would enable me to develop my views. This has proved to be the case although now the methodology of process thought has become of greater concern to me. While remaining indebted to the insights of Whitehead, Hartshorne and other process thinkers for my philosophical understanding of reality, I have recently attempted to use the methodology, and not just the doctrines, of process thought in my work. As is well known, process thinkers have emphasized concrete experience as the basis and the measuring stick, as it were, of metaphysical thinking. Whitehead's metaphor of the flight of the aeroplane to describe the nature of the metaphysical pursuit is particularly striking in reminding would-be metaphysicians of the role of concrete experience.

At the planning stage of my recent work, *From Suffering to God: Exploring Our Images of God in the Light of Suffering* (co-authored with Marian F. Sia), I realized early enough that what I had to say on the topic would be very much influenced by Charles Hartshorne's theodicy. I was also aware that much valuable work had already been done on the problem of evil from the process perspective. What I thought needed more attention, however, was the application of a specific methodology that tried to preserve the concreteness of the reality of suffering while engaging in abstract philosophical thinking. Whitehead's words proved to be a useful guide: "Philosophy is akin to poetry. Philosophy is the endeavour to find a conventional phraseology for the vivid suggestiveness of the poet." The book therefore starts with a literary analysis of specific poems on the grounds that being especially rich in imagery, the poetic mode of expression captures more successfully the experiences of suffering that so many people have. It then attempts, following Whitehead again, to pursue the issues which have emerged by refining the questions, developing any answers and construct-

ing a conceptual framework. My use of theology and philosophy (and my understanding of their relationship to each other) in finding "a conventional phraseology" for what I had learned from the poets is an application and a development of Hartshorne's view that "theology asks the questions while philosophy supplies the answers."

This understanding of the process methodology underlies my present project, a book-length manuscript. This time the focus is on the desire for immortality, in its various forms. In the hope of doing justice to the concreteness of human experience I will make use of various literary sources as the basis for a philosophical investigation. I then inquire into whether and how that desire can lead us to a more philosophically sound understanding of human nature. Again key ideas in process thought, among others, will inform my description of human nature.

The wish to maintain the concreteness of experience, a significant point in my understanding of process thought, continues to challenge me methodologically. It has also led me to try another mode of expression: the writing of a novel which would express more concretely some of the process insights. The university town of Leuven, where I had spent a semester completing the book on suffering, provided both the inspiration and the context. The Fons Sapientiae in the midst of the town became the focal point for my attempts to probe into the human stories of various academics who visit Leuven. Among the characters in this forthcoming novel (titled *The Fountain Arethuse*, it likens Leuven to the fountain of that name, playground of the Muses, in ancient Greek mythology) is an eminent Polish professor of philosophy and son of victims of the internment camp at Majdanek and who is in search of a conceptuality that will help him understand a life that has been fed by the bitter experiences of the past. Also in the novel is a young American philosopher who has been experiencing a gap between the concerns of academia and the demands of concrete life. From Ashling O'Shea, a lecturer in English Literature from a university in Ireland, the reader hears what nature and life can teach: some familiar process insights articulated differently. And behind Ashling's 6-year old son Philip's youthful questions, childlike searches and innocent pranks is a real challenge to the adults that gets them involved in deeper concerns than their professional interests; namely, the concreteness of life. There are other themes explored in the novel, of course, and it is hoped that it will be of interest to a wider readership. And to what extent this new venture succeeds in applying the process methodology will have to be judged by others!



## Special Series



## Peace And Process

by Alonzo (Lonnie) Valentine, author of "Love Seeking Justice: A Process Theology of Non-Violent Resistance," Ph.D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1989

The process vision opened me to a glimpse of God in Christianity that brought but vague intuitions into a clarifying light. This vision is having a similar impact on students I have worked with in their struggles with the Christian tradition. The process vision has offered both a revision of traditional images of Christianity and a way to reconnect to the tradition. In this way, the process perspective has been salvific—it can heal the spirit, emotions, as well as the intellect.

As a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, I had sought some understanding of what was going on within Christianity, but turned away. The Church seemed to be one of the primary supporters of that war which I saw as immoral even in

### What Process Means To Me

terms of the "Just War" doctrines. More deeply, the theological view of God appeared essentially militaristic. In college I took a course with Lewis Ford, writing a biblical studies paper entitled "Love the Lord Thy God—Or Else" that compiled the evidence

for viewing the Christian God as hypocritical since the offer of love was taken back in vengeance. This turned me away from Christianity to look elsewhere. Fortunately, as part of this same course, Professor Ford introduced us to Daoism and Buddhism and here I found a home for my emerging pacifist sensibilities. This course not only provided the basis for my conscientious objector claim, but showed me that there were alternative visions to the Christianity that I saw around me.

However, the thought of Whitehead which Lewis Ford introduced to us in another course remained only latent for me. I was not a good student and got lost in Whitehead's terms and failed to read the last chapter of *Process and Reality*—along with much of the other assigned reading. Nonetheless, Ford's work on the Whiteheadian doctrine of God excited me because it appeared to embrace a vision of how evil is overcome only and always through love. Here was a real alternative to the Christian god of the big exception: God is love, until the end, then God becomes conquering Caesar.

The Whiteheadian language went over my head, but I did get some sense that the concepts of "actual occasions of experience" and God's "bipolar nature" were not only philosophical terms but also were felt visions of a world and God that might in fact be deeply buried within Christianity. Therefore, not only

might my pacifist leanings towards social action and divine involvement in the world find a philosophical home, I might be able to find a spiritual and emotional home within some form of Christian community. This happened for me with the Religious Society of Friends. Here was a group which attempted to sense God's leading for them in the present, stressing God's complete immanence in the world. At the same time, there was a sense of amazement about God acting in this way everywhere and at all times. Finally, there was a sense that though traditional language about heaven (to say nothing of Hell) did not work, God's love for us and what we did was everlasting. Here process helps articulate such sensibilities found in Quakers, and shows its capacity to touch the emotions and spirit as well.

The Quakers who come to the Earlham School of Religion are often in a similar place as I was, though the outward journeys may look much different. The process vision of a God who touches the soul of the self and the world has become a vital for Quakers here to reclaim and revise the tradition of Christianity expressed in the Society of Friends. The motto (not creed!) of the Earlham School of Religion is "We hold that Christ is present guiding and directing our lives, and that we can know and obey Christ's will." The process perspective of God seeking to guide us from the most deeply hidden actual occasion in our bodies to our sharpest conscious understandings of what we are called to do resonates with a central Quaker goal for worship. Worship becomes an intimate relationship with God rather than an obedience before the "wholly Other" and process provides the way to articulate and refine that Quaker vision of worship. At the same time, process provides the theological undergirding for Quaker efforts throughout its history to effect social change. Because of the connection in a process doctrine of God between the inner self and outer world, both social activists and evangelicals can find resources in process. Then these two divisions within Quakers can relate: the activist can make sense of the evangelical attention to the soul and its relation to God and the evangelical can appreciate the outward turning of the activist.

This ability within the process perspective to bridge some of the usual theological and cultural differences among Quakers also leads to reestablishing connections to the larger Christian tradition. Though professor Ford did point out on that ancient college paper that my negative reading of the biblical text as deceptive and cruel was not the only possible reading, it was only much later that I could gain an appreciation for the emphasis on God's transcendence within the tradition. Rather than hiding God within a cloud of absolute separation from all we can know, what could be termed "qualitative transcendence," the process vision of all actual occasions as touched by God allows for a recognition of God's "quantitative transcendence" which does not contradict the claim for God's immanence. Just as this opened the way for me to re-examine a traditional claim, this has happened for students as well. Therefore, process thought not only becomes a different way to see the tradition—spiritually, emotionally and intellectually—it becomes a way to reclaim the tradition.



## Interconnections

### *News from friends around the world*

**Sydney, Australia**—The First Australasian Conference on Process Thought will take place in Sydney, Australia May 23rd-25th, 1997. The conference, entitled, "The Contemporary Relevance of Process Thought" will feature invited speakers Professor **David Ray Griffin**, Claremont, CA, USA, Professor **Jan Van Der Veken**, Leuven, Belgium, Professor **Martin Prozesky**, University of Natal, South Africa, Professor **Charles Birch**, Sydney, Australia, Associate Professor **Wayne Hudson**, Griffith University, Australia, and Dr. **David Bromwell**, Christchurch, New Zealand. For more details please contact the conference organizer: **Peter Farleigh**, PO Box 23, Wentworth Building University of Sydney, N.S.W. 2006, Australia. Email: [p.farleigh@ieee.org](mailto:p.farleigh@ieee.org) Web page: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~farleigh/aapthome.html>

**Ontario, Canada**—The Reverend Dr. **George Hermanson** received an honorary Companion of the Centre degree this year from the Francis Sandy Theological Centre, Paris, Ontario. The Centre is an United Church related Center for Native Canadians to prepare them for the ordained ministry. As of October 1, 1996, Hermanson is Senior Minister at Trinity-St. Andrew's, Ontario. His new address is Trinity-St. Andrew's United Church, Box 117 Renfrew Ont. K7V 4A2. **Suzanne E. Sykes** also received the Companion of the Centre in June of 1996 and is working at United Theological College, McGill, Montreal.

**Leuven, Belgium**—At the invitation of Professor Jan Van der Veken, Professor **Lewis S. Ford** is spending most of this academic year at the Institute of Philosophy at Leuven. He is currently giving a seminar on the development of Whitehead's thought. On April 1 and 2, 1997, a meeting is planned in Kortrijk, Belgium and Lille, France to bring together European scholars on Process Thought. The theme will be "The Future of Process Thought in Europe." For information please contact: European Center for Process Thought, attention Koen Decoster, Institute of Philosophy, Kardinal Mercierplein 2, 3000 Leuven (Belgium). Email: [koen.decoester@hiw.kuleuven.ac.be](mailto:koen.decoester@hiw.kuleuven.ac.be)

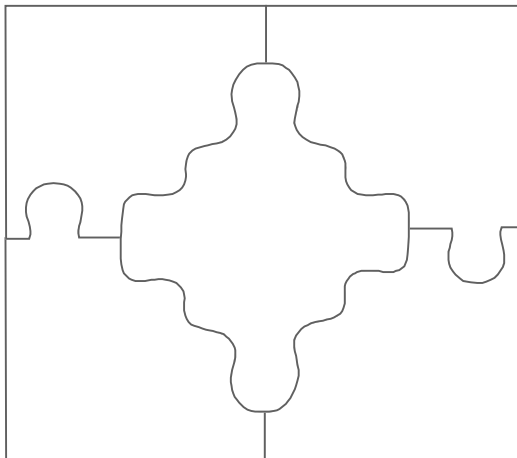
**Lewisburg, Pennsylvania**—**Douglas Sturm** received the Virginia Travis award in Social Justice Tuesday, November

19, 1996 at Bucknell University. Professor Sturm is an inspirational teacher who educated thousands of students about important issues of political, economic, social, and environmental justice. Not content to write and teach about justice, Sturm has long practiced what he preached, serving as an active member of the ALCU, the Lewisburg Prison Project, and of groups promoting racial harmony. Most recently, he played a leading role in establishing the Community Alliance for Respect and Equality (CARE), a community group that seeks to promote awareness and respect among racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. His actions epitomize the principles on which the Virginia Travis award rests. Dr. Sturm's talk was entitled "Politics, Miracles, and the New Millennium." A reception in his honor followed.

**Los Angeles, CA**—**Eugene Shirley's** documentary on the Soviet Union entitled, "Messengers from Moscow" was selected as one of the three best documentaries of 1995 by the Royal Television Society. Shirley is with Pacem Productions, Inc in Los Angeles, CA. and is currently working on a series in education. Shirley is a long time friend of the Center for Process Studies and has worked for years with the Center in trying to develop a series on process ideas.

**Amsterdam, Netherlands**—**Herman Daly** has received the Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Environmental Sciences. Daly is currently Senior Research Scholar the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs in College Park, Maryland. The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences has awarded the prize to Dr. Daly because of his original contributions and insights into the socio-economic aspects involved in the decline of the environment. He was one of the first economists to focus on environmental problems, and may be regarded as the founder of the promising new discipline of "ecological economics." Daly co-authored *For the Common Good* with John Cobb. From 1988 to 1994 he worked for the World Bank, whose Environment Department he helped develop and expand. Dr. Daly will receive a \$160,000 award. The RNAAS selects the winners of these prizes every two years at a special session of the academy. This year's awards ceremony took place on Friday, September 27th in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. (excerpted from *Ecological Economics Bulletin*, Volume 1, No. 3, July, 1996)

**Stockholm, Sweden**—Recipients of this year's Right Livelihood Award were honored in Sweden on Dec. 9, 1996. This

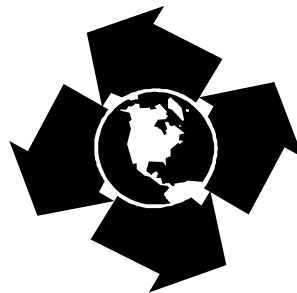


is the 17th consecutive year that individuals and organizations "who have made significant contributions to the survival of humanity" received this honor. The Honorary Award went to **Herman Daly**, ecological economist, whose work profoundly challenges conventional economic wisdom. "For his dedication, in spite of unremitting hostility from the conventional mainstream of his profession, in formulating an economic approach that integrates the key elements of ethics, quality of life, environment and community, in contrast to the mainstream obsession with quantitative economic growth and free trade." The Right Livelihood Award is often called the "Alternative Nobel Prize," and is presented in the Swedish Parliament the day before the annual Nobel presentations. Other Right Livelihood award recipients were: **George Vithoukas** (Greece), in honor of his trailblazing contributions to the revival of classical homeopathy, a long-ignored practice with proven benefits for many people afflicted by a wide variety of illness and injuries; **Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishat** (the People's Science Movement of Kerala State-India), who developed a successful model of people-centered development rooted in social justice and popular participation, and made dramatic achievements in health and education; the **Committee of Soldier's Mothers of Russia**, whose members have strenuously campaigned for humane conditions in Russia's armed forces and bravely worked to end the tragic war in Chechnya. The Award winners are selected because they have rejected the short-term, materialistic goals of much Western science, technology and society. Such short-term materialism is based in great part on the reckless exploitation of the Earth's accumulated resources.

**Fairbanks, Alaska—R. Blair Reynolds** recently gave a public lecture entitled, "Evolution and the Spirit: Rethinking the Classical Model of God" in Fairbanks Alaska. The presentation took place on Monday, Sept. 16, 1996. Reynolds is the author of *Toward a Process Pneumatology*.

**Claremont, CA**—On June 8, 1996 Process and Faith, together with the Center for Church Life at the Chicago Theological Seminary, sponsored a workshop on "Interpreting the Bible in the Parish." Led by Dr. **George Thompson, Jr.**, the director of the Center for Church Life, the meeting attracted a small but enthusiastic audience. **Christine Mabonzo**, Assistant Director of Process and Faith, just returned from spending two and a half months in Africa. Mabonzo attended a conference on African women's issues.

Please send any announcements to:  
 Editor: *Process Perspectives*  
 Center For Process Studies  
 1325 North College Ave.  
 Claremont, CA 91711



## Visiting Scholars

by Martha Bailey

### An Invitation to Women Scholars

In the past year that I worked with Visiting Scholars at LCPS, I noticed that not many had been women. We wish, therefore, to offer a special invitation to women working in any area related to Process Thought to consider coming to spend a period of study in Claremont.

Claremont is a wonderful place to spend some time. The town has a population between 35,000 and 40,000 people, and is small enough that most places can be reached on foot. It is a relatively safe place to live and, at an average elevation of 1100 feet, generally has cool nights even in the hottest times of the summer. Daytime temperatures run from 70-90 degrees much of the year, with a rainy season between January and April. The area seldom has temperatures below freezing. Snow can be seen on the nearby mountains and hills during the winter, often while those in Claremont are out in their shirtsleeves.

CPS offers assistance to our Visiting Scholars in finding housing. We are often able to locate housing on or near campus, and there are a number of local women who rent out rooms. We can also help with local transportation in a limited way.

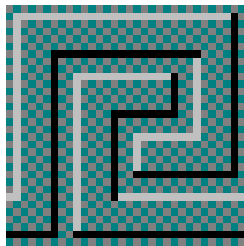
For the scholar, Claremont offers not only the CPS library, but also the libraries of the Claremont School of Theology and the Claremont Colleges. During the school year there are classes that can be audited and many lectures sponsored by CPS and the various schools. These lectures are generally free and open to the public, as are many of the concerts and other performances on the campuses. With seven academic centers, there is tremendous variety and vitality in the intellectual and cultural life in Claremont.

In addition, Claremont is located in the Inland Empire region of the greater Los Angeles area, with all of the diverse offerings of the region within easy access: beaches, mountains, museums, historical sites, cultural events, amusement parks, antique outlets, and agricultural areas. Many of these can be reached by public transportation.

Several of the campuses offer programs for women, and there is a Women's Center on the Scripps College campus which offers additional resources and community to the female visiting scholar.

If you are interested in pursuing the possibility of coming to Claremont, please feel free to contact John Quiring at (909) 621-5330 to explore the idea.





## Membership Corner

by Jeff Sanders

The Center for Process Studies continues to be engaged in creative transformation. This Fall the Center went through a very well-thought-out restructuring of the staff positions. The number of staff working part time was reduced greatly in order to streamline duties. Four main positions were coalesced out of a staff of twelve. The CPS office now consists primarily of two three-quarter time and two half-time personnel fulfilling all of the basic functions of the Center. Dr. John Quiring, who has been with CPS for thirteen years is the program director and coordinates the academic functions of the Center, including the library, visiting scholars, conferences and seminars. Jeff Sanders has been with the Center for three and half years and is the business and office manager, web programmer and techni-

cal consultant. June Watkins, who has logged two and a half years is now the director of public relations, editor of the newsletter, and handles the external communications, advertising, trade shows, and other image-related matters. Judy Casanova, the newest member of the team, remains as the managing editor of *Process Studies*.

The goal of these changes is to consolidate the work of the Center, increasing communication, proficiency, and efficiency, while providing a more stable staff for the Center by offering more substantial positions to graduate students.

So far the changes seem to have made positive improvements in staff morale, communication, and efficiency. As we work through the glitches and unclutter our desks we hope to be able to continue to improve the quality and diversity of resources from the Center for our members. Please feel free to contact any of these folks whenever we can answer any questions you may have about your membership. Our e-mail is [process@ctr4process.org](mailto:process@ctr4process.org). Don't forget to check out our web site. We are constantly updating it, adding more links and improving the graphics. Your suggestions are always welcome!



## CONTINUUM BOOKS ON PROCESS THEOLOGY

- (1) *Trinity in Process: A Relational Theology of God*, eds. Joseph A. Bracken and Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, 286 pages hardcover, 0-8264-0878-8. Retail \$34.95. Now on sale (20% discount), only \$27.95. Offer ends April 30, 1997. Order Code # 8788. **Available February 1997**

### Contents:

John B. Cobb, Jr.: *The Relativization of the Trinity*  
Marjorie H. Suchocki: *Cobbian Approaches to Trinity*  
Bernard Lee: *An "Other" Trinity*  
David Ray Griffin: *A Naturalistic Trinity*

Philip Clayton: *Trinities: Philosophy and Theology*  
Joseph Bracken: *Panentheism in Process Perspective*  
Gregory Boyd: *Trinitarian Revision of Hartshorne*  
Roland Faber: *Trinity, Analogy, and Coherence*

Lewis S. Ford: *Contingent Trinitarianism*

- (2) *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*,

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki 160 pages, 0-8264-0860-5, \$15.95 paperback. # 8605 **Available Now**

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## Journal Update

by Judy Casanova

*Process Studies* Vol. 23/number 3-4 has just been mailed out and should be in subscribers' mailboxes now! You will notice that this volume is marked 1994. That is not an error. Volume 24 (1995) is in the works as I write this at this point we are not promising dates, but are simply paddling as fast as we can and expect our issues to be in line with the calendar year by 1998.

One terrific addition to our staff has been Barry Whitney, our NEW EDITOR. Judy Casanova (managing editor) especially welcomes Barry who responds to E-mail in seconds and seems to work more hours than most other three persons combined. Barry is a self-confessed land-locked Iclander as well as Professor of Religion at University of Windsor (P.O. Box 33830, Detroit, MI 48232, if you want to submit an article or send fan mail). Also check out Barry's Web site especially if you are of Icelandic descent! Even if you're not, it's well worth it: <http://supernova.uwindsor.ca/~whitney/blw.teach.html> Barry intends to update his Web site with current PROCESS information like what articles will be appearing soon in *Process Studies*.

We have an apology to make to our readers in general and to Professor Randall Morris in particular. We neglected to announce in the double issue of *Process Studies* just out that Volume 23/4 was a special issue on political theory, edited by Morris. We can announce now, however, that Vol. 24 will contain a special focus section on Prehension, edited by Pat Mazzerella. We expect to begin The Forum, a section of dialogue/debate between process thought and other perspectives edited by David Griffin with Volume 26/1 which should appear by this time next year. Any questions about our (admittedly) confusing schedule of publication can be addressed to Judy Casanova at the Center for Process Studies in Claremont.



## Planned Gifts

We will soon be celebrating the 25th anniversary of CPS with an international conference in August 1998. At that time, we hope to announce that we have reached our goal of \$225,000 in our endowment fund. Your gift will help us continue to build toward that goal, allowing the Center to continue its various activities aimed at promoting a relational worldview and a peaceable, just, and sustainable world order.

Watch your mailbox for our informative brochure, or for immediate assistance, call the Claremont School of Theology Planned Giving staff: David Nienas or Dale Kraai at (800) 626-7821, extension 209.

## Grants Available

The Center for Process Studies is initiating a program of offering seed money to members who want to hold Center for Process Studies type conferences in their own institutions. Grants will be for a maximum of \$500.

On the first go-round, they will be only for major conferences that are clearly and extensively informed by Process Thought.

This program is launched in response to suggestions that were made at the meeting of the Advisory Board last February. It was objected that although the Center for Process Studies has co-sponsored conferences in other parts of the country, most of its activities are located in Claremont and are inaccessible to many of its members. The Center for Process Studies should encourage the holding of conferences elsewhere.

\$500 will certainly not cover the costs of a significant conference. Sometimes, however, having some money up front makes it possible to get other, larger commitments. We hope some of you will find it so.

We are not at the point of having formal application procedures. Just write us about your ideas and how you think a small grant might help you realize them. If we agree that the idea is worthwhile and practical, as long as our small budget lasts, we will cooperate.

*The Center for Process Studies*  
1325 North College Avenue  
Claremont, CA 91711  
(909) 621-5330  
e-mail: [process@ctr4process.org](mailto:process@ctr4process.org)







March 20-22, 1997  
**The Enlightenment in Evangelical  
 and Process Perspectives Conference**  
 Wednesday, April 9, 1997 4:10-6pm  
**Helen Goggin**  
*Title to be announced*

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Thursday, February 6, 1997 4:10-6pm  
**Nancy Howell**  
*A Feminist Cosmology*

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Thursday, February 13, 1997 4:10-6pm  
**Dan Dombrowski**  
*Babies and Beasts: Process Thought and the Rights of  
 Marginal Human Beings and Animals*

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Wednesday, February 19, 1997 4:10-6pm  
**Leemon McHenry**  
*Descriptive & Revolutionary Event Theory:  
 Whitehead and Quine*

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Thursday, February 27, 1997 4:10-6pm  
**David Orr**  
*EcoJustice*

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Tuesday, March 11, 1997 4:10-6pm  
**Peter Lee**  
*Can One Meet the Cosmic Christ  
 In I-Ching Cosmology?*

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**Robert Doud**  
*Whitehead and the Poets*

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**Leslie A. Muray**  
*The Revival of Civil Society*

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**Rosemary Radford Ruether**  
*Ecological Crisis:  
 God's Presence in Nature*

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**Bruce Epperly**  
*Christianity and the New Age Movement  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

All events will be held at the Davis Community Center on the Claremont School of Theology's campus. Call us for more information at (909) 621-5330.

## CPS MEMBER PAPERS

Upon request, the following papers are available free of charge to center members (\$3 each for non-members). Or visit the WEB site at <http://www.ctr4process.org> in the *members only* section.



**Center for Process Studies**  
1325 North College Avenue  
Claremont, CA 91711-3154



### Forward and Address Correction

