



**TEILHARD RELIGION AND SCIENCE SOCIETY**  
A METANEXUS LOCAL SOCIETY AT LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

**Annual Report 2007**

The Teilhard Religion and Science Society had a very successful second year at Loyola Marymount University. Housed within the university's Center for Religion and Spirituality, the Society benefited from institutional support and participation from LMU's Bioethics Institute, the Center for Ignatian Spirituality, the College of Science and Engineering, the Department of Natural Science, the Department of Theological Studies, and the Jesuit Community. In addition, the M Foundation provided supplemental funds enabling the Society to invite additional speakers on the topics of consciousness and cognitive neuroscience.

The core group of interested scholars and community members met several times during the academic year. In a study-group context, the group met in July, August, and September to discuss chapters from *The View from the Center of the Universe* and was well-prepared to receive visiting authors Joel Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams. Primack and Abrams met with members of the study group when they visited campus on November 17, 2006; their public talk was attended by ten of the core group members and more than sixty students and community members.

The second major public event that entailed Society support was a public lecture by Mary Evelyn Tucker on Religion and Ecology at the annual Bellarmine Forum, a campus-wide week-long event that highlights issues of contemporary interest. Dr. Tucker joined a stellar cast of scientists and activists and scholars devoted to issues of environmental concern. Dr. Tucker's talk was attended by more than 200 students and faculty; the Teilhard Society sponsored a special lunch for the activist/panelists who responded to her lecture, along with members of the Teilhard Society. The entire university community was invited to attend an afternoon reception organized by the Society.

At the third public event, attended by the students, faculty, and members of the Society, Ursula Goodenough spoke on "Exploring the Concept of Religious Naturalism." This talk was particularly formative for developing the program for 2008-2009, and also helped inspire Dr. Landry as he prepared his talk for the annual Metanexus Conference at the University of Pennsylvania in June 2007.

The next three events focused on the topics of consciousness and cognitive science. Peter Grossenbacher's visit began with a luncheon co-hosted by the Buddhist-Catholic and Hindu-Catholic Dialogue groups, both of which have a deep interest in his research on meditation. His public talk "What Can Cognitive Neuroscience Learn from Contemplative Spirituality" was well attended by the campus community. V.V. Raman spoke the following month on "Hindu Perspectives on the Role of Consciousness in the Universe," followed two weeks later with Amit Goswami's presentation on "Science within Consciousness: The Future of Human Evolution." Prof. Goswami's talk was part of an event co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Hindu-Catholic Dialogue.

Jeffrey Schloss made the last presentation of the 2006-2007 academic year, speaking on “Evolution, Religion, and Intelligent Design: Scientific Debate or Culture War?” Having published and lectured extensively on this controversial topic, Schloss was particularly adept at addressing student concerns.

The Teilhard Religion and Science Society fulfilled its stated purpose this past academic year, addressing the interface between religious cosmologies, physics, and ecology; probing into the scientific study of religious experience; and exploring the topics of quantum physics and neuroscience in relation to religion. Community members, faculty, students, and staff participated in the meetings, and the theme of the Society fit well with the topic of the Bellarmine Forum. The supplemental funding from the M Foundation helped the Society mount an especially full roster of highly qualified speakers, all who have published extensively in their respective fields. Several hundred people benefited from the work of the Society.