TOWARD ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION—AN IMPORTANT NEW NONPROFIT AND MOVEMENT
By Herman Greene

Toward Ecological Civilization, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation (EcoCiv), emerged out of the vision of John B. Cobb, Jr., Professor of Theology (emeritus) of Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA, a 501(c)(3) organization (CST), and the work of the Center for Process Studies (CPS), a center within CST. Under the leadership of Cobb, CPS organized an ambitious conference that was held at Pomona College, Claremont, CA, in June 2015 titled, “Seizing an Alternative: Toward an Ecological Civilization.” The purpose of this transdisciplinary event was to work together on reenvisioning the various sectors of society through an ecological lens. The conference was a success. Over 800 scholars participated in the 80+ working groups of the conference and an additional 1,200 people attended the plenary sessions or other special events. The conference was intended as the beginning of an ongoing movement toward ecological civilization—toward a sustainable future.

Plenary of “Seizing an Alternative: Toward an Ecological Civilization” (the “Great Conference at Claremont), June 4-7, 2016
The organizers of the conference decided that to take the work of the conference forward a new organization was needed which would focus solely on ecological civilization. A generous donation of $150,000 was given to CPS so that it could launch this new organization.

In July 2015, Philip Clayton and Wm. Andrew Schwartz, who held positions in CPS and were part of the June 2015 conference planning committee, were selected to take responsibility for this new initiative. The strategic plan for the first few months was to focus on clarifying the mission, purpose, and structure of EcoCiv. To this end, a website was created (ecociv.org), fundraising documents were drafted, and initial staff were hired.

The first public event organized by EcoCiv was a conference on “Ecology of Community,” held in October 2015, which was co-sponsored by CPS, Pando Populus, and the Environmental Analysis program of Pomona College. That same weekend, EcoCiv held private research consultations on the topic “Economics Toward Ecological Civilization.” In that consultation EcoCiv interviewed leading theorists in the field for the purpose of drafting a roadmap for action and policy recommendations related to economics.

In February 2016, EcoCiv held an additional research consultation on “Education Toward Ecological Civilization.” In April 2016, EcoCiv held a second research consultation on economics and co-hosted a public conference on the Pope’s encyclical Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home.

In June 2016, EcoCiv will hold a research consultation on Business & Management. In Fall 2016, EcoCiv expects to hold its first “convening”—a gathering of leaders representing different sectors of American society, such as business, nonprofits, government agencies, environmental organizations, religious organizations, and perhaps a union leader, an urban designer, a university president—with the purpose of considering, critiquing, and providing feedback on the recommendations from the research consultations so as to forge a multi-sector roadmap toward ecological civilization. The convenings are also intended to encourage these leaders to take the recommendations to their networks and to become advocates for needed changes in their institutions and other areas where they have influence. This first convening will probably be held in Washington DC. Also, EcoCiv plans to hold a convening with a group faith-based eco leaders at Yale University in fall 2016.

EcoCiv has identified 12 initial sectors of society to examine and influence, as follows:

Agriculture

Energy & Technology
The process of research consultations and convenings will continue in relation to each of these sectors, as additional sectors are identified and explored. The basic method and process of EcoCiv is the following theory of CHANGE:

- **COLLECT** information about the major sectors of society, trends, and paradigms.
- **HOLD** consultations and conferences with experts from each sector in order to identify shared values that unite currently fragmented sustainability efforts.
- **ARTICULATE** a roadmap toward sustainability, including—how each sector must be organized to make its particular contribution, which will win broad consensus.
- **NAVIGATE** between academics and activists, between theory and practice, so that the solutions offered are broad enough to unite but specific enough for concrete action.
- **GATHER** leaders from government, business, and nonprofits to further refine and take ownership of the roadmap, which they will then disseminate among their communities to form a coalition for action.
- **EDUCATE** the general public about concrete steps they can take.

The overall mission of EcoCiv is to identify how the major sectors of human social, political, and economic life will need to be organized if humans are to live ecologically and sustainably on this planet for the long term. Its intent is to develop clear ideas through research and dialogue and communicate them through networks of networks to influence change.

EcoCiv will also identify certain on-the-ground sustainability action projects and will collaborate with them in their work. EcoCiv plans to begin featuring "ecological laboratories" (EcoLabs), communities that are already in existence around the country. The aim is to support key experiments toward ecological civilization, provide an online platform for connecting these experiments with one another, and publicize the most important among them. By doing this, EcoCiv will bring attention to important initiatives in sustainability.

For more information about EcoCiv contact info@ecociv.org.