

# The Future Is Calling Us to Greatness

with Michael Dowd + 56 Experts



## Global Dark Green Integrity

with Bron Taylor

Big ideas from this session:

- Avatar, Nature Spirituality, and Dark Green Religion
- What the spirituality of surfing can teach all of us about honoring Reality
- Our moral obligation to nurture a deeper communion with Life

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Michael: Hello, Bron. It's good to have you part of this series called *The Future is Calling us to Greatness*. I've been looking forward to this call for some time.

Bron: Me too.

Michael: Cool. Bron, could you please – Connie and I know you personally, we're friends, colleagues. I think your book's the greatest thing since sliced bread, *Dark Green Religion*. But a lot of our listeners and viewers may not be familiar with your work or your book, so could you please help us give a sense of who you are and what you bring to this conversation and sort of what your gifts are? Don't be bashful. Just help us get who Bron Taylor is.

Bron: Officially I am a professor of religion, nature and environmental ethics at the University of Florida, as well as a fellow of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich.

That's far less important, I think, than what I've been interested in my whole hybrid academic and activist life. That is trying to figure out what might lead to dramatic mobilization around the host of challenges we face today, especially environmental and equity related. I've got a special passion for the conservation of biological diversity upon which all life depends.

Michael: That's great. One of the things, why I consider you such a soul brother in this work, is that you just articulate it for myself. Obviously I don't have the creds and the professional involvement that you do, but that deep and passionate commitment to a healthy

future, and to not just climate change or not just some of the other large scale issues, but also this intergenerational justice and where we've been out of relationship to nature and to other species and how to bring about change to bring us in there.

I'm curious. Let's explore a little bit. First of all, for anybody who's never heard the phrase "dark green religion", could you give us a sense of what that is? Who are people for whom that would be a label that they could easily say, "Wow, yeah. I've never heard of that, but that's me."?

Bron: Sure. Dark green religion is a term I made up, and I chose it because it had a certain kind of double meaning and I like double meanings for book titles and the mystery of them.

On the one hand, it refers to people who have a deep sense of belonging to nature, a sense that – and typically folks who use religion-related rhetoric to describe their sense of belonging, connection to nature, such as nature as sacred, nature as sublime. People who understand that all life is deeply interconnected and mutually dependent. People usually informed by an evolutionary understanding understand that we all got here through precisely the same processes. We're deeply related at a biotic level, we share a common ancestor, and thus we are quite literally kin.

Of course, kinship brings with it all sorts of ethical responsibilities. Of course, those ethical responsibilities differ depending on how close our kin are, but we have widespread obligations to I think, as Aldo Leopold put it, to live and let live to the greatest extent possible, allow all other living things to flourish. That's a very common perception within what I've been calling dark green religion.

Those sorts of basic ideas and understandings, I argue in the book, have been spreading with special alacrity since Darwin penned on the origin of species. For some that kind of understanding of the unfolding of the cosmos and of biotic evolution, as you very well know, can be a self-standing sufficient form of spirituality. For others it's possible to graft those sorts of stories, those sorts of understandings, onto longstanding religious traditions and to hybridize them.

What I do in the book is I look around the world and I think I'm finding, and have documented, that these sorts of understandings and this kind of story is spreading rapidly around the world. It's not something that just one social class, ethnicity, religion or geographic setting is predominant. But actually, wherever these sorts of understandings have spread people are in very creative ways adopting them.

There is a strong ethics that's easy to surmise from these, this kind of live and let live ethic which really forces us to think carefully about how we might live more equitably with

our own species. It really forces upon us the notion that we ought to be doing everything we can to prevent the currently unfolding and intensifying extinction episode that unfortunately our species is the one responsible for.

Michael: Yeah, that was great. One of the things that I've been calling Religion 3.0, which is sort of this factual faith or sacred realism, ecological evolutionary sensibilities. As you say, and it's been my experience as well, is that there are people for whom this deep core sense that nothing is more important than living in a right relationship to reality, as evidentially understood and collectively discerned, and doing so in a way that's a blessing to future generations, that's a contribution to future generations.

That core sentiment, those core set of values and priorities and commitments really do unite tens of millions of us, possibly hundreds of millions of us, around the world, some of whom, as you say, and I experience it as well, they don't need any other traditional form of spirituality or religion or practice. That's sort of sufficient for themselves.

But then there's others for whom they've remained Buddhists or Hindu or Catholic or Quaker or Baptist, or whatever, but they have this deep sense. However they interpret their religious tradition or their spiritual path, they do so within an ecological evolutionary sort of milieu, a commitment.

One of the things I appreciate about your book is that you really do, in the various chapters you go through where dark green religion is – you're saying. I call it Religion 3.0. I realize I probably should define that. Religion 1.0 is the authority of elders. Religion 2.0 is the authority of scripture.

Religion 3.0 is the authority of evidence. That is where our best understanding of what's real and what's important isn't old man nor old books, but through all forms of evidence collectively interpreted. So I see that there are – so I'm seeing modern day evidence as modern day scripture or as authoritative guidance or whatever, however you want to talk about it.

You do that really brilliantly in very different ways. Could you give a little bit of sense of the diversity of people for whom these values and this commitment to a sustainability ethic, a land ethic, a bioregional, or just a right relationship to reality ethic, where that has shown up in various segments of society and where it shows up now?

Bron: Maybe one way into this would be just to talk a little bit about my own pilgrimage through social groups and inquiry. As a young man I got very interested in the so-called liberation theology movements in Latin America, that were primarily promoting social justice and rebelling really against authoritarian political regimes there. Not always in ways that proved to be the most effective or even just in of themselves, but nonetheless these movements for social justice in those places.

I knew enough about those places to know and to feel that there was something very much missing from the bulk of those movements. In other words, an understanding that their well being and their aspirations were deeply dependent on their natural surrounds. But they really came – they were mostly influenced by leftist political thought, which truth be told has been largely human-centered, anthropocentric, and not that nature-centric we might say or biocentric.

So I began to notice, though, that there were a few people who had been moved by those sorts of traditions that began to integrate nature into their understandings. A few early people in the early '70s began to talk about not only the liberation of human beings, but the liberation of life itself.

But still those were largely folks in the Christian tradition and they were very much a minority in the Christian tradition around the world. So I began to wonder where might there be greater traction for a much more holistic emergence of movements of social conscience that would take our dependence on environmental systems more seriously. I was also increasingly aware of the global extinction crisis, and I wondered where are people actually getting it, where are people actually responding to that.

I noticed around 1980 a group of rebels, that are now known as the radical environmentalists, who were challenging the dominant ways of thinking and acting and the dominant social and economic systems. So my curiosity perked up, and I went to find out more. It became clear very quickly that for most of those activists there was a kind of deep spiritual connection to nature that was the fundamental ground of their activism.

I'm working on a book still about that movement. We'll eventually come out with a book on that movement. There's I think a significant amount to praise and also a significant amount to criticize with regard to it. But I was very impressed then, and remain very impressed, with really the way in which a love of nature was the fundamental ground of what they were about. I was also impressed with the very diverse sources that this very plural movement was drawing upon for their activism.

Then I began to wonder, is this just a North American phenomena? They had an attitude towards social movements emerging in what we now call the Global South, Latin America and Africa and so forth. I wasn't sure that their perception of it was accurate. They were sort of saying these are our soul mates in Latin America and Asia and elsewhere.

So I began to study environmental movements around the world, I did a book called *Ecological Resistance Movements*, and began to notice that despite significant differences there were some patterns beginning to emerge.

Then I was privileged to go to, as you can tell from the *Dark Green Religion* book, to a wide variety of places around the world and to be engaged with social movement actors there. Indeed I began to notice certain kinds of patterns emerging, certain sorts of understandings emerging, that made it possible to see a global environmental movement that is sharing certain sorts of perceptions, beliefs and values.

As I said before, academics love to focus on difference in contention and so forth and so on, and I think that can be a very important thing to do. But I think the penchant for that has led many analysts to not notice points of convergence, points of common understanding, social movements that are not bickering but collaborating and figuring out how to do so effectively.

I also became increasingly interested over the years in the ways in which the arts were both expressing and promoting these sorts of values, and indeed the ways in which they were expressing and promoting contemporary scientific understandings.

So I've spent a significant amount of time looking at the ways in which these ideas are expressed and promoted outside of what we might call the world's predominant traditional religions, but how there's just a host of what the sociologist Paul Ray and his wife Sherry Anderson calls the cultural creatives, people who are using their gifts, whatever they might be, sometimes film, sometimes poetry, sometimes novels, documentaries, animated films, and so forth and so on, to both express and promote their understandings and their hopes for a greener and more socially just future.

Part of what I've been arguing is that at least if we begin to project based on the last 150 years of cultural innovation, a century, two, or three, or five down the road, and ask ourselves what do you think the majority of our species is going to understand in coming generations, in a few centuries, my hunch is it's going to be wildly different from what the majority thinks and believes today because these emerging new paradigms they're sensory, as you were talking about earlier. They're based on reality.

Whatever people's cultural backgrounds and or religious backgrounds might be, if you can engage them in authentic encounter and give them – and if you're provided with the opportunity or have the chance to bring this kind of reality-based world to them, a very significant number of them will figure out ways to embrace that. I think we're seeing that, and that's where I find both some significant inspiration as well as encouragement.

Michael: Yeah, me too. Again, what I'm calling Religion 3.0, or factual faith, is where we find our inspiration and our – we find the world view that gives us access to the feeling states that humans have always needed to thrive, such as trust when we look to the future and a passionate commitment to ensuring or doing what we can to ensure a healthy future, gratitude to the past, and inspiration to be an action in the moment, where most humans for most of human

history where they sourced those feeling states that the human animal can't thrive without have been various belief systems.

Yet there's now a fast growing number of people for whom where they find what gives them trust, gratitude and inspiration, and solace and other feeling states that are important for human thriving, is evidence. Is our best scientific understanding of reality and our best understanding of scientific evidence, historic evidence and cross-cultural evidence. So the cross-cultural aspect's there as well.

I think we're in a new axial age, a new religious transformation that a thousand years from now looking back, assuming that we don't destroy ourselves from climate change or some other means, this new evidence-based, ecological evolutionary friends, I think a hundred years from now there's still going to be Christians and Muslims and Buddhists and Jews, yet they're going to fully – the vast majority will fully embrace an ecological evolutionary world view. So they'll find ways of integrating that.

There will also be those for whom traditional religious forms don't work, for whatever reason, or they don't aspire for them, but some form of dark green spirituality or earth honoring faith does.

I'm wondering, either in terms of your personal story or just a menu, just give a sense, I want to give a bird's eye view of who the various movements, what are some of the names or people or authors or movements that you see this emerging sense of what you're calling dark green religion and what I'm calling Religion 3.0?

Bron: It's hard to know where to start. I would certainly start and certainly mention in Western history the emergence of the romantic movement, which of course some people like to criticize. But that was a response to the rapid industrialization and the desacredilization of nature, that I think emerged first and forcefully in Europe as a kind of a dissident movement there, and then was picked up and elaborated on and moved in new and creative dimensions in North America, and has had all sorts of interesting manifestations.

I hardly know where to talk. We could talk about specific figures, but I don't think we have a whole lot of time to go through the kind of history that I laid out in the *Dark Green Religion* book.

But I guess I would first start with if you look at the people who have been most influential around the world in different social contexts, in articulating and inspiring movements for ecological and social justice, especially the hybridized forms of those, you'll find that they are articulating and feeling things that are very similar one with another. So I guess one of the first places I would be looking would be for those environmental movements and those figures.

Honestly, when I think about the *Dark Green Religion* book I think I'm a good synthesizer, but I don't think in some ways that I'm doing much more than identifying and reflecting what's already coming up organically from the grassroots of social movements from around the world. So that's kind of the grassroots energy.

But there's an interesting synergy and mutual influence between the grassroots and what we might call the intelligentsia. The grassroots appropriates ideas from the world's intellectuals, and I think to some extent the world's intellectuals also appropriate and learn from and are inspired by the grassroots.

I like to look at both people who are doing innovative things at the grassroots and people who are articulating these visions intellectually. That sounds a little vague, and I can get more specific as time allows, but those are some of the things I like to examine.

Michael: For me it's as simple as who really loves earth, loves life and is committed to a just and healthy future, not just for humanity but for the larger body of life upon which we all depend and of which we're all a part. Wherever that shows up is to be applauded, in my opinion, and where that is lacking –

Another interview series that I did three or four years ago was called *The Advent of Evolutionary Christianity*, where I interviewed 38 of the world's most highly respected leaders, catholic, protestant, evangelical, some of were naturalists, some of us were supernaturalists, we had the whole gamut, liberal, conservative.

Yet we all had a deep time understanding of reality, what I call deep time eyes. We all had a global heart and a global commitment. We also all valued evidence as in some really sense divine, divine guidance, divine communication. Some felt comfortable, like I do, calling it modern day scripture. But that we don't privilege ancient mythic texts over current evidence in terms of our understanding of what's real and what's important.

All 38 of us, even the evangelicals, all 38 of us had deep time eyes, a global heart and a value of evidences in some very real sense divine. I find that encouraging because we don't have time to convert each other at the belief level.

Bron: I think part of what's happening is many people are working toward a critical correlation between the best that we can know through our senses. In other words, scientifically. But that's not just science in the kind of modern science with all the sophisticated tools. That's also the sciences of people around the world over long periods of time who have been engaged in the careful observation of natural cycles and what happens when you mess with them.

We know that there's lots of civilizations, and small scale societies as well, that have deep and profound understandings of how things work. One of the problems has been this

juncture between western scientific modes of knowledge and what we might call indigenous, the modes of knowledge of indigenous people –

Michael: Participatory.

Bron: Yeah. The truth is that people are smart everywhere, and we need to increasingly bring these different sorts of folks together for authentic encounter and mutual learning. That's hard to do when human beings are so siloed around the world. On the other hand, as I talk a little bit about in the book, we have unprecedented opportunities for that today through the kind of communicative technologies that have unfolded. So I think we're seeing that.

Even if we look at some of these networking sites, some people thought this would just reinforce our insularity. But the social scientists who have looked at this have discovered that, no, people are networked in so many ways that actually people are getting more information, and sometimes disconfirming information, through those sources that they would not be getting otherwise.

I think the realities of the situation also are simply pressing themselves on us. They are inescapable. Despite the economic interests who are investing heavily to create confusion about what's going on, gradually, all too gradually for our taste, but nonetheless gradually, I guess I would say in fits and starts, depending on the latest batch of headlines, people are beginning to understand that we have been heavily insulting the environmental systems of the biosphere and that we really need to address those things.

So on the one hand you could say we're not moving fast enough, and that's absolutely correct. On the other hand you could say that the changes in understandings are happening at a rate that is unprecedented.

You talked about how you think we're at the cusp of a new Axial Age. I just wanted to piggyback on that, because in one of the lectures I give around the country these days, I think I call it spirituality after Darwin is the main tagline.

In it I start off that talk by asking people to imagine if you were out there in the world when the great Axial Age prophets were teaching and you had run across them, you'd seen Jesus on the hill or the Buddha in the forest, would you have said, "Oh, I know that a very large part of the human population is going to be that guy's followers in 2,000 years."?

Probably not. You'd think, "Oh, there's another interesting new spiritual voice. Maybe I'll go check him out." I think most of us probably would not have been so acute as to recognize the significance of that figure.



I think today when we talk about a kind of ecological and ecology inspired spirituality, most of us, present company accepted, are not recognizing the extent to which we are really at the cusp of an absolutely huge gestalt shift in human consciousness. I don't mean that in some kind of new age way. Oftentimes I'm not all that optimistic about the human species present term and medium term, but we are learning creatures.

I take some comfort in the environmental anthropologist, Roy Rappaport, who once I think almost flippantly said that now adaptive human cultures kill their hosts. You flip that over. Where human beings have developed cultures and understandings that are reality-based, they figure out what their manners are in a place and they develop rich and flourishing livelihoods and lifeways.

So I think ultimately I'm not one of those who thinks that despite how much we're insulting the biosphere that we're likely to die out. As a species we're very creative. We've obviously proven that we can live in all sorts of pretty harsh habitats. So I don't think we're going away, at least anytime soon. But I do think that we're coming into some very severe bottlenecks, and that on the backside of those inevitably there's going to be some very profound learnings. We are of necessity and inevitably going to learn our planetary manners.

To me the real question is, how much unnecessary and tragic suffering is there going to be between now and then? Our calling, I think you would agree with me, is to do everything we can to prevent as much of that as possible.

Michael: Yes, amen. Amen. You're giving me some new language. Heavily insulting the bio systems of the planet. I love that, insulting the bio – because I think having an I-Thou relationship to this body of life is essential. We all know what it means to be insulted and we can relate to that.

Then the learning our planetary manners. Several of the other people that I've interviewed in this series, Richard Heinberg of course and his commitment to a post-carbon future and the Post Carbon Institute, Jim Kunstler, *The Long Emergency*.

My favorite writer, I think my favorite writer of all, is probably John Michael Greer. I have read about eight of his books. He speaks about *The Long Descent*. That we're in this process of this contraction. We talk about the collapse of the Roman Empire. It took 400 years. Every decade it was a little worse than the previous one. We're seeing that kind of contraction.

But he has this vision of an ecotechnic future, kind of what I think Thomas Berry was trying to get at in terms of the ecozoic era. It could easily take 200, 300, 400, 500 years to get to there. We've got to go through a salvage industrialism, or perhaps even – I forget, he's got

an intermediate one – but before we get to the ecotechnic future. I agree. I think we're very adaptable. We can survive.

But I'm committed in my lifetime to doing everything I possibly can given my unique gifts and limitations to, as you say, ensure as little suffering or unnecessary suffering as possible, both for humans and animals, and to gracefully, or as gracefully as possible, make this transition that's going to take some time.

Bron: One of the points of intersection I just also thought I'd piggyback on with your work, yours and Connie's work, is I think you've done a great service in looking at the ways in which people who are on the one hand secular, and on the other hand are still what we might say traditionally religious in some way, can in their own ways come to some common understanding.

I do think that's – certainly some conservative religions are rebelling against modern understandings because they view them as threatening, but as you well know that's not necessary, and that there are folks who are figuring out how to do some interesting blending here.

What I talk about toward the end of the *Dark Green Religion* book, borrowing from my friend the political theorist, Dan Deudney, is the possibility of a terrapolitan earth civilization, or a terrapolitan earth religion emerging over time, in which people from a wide variety of religious and non-religious philosophical perspectives would be able to come together around certain sorts of shared understandings.

It seems to me we can keep this pretty simple. We are all, to use a little religious language that you'll recognize, whatever else we might be dependent on, we are all absolutely dependent on the living systems of this biosphere.

So even just for purely prudential self-interested reasons we can make a compelling argument to people from whatever their backgrounds are that we need to ensure that the diversity and the diversity dependent fecundity resilience and services of these environmental systems remain healthy. That's not a hard sell if we can get in the room with our interlocutors, which really is everybody on the planet.

So I see potential for – again, I'm not sure what the timeframe is, but I think we see it in fragile and nascent stages in all sorts of places. There's other things we know from political science, that you don't have to win everybody over to win politically in a democratic discourses. There's a relatively small political strata which is highly influential. We can see in our own country how influential this minority of tea party activists are.

I think there's close to an equal number, if not an equal number, of equally passionate greens out there, but whose overall approach tends to be less aggressive. I think that

less aggressiveness comes in part because of that whole kind of metaphysics and ecology of interdependence.

So part of what I've taken some inspiration in is movements like the [350.org](http://350.org) movement and others that are saying we've got to get more uppity about these things.

I argued in *Worldwatch*, and it was interesting that they even wanted something from me in *Worldwatch*, on resistance and on why isn't there a massive social movement, a march on Washington scale movement, of people demanding action to prevent climate disruption. I think we're seeing some of the early stages of such a movement emerging, and it just needs to be as rapidly multiplied as possible in my judgment.

Michael: Yeah, I agree. I'm encouraged by that. Bron, what gives you – on a day by day, week by week basis, where do you find your deepest inspiration to be in action? Where do you find your – what is it that feeds those feeling states that help people thrive for you?

Bron: That I guess drives me to a more personal side of the thing. I think that, like a lot of folks, I didn't have an easy time as a youngster. Like so many people, I had a pretty dysfunctional family situation. There were times when just to get outside of the craziness and the violent nature of it, I just had to leave.

I was fortunate to live near a marine ecosystem, and I found myself on a number of occasions just going down to the beach and sitting out on a jetty and looking out over the ocean watching the anchovies jump, listening to the birds and other wildlife around me, feeling the waves rolling in and rolling in and looking out over a vast star-filled, if it was a clear night, horizon.

I just got a sense that this human stuff just isn't all that important in the grand scheme of things. I'm no great mystic and I'm no great religious figure, but there was just a sense that there's something really cool, if mysterious, about this universe.

There's something really awesome about it, and even right about it, despite our pettiness and our wounds and often our inability to get along. I think that, to put it in a simple way, just the kind of love of nature emerged through that and a feeling of contentment in that place. I guess out of that came a sense that it's all so glorious. It all just matters. It just sounds so simple, doesn't it?

Michael: You're speaking my heart, so I'm with you.

Bron: All life matters. Those are the sorts of experiences that gave me those impressions. There's others too, the privilege to sometimes be in some relatively intact biological

systems, where I think if you're alert you get a sense of the exotic intelligences that are there. Even the feeling of just great energy in an old-growth forest.

I'm a privileged guy to have had such experiences, and in this urbanized world a lot of people don't. But those are the things that even if I don't get out there very much, they still drive me. Those sorts of connections still drive me. I want to try to share those experiences and those possibilities with folks.

Michael: You did a pretty damn good job in your book *Dark Green Religion*.

Bron: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Michael: Here's the question that Connie wanted me to ask folks. It's basically if you were to invite three dinner guests, it can either be one gathering where all four of you, these three people and you, or just one-on-one, have a beer with any three people, have a meal with any three people throughout human history, so either individually one-on-one or together, but who would those three people be and why?

Bron: Right now?

Michael: Yeah.

Bron: My first reaction is I think this is such an important period in human history. If the question were who would I most like to pick the brain of and learn from and find out what really made them tick and if they were alive today would they still think the same sort of thing that they were saying back then, there's a whole bunch of really interesting cats I'd love to talk to. Right?

Michael: I'm with you.

Bron: But today I would probably be trying to figure out who are the three most important people who are antagonistic to what I think needs to happen. That would be a tough choice, but I might think about – oh gosh. I would be thinking about someone who I think is going to have the most influence on the conservative right-wing in North America. That's a hard one because I'm just not sure, to be honest.

That archetype, maybe someone from – I think unfortunately from a period of great interest in the sciences, to generalize the Islamic world has gone backwards in reaction against the West in scientific understanding. So I think I'd want to talk to one of the great, perhaps who's the most influential Islamic scholar today. Because of the Shiite and Sunni divide that might take two. I don't know. You think about somebody like Putin, who has become such a regressive figure in terms of that part of the world.

So gosh, I feel like I would need some time. That's the sort of strategy – but here's the premise of it. I think if you get those people together with tea, in the Muslim world, or beer somewhere else, and if you can really get people to talk about what they really love and why, you can begin to find common ground.

I don't think there's anybody who will say that they want to pass a world down to their children, or to future generations if they don't happen to have children, who would say that it would be okay for us to pass down a less ecologically rich world than the one we inherited.

Michael: There are those for whom end times thinking, apocalyptic thinking, is so front and center that they – I might disagree with that last statement of yours for some people who just –

Bron: You're right, there are some exceptions. But I think that there's even ways to – I'd like to think anyway, that you can still find common ground. Even with folks who talk like that, they at least also usually will talk a certain kind of stewardship language that provides a basis for building upon, even though I think if they have that –

I guess these are kind of starting place conversations. But if people really have the notion that the sacred is above and beyond this world and there's a big divide between this world and that world, that's a really hard one to overcome.

Michael: One of the things I love about your response is that you – Connie and I are two of the most mission-driven people that I know. That is almost every question and everything is sort of filtered through how can this further what our mission is. That's what I'm hearing from you too, a strategic conversation about who to invite that could move the whole thing forward in a helpful way is just great.

Bron: We don't need to just be talking to one another. Ultimately, we need to have real authentic, heartfelt, reality-based conversations as you put it, with the most important people who are blocking these sorts of understandings from emerging. We have to break down the insularity somehow. Sometimes the only way to do that is through creative conflict.

So there's still part of me – I'm not metaphysically Ghandi, who thinks – like I think he thought with his philosophy of conflict that if one person stands true to the truth, even if that means they change their mind, in a conflict situation the truth will will out. I'm not convinced of that.

But I like the philosophy of conflict, where we're two averse, two difficult conversations, including our families and in our wider circles, we have to speak our truths forthrightly and collegially and in a way that welcomes – which is in a nonjudgmental way. We can do that if we understand how people come to believe what they believe in the first place. We

know from the sociology of knowledge that usually the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Usually most people will follow the leads of their primary and secondary socializers.

So when people believe things that don't make sense to us and we think our regressive, vis-a-vis the directions we need to be thinking and going, to a significant extent that's just understandable. To a significant extent that's not their fault. So we don't have to come across hubristically and arrogantly, but we can talk about where we started and how our understandings emerged.

Frankly, we can talk about how difficult it is sometimes to let go of earlier deeply felt understandings. As you know, I have an evangelical background. That wasn't easy emerging out of that and developing a much wider understanding of the universe when that was so important, helpful and in many ways healing for me at a certain point in my life.

There's no substitute for the personal touch. One of the biggest problems we face is that there's just not enough people doing what you and Connie are doing, getting out there in the grassroots and having these encounters with people. I know, as much as you can, you're doing that across cultural divides.

Michael: Yes, exactly. Cool. My host has come home, so I want to attend to her. I haven't even said hi yet. You can probably hear a little bit in the background. Before I do I just want to ask, where would be the place for people to go, in addition to your book, who want to learn more about you and your work? What website or what would they Google?

Bron: I have a website, which is just my name, [brontaylor.com](http://brontaylor.com). There's a number of books there that I've written or orchestrated. There's also links to – my long-term interest has been in environmental mobilization, so for those who are interested in research into what might mobilize the human animal to responsiveness in this area I've been working with other scholars on these things, including with the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, and I edited a journal with that title.

There's sample entries for the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, which I edited a number of years ago, which is I think a good starting place into some of these issues.

There's interviews and some lectures and so forth. I'm trying to keep that up-to-date with interesting folks and interesting things for folks who are interested.

Michael: I'll go ahead and mention my enthusiasm for that *Encyclopedia for Religion and Nature*, not only because Connie and I each have a contributed essay, but it's just a fabulous resource.

Bron: I'm glad you like it.

Michael: Cool. Bron, thank you so much. Say hi to Beth for us.

Bron: I will. It's my pleasure.

Michael: I really appreciate you being part of this.

Bron: We had some pretty good interviews back at my place. I've still got to find time to – I mean, those were gems.

Michael: Yeah, they really were.

Bron: Now that some of these – we should get those online.

Michael: That's a great idea, because Connie does YouTube. Yeah.

Bron: Now we can put a lot more online because when we were doing those they were only letting us have eight minutes or something. Right?

Michael: Exactly. We have two YouTube channels, both of which we can have hour long things on. Connie's become quite the video editor. We're going to be in Gainesville for about three weeks in January. I think the last two weeks in January and the first week in February we're going to be based in the Gainesville area, Heart and Jeffrey, Heart Phoenix and – they're going to be – yeah. So they've got –

Bron: You're always welcome to stay here. Now with the kids gone, you don't even have to sleep in your truck. So if Heart and Jeffrey aren't around the whole time or if you just want a little less drive into town, we'd love to see you. I'll put a note on my calendar and try to steer other things, out of town runs, away from there. We'd love to see you guys.

Michael: We plan on it. We'd like to spend some real quality time with you.

Bron: The other thing, Kelsey graduated since we last saw you from the film school at USC. She's been doing associate producer stuff on various things. There may be documentary possibilities down the road. I was approached about doing a *Dark Green Religion* documentary by Wes Skiles, a Nat Geo guy. Then, unfortunately, he was a diver and he was especially taken by the aquatic side of that book, he unfortunately had a diving accident and passed away.

Michael: Oh god.

Bron: Yeah. But there's still a desire to do something like that. Your stuff is totally amenable and should be a part of – he actually thought – once he actually read the book he said

this isn't a one-off, this should be a series. I don't know what the title would be. But what you two have been doing should be a part of that just because you were at least one of the cast of characters in the *Dark Green Religion* book. So anyway, that might have given us a chance to brainstorm about some future collaborations.

Michael: That's great. I just got notice this morning that my latest TEDx talk, the one that I did just a few weeks ago in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is online. So I'll send you a link to that. I was pretty pleased. It's called "Reality Reconciles Science and Religion".

Bron: I'll blast that around the world.

Michael: Cool. Cool. Bron, this has been fabulous. Thank you so much.

Bron: Give my best to Connie. Also, I'll certainly greet you from Beth. We love you guys.

Michael: Love you too.

Bron: Great respect. So glad you're healthy, my friend.

Michael: Thank you, me too.

Bron: Keep it up.

Michael: Okay, thanks. Bye-bye.

Bron: Take care, bye-bye.