

From the Editors

With gratitude and hope, we welcome readers to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Ecological Civilization Studies*. This journal begins from a simple but urgent conviction: the crises of our time are not only environmental, political, economic, or spiritual. They are civilizational. Climate disruption, biodiversity loss, economic inequality, technological disruption, political fragmentation, and widespread crises of meaning all point toward the inadequacy of inherited ways of thinking and living. They call us to imagine, study, and help bring into being forms of civilization that are more just, participatory, compassionate, and life-sustaining.

The phrase “ecological civilization” names both a critique and a hope. It critiques the dominant assumptions of modern industrial civilization: the reduction of nature to resource, the reduction of society to market, the reduction of persons to consumers or workers, and the reduction of knowledge to narrow specialization. But ecological civilization also names a constructive alternative. It points toward cultures, institutions, economies, technologies, and communities that are organized around the flourishing of the whole Earth community. It invites us to ask not only how humanity can survive, but how humans might learn to live well with one another, with other creatures, and with the living planet that sustains us.

This journal is especially indebted to the life and work of John B. Cobb, Jr., whose intellectual and moral legacy continues to inspire the field of ecological civilization studies. Long before ecological crisis became a central concern of public discourse, Cobb recognized that modern civilization was on a destructive path. He saw that the ecological crisis could not be solved by technical adjustments alone, because it arose from deep assumptions about reality, value, economics, religion, and human purpose. His work joined philosophical rigor with practical urgency, theological depth with ecological concern, and critique with constructive vision. In this sense, Cobb did not merely write about ecological civilization; he helped create the intellectual and spiritual conditions in which such a vision could become thinkable.

Cobb’s legacy also reminds us that ecological civilization is not the possession of any single discipline, culture, nation, or tradition. It requires philosophy, science, religion, economics, education, policy, agriculture, the arts, and grassroots practice. It requires dialogue between East and West, North and South, academic and practical, humanistic and

scientific. It requires attention to the local and the planetary, to lived experience and structural transformation, to ancient wisdom and emerging knowledge. For this reason, the *Journal of Ecological Civilization Studies* is intentionally transdisciplinary. We seek contributions that cross boundaries, not for the sake of novelty alone, but because the most pressing problems of our time transcend the boundaries of academic disciplines.

The journal is also constructive in orientation. Critique remains essential. We must name the systems, habits, and ideas that have brought us to the edge of catastrophe. But critique by itself is not enough. Ecological civilization studies must also ask: What comes next? What forms of economy can serve life rather than extract from it? What forms of education can cultivate whole persons and whole communities? What kinds of technology can be embedded within ecological wisdom? What political forms can support participation, justice, and the common good? What spiritual and philosophical visions can help humanity rediscover its kinship with the more-than-human world?

As an international open-access journal, we are committed to making this conversation available as widely as possible. The transition toward ecological civilization cannot be confined behind institutional, disciplinary, or economic barriers. Open access is therefore not merely a publishing model; it is part of the journal's ethical commitment. Knowledge that serves the common good should circulate freely, inviting collaboration among scholars, educators, activists, policymakers, religious leaders, artists, farmers, students, and communities around the world.

We launch this journal in a time of profound uncertainty, but also of profound possibility. The future is not predetermined. Civilizations are made, unmade, and remade through ideas, practices, institutions, and relationships. The work gathered here is offered in that spirit: as scholarship in service of transformation, as inquiry in service of life, and as a contribution to the long labor of building ecological civilization.

We invite readers to receive this journal not only as a collection of articles, but as a growing conversation. May it become a meeting place for rigorous thought, courageous imagination, and constructive practice. May it honor the legacy of John Cobb by carrying forward the work to which he devoted his life. And may it help nurture the wisdom, compassion, and creativity needed for a flourishing Earth community.

Wm. Andrew Schwartz and Zhihe Wang, Chief Editors