Religion, Environmental Ethics, and Climate Change

No Joking Matter

Dr. Greg Hitzhusen
Outline

- Religious concern for environment and climate change
- Climate change as a moral issue
- Trends and tensions
- Response in action
strange couchfellows…

- We Campaign ads -
  Sharpston and
  Robertson

- Gingrich and Pelosi
Catholic Social Teaching Themes

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community, Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Dignity of Work; Rights of Workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God’s Creation
Vatican: world’s first carbon-neutral state; 2,400 solar modules

One of seven new social sins: “environmental pollution”

Carbon offset: restoration of ancient forest in Hungary

Nervi Hall
Paul VI Auditorium
• 20% renewable by 2020; carbon neutral already
• New Idea: 740 acre solar farm north of Rome to power Vatican Radio and grid

• 1.2 million Euro system
• 300 kWh annually
• 225 tonnes CO2; 80 tonnes oil saved/yr
Pontifical Academy of Sciences

Dr. Lonnie Thompson
Ohio State University
Byrd Polar Research Center

Fate of Mountain Glaciers in the Anthropocene

A Report by the Working Group Commissioned by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

Maine Rongbuk Glacier (see inside page)

May 11, 2011
“We are committed to ensuring that all inhabitants of this planet receive their daily bread, fresh air to breathe and clean water to drink as we are aware that, if we want justice and peace, we must protect the habitat that sustains us. The believers among us ask God to grant us that wish.”
Anglican Lenten Resource
www.tearfund.org/carbonfast
Lo-Watt Shabbat

Shabbat is a time when, once a week, we are asked to slow down and remind ourselves that we are part of God’s creation. This holy day emphasizes the importance of appreciating nature and taking conscious actions to protect the environment. It is especially appropriate to think about the sources of the products we use. As we understand where our water, food, and electricity come from, we can make better decisions in how we use and preserve these resources that allow us to live.
One for Each Night
A Hanukkah Study Guide for a Brighter Future

נִמְצָא בְּרָנוּלָה הַיּוָה שֶם

a project of
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
Muslim Green Guide to Reducing Climate Change

As for the earth, We have spread it out, set firm mountains in it, and made everything grow there in due balance (Surah 15:19)

co-published by:
LifeMakers UK & Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences
المؤسسة الإسلامية للطبيعة وعلوم البيئة
For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility

- Protect Religious Freedom and Liberty of Conscience
- Nurture Family Life; Protect Children
- Protect Sanctity of Human Life
- Justice and Compassion for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Protect Human Rights
- Seek Peace and Restrain Violence
- Protect God’s Creation
The Friendship Collaborative
Building Bridges Between Science and Faith

- Georgia, 2006
- Akron, 2007
- OSU, 2009

Speth  Wilson  Cizik  Hansen  DeWitt  Safina  Wilson
What Would Jesus Drive?
www.WhatWouldJesusDrive.org

Why Would Jesus Drive?
bikeforpeace.org
Religious community helping planet
Coalition fervent about environment, energy
Sunday, March 16, 2008 3:28 AM
BY ALAN JOHNSON
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH
Enviro Lit in ATLA as proportion of overall database

Figure 5. Religion-env. ATLA citations by year as proportion of total ATLA articles.

American Theological Library Association

Database search: “ecology” or “environment”
E CAN RELIGION
SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT?
“I used to think the ‘big three’ were climate, biodiversity, and pollution, but after many years of work I think pride, apathy, and greed are even bigger. We need cultural and spiritual transformation, and science doesn’t do that -- the church does that.”
## North America - A Religious Place

### United States

**Religious Demographic Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>ARIS(^a)</th>
<th>GSS(^b)</th>
<th>PRC(^c)</th>
<th>Baylor(^d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/DK</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 2001 American Religious Identification Survey (N=50,281)  
\(^b\) 2004 General Social Survey (N=2,812)  
\(^c\) 2006 Pew Research Center Surveys (N=23,265)  
\(^d\) 2006 Baylor Religion Survey (N=1,887)
The World - A Religious Place

NOTE: Total adds up to more than 100% due to rounding and because upper bound estimates were used for each group.
Moral leaders on why climate change is a moral issue and obligation:

- For our children’s sake
- For human survival
- For the sake and love of Earth and all life
- For moral integrity and virtue
- Because...life is beautiful
- …life is a gift = gratitude obligation
- …stewardship obligation
- …honor is due to great, evolved life systems
- …obligation to diversity/creatures
- …compassion duty to prevent suffering
- …people have a right to their cultures, which are being destroyed
- …justice
A Moral Issue

Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions (tons)
EIA (2008)
A Moral Issue

China
4.91

Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions (tons)
EIA (2008)
A Moral Issue

Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions (tons)

China
4.91

Japan
9.54

EIA (2008)
A Moral Issue

Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions (tons)
EIA (2008)

China: 4.91
Japan: 9.54
Germany: 10.06
A Moral Issue

Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions (tons)
EIA (2008)

China 4.91
Japan 9.54
Germany 10.06
USA 19.18
U.S. 4% of world population
U.S. 28% world’s CO2 emissions
Did you know?

262 million people were affected by climate disasters in 2004, more than 98 per cent of them in developing countries.
Prudence requires us to act to protect the common good by responding to climate change.

The poor and vulnerable bear the consequences, inaction makes that worse.

Climate change policies should enhance, not diminish the economic situation of those in poverty.

Policies should help vulnerable populations here and abroad adapt, and actively participate in these efforts.
Human-induced climate change is real
Consequences significant; hit poor hardest
Christian morality demands response
The need to act now is urgent
The scientific consensus

- Warming observed over the last century is highly unusual
- Present conditions are outside the range of natural cycles experienced by humans
- Natural changes (sun, volcanoes, etc) continue to affect climate today…
- …But warming of the last 50 years is primarily human-induced
Who agrees with the consensus?

- US Climate Change Science Program (created by George W Bush Admin)
- US National Academy of Sciences and national academies of 32 other nations (none disagree)
- Every major scientific organization whose members include climate scientists (Am. Assoc. of Petroleum Geologists recanted their 1999 rejection in 2007)
- More than 97% of climate researchers actively publishing in the field (NAS, 2010)
- Every major religious denomination with a climate change statement except the Southern Baptist Convention
Doubt regarding the seriousness of global warming is at an all-time high

Thinking about what is said in the news, in your view is the seriousness of global warming -- [generally exaggerated, generally correct, or is it generally underestimated]?

- % Exaggerated
- % Correct/Underestimated

GALLUP POLL
Perceptions tend to run along party lines ...

Percentage Saying News of Global Warming Is Exaggerated, by Party ID

- Republicans
- Independents
- Democrats

Gallup Poll
“Do you think that global warming is happening?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yale, October 2008, 2010

Anthony.Leiserowitz@yale.edu
The percentage of pastors strongly disagreeing that global warming is real and man made has increased since 2008.

Among Protestant Pastors

* Statistically significant differences at the 5% level
Q: “I believe global warming is real and man made.”

LifeWay Research, October 2010
We are at a pivotal time in which every member of Congress will decide whether they will be on the right side of history or the wrong side of history… Civil rights in the 1960s was a moral issue, and there was a right side and a wrong side. Climate change is an environmental issue. It is an economic issue. But it is also fundamentally a moral issue.

(March 7, 2011, NYTimes)
To be Ethically Acceptable
Climate Change Legislation Must Demonstrate:
- Environmental Sufficiency
- Just Adaptation
- Equity
(Cancun failed these criteria; so too U.S. Congress)
A New Kind of Crime Against Humanity?: The Fossil Fuel Industry’s Disinformation Campaign On Climate Change

By DONALD A BROWN on October 24, 2010 11:43 PM 137 Comments | 1 TrackBack

I. Introduction.

This post examines the question of whether some US companies are guilty of a new kind of crime against humanity that the world has yet to classify. This post is not meant to be a polemic but a call for serious engaged reflection about deeply irresponsible corporate-sponsored programs that have potentially profound harsh effects upon tens of millions of people living around the world, countless millions of future generations, and the ecological systems on which life depends. This post seeks to encourage further reflection on the issues discussed here.

II. Corporate Disinformation Campaign

Although skepticism in science is needed to make science advance, for almost thirty years some corporations have supported a disinformation campaign about climate change science that has been spreading untruths and distortions about climate science. Several recent books document how this disinformation campaign began in the 1980s including a book by Oreskes and Conway, Merchants of Doubt. (Oreskes and Conway, 2010)
Geographic Distance

“‘How serious of a threat is global warming to…’

“very serious”

Source: Yale, January 2010
“The earth is the Lord’s and everything therein.”

Psalm 24
United Methodist Ohio Resolutions

• West Ohio Conference 2008
  – Resolution #6: Care for Creation: Local Church Response
  – Resolution #7: Advocacy Regarding Care of Creation
Procter center breaks ground for organic garden

The Rev. Frank A. Edmunds, inaugural Ecumenical Center for...
How Many Lightbulbs Does it Take to Change an Episcopalian?

PASSED - R2: Resolution on Assessment Credit for Increases in Natural Gas and Heating Oil Expenses (11/1-4/30)
Sylvania UCC
UU Fellowship of Wayne County, Wooster, OH

Nation’s First LEED Gold Certified House of Worship
A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor

Easter 2009

Archdiocese of Cincinnati
**Waste:** emissions from landfill waste (mainly methane) converted into carbon equivalent units.
Cool Congregations Pledge

Annual CO2 Emissions

- Air
- Food Allowance
- Average US Per capita for Your Number of Family Members

CO2 Breakdown:
- Cattle: 5%
- Fruits: 2%
- Auto 1: 19%
- Auto 2: 9%
- Auto 3: 7%
- Auto 4: 1%
- Gas: 16%
- Oil: 4%
- Electrical: 20%
- Food: 21%
- Garbage: 4%

Sources:
- Vermont carbon calculator (vcarb.org)
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Rocky Mountain Institute (rmi.org)
Monks Community
Forest in Cambodia
Stop Desertification
In Cameroon
Restore Deforested
Ghana
Plant 3,000,000
Trees on
Kilimanjaro
Catholic Bishops (2001):

“Much of the debate on global climate change seems polarized and partisan. Science is too often used as a weapon, not as a source of wisdom. Various interests use the airwaves and political process to minimize or exaggerate the challenges we face. The search for the common good and the voices of poor people and poor countries sometimes are neglected.”
Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel has resigned. His program is under investigation for violating NCAA rules. It appears (and Tressel has admitted) that at a minimum he looked the other way when players received benefits and gifts that were against the NCAA rules.

Many of my fellow Michigan (and MSU) fans are jubilant. OSU is going to be a weakened program. They are going to lose scholarships and be much more beatable. Just as Michigan appears to be on the rebound. But I am sad. I am sad because Tressel, by all accounts, takes his faith seriously. A few years ago, he got attention for handing out religious tracts in Columbus. He emailed players psalms. He made a point to talk about God at any given opportunity. His two books were about faith and integrity.

Which brings up the issue of ethics. I can’t speak to Tressel’s mindset but I am sure he justified his actions. Did he think he was doing the right thing, even if he was breaking the rules? I respect the man for his faith and respect. I don’t understand his actions.
Health alert today because of heat, smog

Tuesday, May 31, 2001 03:09 AM

BY MARK SOMERSON
The Columbus Dispatch

High temperatures and a blazing sun created unhealthy levels of smog across central Ohio yesterday and are likely to do so again today.

A high-pressure zone over the Midwest that's expected to push temperatures toward 90 spurred the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission to issue a health alert for ground-level ozone, a key ingredient of smog.

Smog forms on windless days when the sun cooks pollutants from cars, trucks, power plants and factories. It can harm lung tissue, help trigger asthma attacks and worsen lung diseases.

The commission is advising older people, children and those with breathing problems to monitor and limit outdoor activity.
WE'RE NUMBER ONE! WE'RE NUMBER ONE!!

MORE MARCH MADNESS

OHIO LEADS THE NATION IN AIR POLLUTION
Religion, Environmental Ethics, and Climate Change

No Joking Matter

Special Thanks and Slide Credits:
Interfaith Power and Light, Sarah Webb, Katharine Hayhoe, Bill Bradlee,
LifeWay Research, Anthony Leiserowitz, Lonnie Thompson
## Views About Environmental Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Religious Traditions</th>
<th>Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy</th>
<th>Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost</th>
<th>Neither/both equally</th>
<th>Don’t know/refused</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Total:</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>35556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Churches</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Churches</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historically Black Churches</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormons</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah’s Witnesses</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christians</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Faiths</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question wording:** Now I’m going to read you a few pairs of statements. For each pair, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views -- even if neither is exactly right. 1 - Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy, OR 2 - Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost.
Trust

“How much do you trust the following groups to tell you the truth about global warming?”

Source: Leiserowitz, January 2003 (n = 549)

- Naysayers: 7% (Strongly trust)
- All others: 83% (Somewhat trust)
- Alarmists: 10% (Somewhat distrust)

Anthony.Leiserowitz@yale.edu

Source: Leiserowitz, January 2003 (n = 549)
Why are our feet so big?
Fuel economy

Fuel Economy by Model Year


Fuel economy
Vehicle miles
horsepower
## Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>McCain (R)</th>
<th>Obama (D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education vouchers that allow parents to choose public or private school for their children</td>
<td><strong>Supports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opposes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex education for children in kindergarten through 12th grade</td>
<td><strong>Opposes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in federal income tax rates</td>
<td><strong>Opposes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
<td>Opposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appointing judges that will adhere to a strict interpretation of the Constitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposes</td>
<td>Further restrictions on the right to keep and bear arms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public funding of abortions, (such as govt. health benefits and Planned Parenthood)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
<td>Parental notification for abortions by minors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation mandating health care for infants surviving abortions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granting sexual preference a protected minority status under existing civil rights laws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposes</td>
<td>Allowing adoption of children by homosexuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enforcing the 1993 law banning homosexuals in the military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prohibiting public funding for art that is pornographic or anti-religious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
<td>Tax credits for purchasing private health insurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allowing federal funding for faith-based charitable organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tax credits for investment in renewable sources of energy, (such as wind, solar &amp; biomass)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation to enact a &quot;cap &amp; trade&quot; system to reduce carbon dioxide emissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ellison Research Poll**
November, 2007

- 84% of evangelicals support legislation to reduce global warming pollution
- 54% of evangelicals are more likely to support a candidate who works on the issue of climate change
Protestant Pastors’ Views on the Environment

Survey of 1,000 Protestant Pastors

LifeWay Research
October 2010
The percentage of pastors strongly disagreeing that global warming is real and man made has increased since 2008.

Among Protestant Pastors

Q: “I believe global warming is real and man made.”

* Statistically significant differences at the 5% level
Democrats most likely to strongly agree, Republicans most likely to strongly disagree, and Independents are in the middle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bc</td>
<td>ac</td>
<td>ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bc</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bc</td>
<td>ac</td>
<td>ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letters indicate column with statistically significant difference at 95% confidence interval.

Q: “I believe global warming is real and man made.”

n = 213 (Democrats)
n = 506 (Republicans)
n = 144 (Independent)
Ideological leanings show significant differences in beliefs on whether global warming is real and man made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Progressive or Liberal</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Very Conservative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>78% bc</td>
<td>7% a</td>
<td>6% a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>12% c</td>
<td>15% c</td>
<td>5% ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>5% bc</td>
<td>27% ac</td>
<td>18% ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3% bc</td>
<td>47% ac</td>
<td>69% ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letters indicate column with statistically significant difference at 95% confidence interval.

Q: “I believe global warming is real and man made.”

n = 148 (Progressive or Liberal)
n = 388 (Conservative)
n = 244 (Very Conservative)
Religion and Social Change in the United States
Endangered Species Act
104th Congress
Endangered Species Act
DeWitt
Evangelical Climate Initiative

Evangelical Leaders Call Global Warming a Moral and Spiritual Crisis

Cizik vs. DeWitt vs. Colson vs. Dobson
“By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.

“Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen.

“…Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt.

“We shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man.
Bill Moyers, 26 August 2003, *Grist Magazine*

“…the government in Washington has declared war on nature. They have placed religious and political dogma over the facts….

“Their dogma is the literal reading of the creation story in Genesis where humans are to have ‘dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing’… The result is the politics of exploitation with a religious impulse.”
“Remember James Watt, President Reagan’s first secretary of the interior? My favorite online environmental journal, the ever-engaging Grist, reminded us recently of how James Watt told the U.S. Congress that protecting natural resources was unimportant in light of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. In public testimony he said, ‘After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.’”

-Bill Moyers, Dec 2004 in Harvard environmental journalism award acceptance Speech
James Watt
Reagan’s first Secretary of the Interior
Conservation in Context

Armageddon Versus Extinction

DAVID W. ORR
The Argument...

- Millions of Christians hold End Time beliefs, many legislators too
- Some are wacky, maybe anti-enviro beliefs
- An imminent End invalidates conservation
- Powerful political elites (exploiters) are duping End Times believers
- This unholy alliance must be stopped
Empirical Evidence

- Political factors overshadow religious
- “Dominion” belief not of religious source
- Attitudes don’t = bad behavior
- Christian concern/behavior not low
- Stewardship ethic & positive correlations
- Cross-cultural rejection of White Thesis
- If anything, positive influence

(Hitzhusen, 2007)
“I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns,

-James Watt, Feb. 1981 to a House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee
“I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns, whatever it is we have to manage with a skill to leave the resources needed for future generations.”

-James Watt, Feb. 1981 to a House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee
Because Americans aren’t taught about religion in school, “it’s possible for rather harebrained and untutored ideas about the interpretation of the Bible and the Christian tradition to arise unchecked.”

- John Barrow

Templeton Prize winner
• Government Regulation
• Population Control
• Doomsday Warnings
• New Age-Pantheist Beliefs
Religion is a great force--the only real motive force in the world. But you must get a man through his own religion, not yours.

- George Bernard Shaw
Eco-theology from Gary Larson
“By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects. . . .

“Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen. . . .

“...Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt. . . .

“We shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man. . . .
Critiques

• Misinterpretation and overgeneralization
• Other cultural factors more salient
  - materialism, secularization, democratization, individualism, wealth
• Environmental degradation in the East
• Theologically incoherent
• Not well supported by empirical findings
Kempton et al., 1995

- Open ended inquiry regarding source of environmental values:
  - Religion/Spirituality
  - Human/anthropocentric
  - Nature/biocentric
Because God created the natural world, it is wrong to abuse it.

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<tr>
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<th>Earth First!</th>
<th>Sierra Club</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Dry cleaners</th>
<th>Sawmill workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
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Even non-religious people explained their environmental values with reference to the metaphor of divine creation (69%). 46% of atheists agreed with the statement.

Concl: Divine creation language is the best vehicle we have in this culture to express our deepest value for nature.
Religion seems *not* to be getting in the way of environmental support, but instead is reinforcing and justifying it.
Oelschlaeger, 1994

“The metaphor of caring for creation, springing out of our distinctive Judeo-Christian myth of origin, is the last, best chance for Americans to fashion a sense of community beyond the market and construct a sustainable society.”
Urgent action that both addresses the growing impact of climate change and acts to protect the poor and vulnerable is needed.

Put a price on carbon and insist that a significant portion of the revenues go toward minimizing impacts of climate and climate policies on those least able to bear them.
Catholic Bishops (Feb 2011)

• Climate legislation must prioritize the needs of the poor and vulnerable
  – Protect low-income folks from energy-related price increases resulting from climate legislation
  – Help the poor esp. in developing nations to adapt to climate change impacts

• Promote the Green Climate Fund ($100B by 2020 to help poor countries adapt/mitigate)

• Catholic Relief Services – humanitarian relief from flood, drought, and storms
• Prudence requires us to act to protect the common good by responding to climate change
• The poor and vulnerable bear the consequences, inaction makes that worse
• Climate change policies should enhance, not diminish the economic situation of those in poverty
• Policies should help vulnerable populations here and abroad adapt, and actively participate in these efforts
#1: Coal Plants

30% of U.S. total emissions
#2 Passenger Vehicles

15% of U.S. total emissions
Ann’s Family
Carbon Footprint Checklist

1) UTILITY INFO totals for the last 12 months

Electricity (kWh) ________________________________

Heat (You only use one of the following in your home)

Natural Gas ________________________________
(Total “therms” of gas. If “mcf” then, 1mcf x 10.3 =1therm)

Heating Oil (in gallons) __________________________

Propane (in gallons) ________________________________

Didn't save your last 12 months of bills?

MidAmerican - find your account number on your latest bill and go to www.midamericanenergy.com establish a user name and password, enter your account number and print off your last 12 months of bills.

2) MILES DRIVEN and MPG - Estimate for each car for the last 12 months.
Ann’s Pledge Sheet

Cool Congregations Pledge

Annual CO2 Emissions

Name: Ann

CO2 Breakdown

Garbage 8%
Gas 22%
Wax 43%

Pledged Actions & CO2 Pounds (Enter CO2 Pounds in Yellow Boxes):

1. 6 compact fluorescents: 1080
2. switch 10 loads over to cold/warm: 2500
3. turn off unneeded lights: 300
4. dry 1/2 summer clothes on rack: 300
5. turn up AC thermostat by 4 deg: 1000
6. use less hot water in general: 300

Total Pounds Emittted = 7983.433
Total Pounds Pledged = 5900
Percentage Pledged (98%) = 7983.433
Ann’s Energy Use

- Electricity down 17%!
- Gas down 15%!
Ann’s Carbon Footprint

- Reduced by 9%!
- Invested $12 on CFLs
- Saving $100/mo on utility bills

(APPLAUSE!!!)
The Power of 10%

St. Luke’s 35 families = 18 cars off the roads

Every Athens, OH household = 5,300 cars

Every Ohio household = 2,289,825 cars
St. Luke’s Biggest Losers!

67 tons CO2
9% average
Saved $5000 just on utilities!