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**A TALE OF TWO CHRISTIANITIES: THE RELIGIOPOLITICAL CLASH
OVER CLIMATE CHANGE WITHIN AMERICA'S DOMINANT RELIGION**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SOCIOLOGY

with an emphasis in ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

by

Daniel Bernard Zaleha

June 2018

The Dissertation of Daniel Bernard Zaleha
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Abstract

Daniel Bernard Daley Zaleha

A Tale of Two Christianities: the Religiopolitical Clash Over Climate Change Within America's Dominant Religion

Religious forms of environmental advocacy started emerging in the United States in the 1990s, seemingly within all branches of American Christianity, creating hope, both among these emerging movements and among secular environmental advocacy groups, that this would bring new constituencies to bear, constituencies with the moral authority to make ethical demands for environmental protection. It has led to persistent theorizing that religions, including Christianity, are about to intervene in a way that will alter the political situation and increase public demand for climate change action and environmental protection generally. So far this has not transpired. To investigate why, between 2016 and 2018, I did field work in congregations in Arizona (a Republican dominated state) and California (a state with strong Democratic Party influence). I divided my visits between a fundamentalist confederation of churches (Calvary Chapels) and liberal congregations affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity, an affiliation of liberal congregations (primarily United Church of Christ, Episcopalian) where more naturalistic, non-supernatural understandings of Christianity are more common. I interviewed pastors, church members, and key leaders within religious environmentalism, and conducted three direct focus groups. I also viewed a substantial number of online sermons posted at church websites. I found substantial indifference or outright hostility to environmental concerns and climate mitigation at all of my Calvary Chapel sites, due

especially to intense apocalyptic expectation of imminent rapture. Other factors included belief in sovereignty of God (the idea the God causes all events), a tendency toward collective narcissism and susceptibility to conspiracy theories.

Progressive congregations were open to environmental concerns, talked about their importance, but ultimately were minimally involved. Social justice issues and the immediate needs of the homeless, immigrants, and advocating for LGBTQ equality in most cases took precedence.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

Almost fourteen years ago, my beloved wife, Veronica Daley Zaleha, took me to the airport in Boise, Idaho, sending me off to Gainesville, Florida, where I had been invited by Bron Taylor to give a guest lecture on religion and environmental advocacy in the Religion and Nature program at the University of Florida's Religion Department. Veronica, knowing my desire to return to graduate school, said as she saw me off, "I hope this turns into something." It did, and I dedicate this dissertation to her. Quite simply, it would never have happened without her loving, encouraging, dedicated and continuous support.

A year and a half after that trip to the airport, I entered the master's program at UF under Bron Taylor. Two and half years after that, I entered the Sociology graduate program here at U.C. Santa Cruz, having been fortunate to be offered the opportunity to come study with Andrew Szasz. Without Bron's and Andy's mentoring and steadfast encouragement, this dissertation also would not have come to fruition.

My other two dissertation committee members, Miriam Greenberg and Nathaniel Deutsch, also have also been a continuous encouragement in this project. Miriam shepherded me through my qualifying exams, helping make what many grad students dread a fun and enjoyable experience. Of my many fellow sojourners in graduate school, Tracy Perkins, Christie McCullen, Yvonne Kwan, Jeff Jenkins,

Costanza Rampini, Jimi Valiente-Neighbours, Travis Williams, Meenoo Kohli, and Kevin Cody, have helped me brainstorm, write, and navigate my doctoral program. Our “Bullshit and Beer” gatherings honed my social theory in a way that would not have otherwise been accomplished. Finally, I thank John Van Cleve, a loyal and vital friend who has encouraged and supported my academic and intellectual endeavors for over 40 years now.

Chapter 1: The Religious Roots of Environment-Related Behavior

It was Wednesday evening, November 9, 2016. Senior pastor Jack Hibbs at the Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, an evangelical megachurch 35 miles east of Los Angeles, had begun his regular midweek service. The service had been previously scheduled to be a lesson on the Hebrew Bible book, *Isaiah*. However, 19 hours earlier, Donald Trump had won an unexpected surprise victory in the race for the United States presidency,¹ and Hibbs instead declared “a night of thanksgiving to God and praise.”²

Two Sundays earlier on October 30, 2016, at each of his three regular Sunday sermons (each of which are regularly delivered to 2,000 to 2,500 or more congregants, both in the main auditorium and in closed-circuit video overflow rooms), Hibbs had delivered a sermon entitled “What is the Christian vote?” In that sermon, he explained that it is every faithful believer’s Christian duty to vote, and to vote for the Republican candidate. This was true in Hibbs’ telling because the Republican party platform (1) opposes the right to legal abortion, (2) opposes the

¹ Tessa Berenson, "Donald Trump Wins the 2016 Election," *Time*, 11/9/2016 <http://time.com/4563685/donald-trump-wins/>.

² Jack Hibbs, "What Is the Christian Vote? - Results!," Chino, CA: Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, 54:24, Nov. 9, 2016, URL <https://youtu.be/f3XBBhTHsTM>, URL2 <https://vimeo.com/191108597> (Accessed Feb. 27, 2018), **01m13s**. In this dissertation, where the beginning location of a particular portion of an online video or audio file needs to be designated, I will follow this convention: **#h##m##s**. For instance, the 1 hour, 5 minute, 5 second point will be displayed as **1h05m05s**. If the video has a runtime of less than an hour, the #h element will be omitted.

right of LGBTQ people to marry, (3) gives unreserved support for the state of Israel, 4) gives unqualified and unlimited support to own guns under the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (a sanctified right originating, according to Hibbs, with the Christian God), and (5) protects the “religious liberty” of conservative Christians, including the liberty to discriminate against LGBTQ people if required by conservative Christian beliefs and conscience and the right for Christian businesses to deny contraceptive coverage to their employees.³ (In the main body of this dissertation, I will explore this sermon in more detail). This was not Hibbs first explicit endorsement of Trump. While Hibbs had originally endorsed his fellow evangelical, Ted Cruz (the junior Republican U.S. Senator from Texas), during the Republican presidential primaries, he had given various media appearances supporting Trump during the general election campaign. But this sermon was his detailed brief laying out the Christian’s duty to vote, and to vote for Trump.

On the evening of November 9, seemingly against all odds, Trump had won, and Hibbs said he felt called to explain the cosmic significance of the election outcome to his midweek worshipers. With increasing excitement, a little more than 40 minutes in, Hibbs exclaimed “This is amazing! This is not human! This is not a human victory. No one could have done this. Nobody could have done this. No

³ Jack Hibbs, "What Is the Christian Vote?," Chino, CA: Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, 1:15:36, Oct. 30, 2016, URL <https://youtu.be/t8n5cQQvTXs>, URL2 <https://vimeo.com/189734001> (Accessed Feb. 27, 2018); Jack Hibbs, "What Is the Christian Vote? - Sermon Notes," Chino, CA: Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, Web Page, Oct. 30, 2016, URL https://www.calvarycch.org/media_files/notes/JHX409.pdf, (Accessed Feb. 27, 2018),

Donald Trump did this. This is the hand of God... He is starting to move... I know there's a lot of side benefits from what just happened. We've all heard that [entertainment personalities] Alec Baldwin, Beyonce, and JAY-Z are moving to Canada [loud cheers, laughter and applause both from Hibbs and the large congregation].. Hey everyone... you have seen the intervention of God. This is how it looks... Whenever you step back and say 'I can't explain this; How did that happen,' he's called God... Jesus could come tonight, and I hope he does. But God has spared America because of you, the church... God did what he did, using a man that if you know your bible would be the most unlikely person, to get your attention!... 'This person, that no one would have picked,' God is saying 'I picked him for a reason, to freak all of you out,' so God would get the attention, so God would be the focus, not Donald Trump.'"⁴

Four days later, at the regular Sunday service of Peace United Church of Christ in Santa Cruz, California, Beverly Brook, a retired probation officer and volunteer chaplain at the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall, was filling in for the regular senior pastor. I was in attendance as part of this dissertation's research program. The mood was somber, in stark contrast to the celebration in Chino. The perception was that American society had just experienced a serious, perhaps grievous, setback on the path to a more just society, and that the workload that congregation would bear had just intensified because attacks on society's

⁴ Hibbs, "What Is the Christian Vote? - Results!," 54:24, Nov. 9, 2016, URL <https://youtu.be/f3XBBhTHsTM>, (Accessed Feb. 27, 2018), 43m45s-49m38s..

marginalized would now grow. But Ms. Brook reminded the congregation that it was among the marginalized where God resided, evoking without explicitly citing a famous New Testament passage (Matt. 25:31-46 NRSV) where Jesus tells a parable in which the Son of Man (the righteous judge of human history) makes exactly this point.

These two services, both religious gatherings of people self-identifying as Christian, could not have been more different. One had just witnessed a miraculous intervention in human history by the Christian God, the creator of the universe. This was unexpected and a cause for joyous celebration. The other congregation was saddened and concerned for what this would bring to marginalized human communities, to the United States, and to the world.

Lynn White, Jr.: Was He Right About Christianity?

This dissertation is prompted by the question of whether and how Christian belief affects the behavior of the Christian believer and more specifically the effect on the environment-related behavior of such believers. This question was provocatively addressed more than a half century ago by the UCLA historian of medieval science, Lynn White, Jr., in his now famous and still controversial essay, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis.”⁵ There, his primary argument was that Christianity

⁵ Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967), <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/155/3767/1203>.

effectively destroyed the “pagan animism” that had preceded it, and had stripped away beliefs in unseen protective spirits within the non-human natural world. As a consequence, “Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference.” Flowing from this indifference, in White’s view, Christianity “especially in its Western form,” became “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen,”⁶ thereby increasing humanity’s rate of environmental destruction and suppressing environmental concern among Christians and within the Western Civilization that it inspired. Or so White hypothesized. Was he right? Was he wrong? Or was he some combination?

Between 2013 and 2016, Bron Taylor, Gretel Van Wieren and I undertook the most comprehensive review of extant research yet conducted, which involved a review of academic literature comprising approximately 700 journal articles, reports, book chapters and books published over the last 35 years. We concentrated on the social scientific literature assessing White’s hypothesis. We found that the majority studies reviewed showed a robust concentration among evangelicals of “lack of environmental concern,” confirming White’s insight at least as to evangelical Christians in the United States. In contrast, more liberal and mainstream Christians more routinely “incorporate scientific understandings, including those that evoke awareness and concern about environmental degradation.” Most of the extant research we reviewed were large scale survey studies that still leaves much uncertainty about the “variables that hinder and promote pro-environmental behavior

⁶ Ibid., 1205.

among Christians.” We proposed that further investigation “of the divergent epistemological communities that religious individuals and groups draw on” might well clarify the relative importance of religious and nonreligious factors in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors.”⁷ Since our survey, Konisky has published a further study based on Gallup polling data between 1990 and 2015 showing that Christianity taken as a whole has not become any more environmentally concerned during that quarter century.⁸ This dissertation is a further step in elaborating these factors and how they may (or may not), in the spirit of Max Weber, become “effective forces in history.”⁹

Methods

My research and its design, as an initial matter, has been informed by my own environmental activism over the last quarter century, including participation in and with several faith-based environmental advocacy organizations. As a Sierra Club activist and leader from 1981 to 2009, I served as the Club’s liaison to several Christian and Interfaith environmental advocacy organizations. This provided my first contact with religious environmentalism generally, and a number of key leaders

⁷ Bron Taylor, Gretel Van Wieren, and Bernard Zaleha, "The Greening of Religion Hypothesis (Part Two): Assessing the Data from Lynn White, Jr. to Pope Francis," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 16, no. 3: 328-30, <https://goo.gl/9p4pM1>.

⁸ David M. Konisky, "The Greening of Christianity? A Study of Environmental Attitudes over Time," *Environmental Politics* 27, no. 2 (2018), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09644016.2017.1416903>.

⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, Routledge Classics (London & New York: Routledge, 2001).

within these movements, which vary from theologically and politically conservative to liberal and progressive. In the early 2000s, I frequently participated in collaborative lobbying efforts, in Congress, in federal agencies, and at The World Bank in Washington, D.C. During my tenure as national Vice President of the Club from 2004 to 2006, I was invited to lecture on the secular/faith nexus in environmental advocacy for Earth Day events at both at Houghton College, a small evangelical college in upstate New York and at The University of the South, a liberal Episcopal university in southeastern Tennessee.

There have been previous ethnographic studies of evangelicals.¹⁰ In a unique research model, I set out to simultaneously observe, in person to the extent possible and remotely through digital means, the extreme poles of American Protestantism. I used Calvary Chapels as my exemplar of conservative Protestantism and congregations affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity (“TCPC”), that operates under the assumed name of “progressivechristianity.org,”¹¹ as my exemplars of progressive or liberal Protestantism. Calvary Chapels espouse young-earth creationism, and are against abortion rights and marriage equality for LGBTQ people.

¹⁰ Robin Globus Veldman, "An Inconvenient Faith? Conservative Christianity, Climate Change and the End of the World" (Dissertation, University of Florida, 2014); Katharine K. Wilkinson, *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals Are Cultivating a Middle Ground on Climate Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Lydia Bean, *The Politics of Evangelical Identity : Local Churches and Partisan Divides in the United States and Canada* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell : Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹¹ The Center for Progressive Christianity, "Progressivechristianity.Org," Web Page, URL <https://progressivechristianity.org/>, (Accessed May 19, 2018),

They believe a supernatural “rapture” of the faithful up to heaven through the action of an all-powerful, omnipotent deity can happen at any moment, and is likely to occur soon. TCPC congregations, in contrast, are nearly unanimous in their support for LGBTQ rights, reproductive freedom, and openly welcome people of many different metaphysical assumptions, ranging from atheistic to traditional Christian. They are not apocalyptic in their expectations, and do not believe in an imminent rapture.

My method is a combination of grounded theory¹² (where hypotheses are held in abeyance and allowed to emerge from the observed data) and what famed anthropologist Clifford Geertz called “Deep Hanging Out.”¹³ In my research, I combine elements of overt observation, overt participation, covert participation. My research is overt observation, in that I disclose that I am a sociologist and that I am interested in American congregations and how they vary from church to church. My research is, though minimally, overt participation. I attend their services and even more importantly, their additional activities like church potlucks, after-church coffee & snack socializing, and in the case of Calvary Chapel Scotts Valley, a pre-service dinner before the mid-week service. My research has elements of covert participation, in that the congregations do not fully know my research question. And particularly in the Calvary Chapel setting, I avoid asking questions that arouse suspicion or trigger any of the well known controversial social issues. As a practical matter, asking such

¹² H. Russel Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology*, Fourth ed. (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006), 492-505.

¹³ Clifford Geertz, "Deep Hanging Out," *The New York Review of Books*, Oct. 22, 1998. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1998/10/22/deep-hanging-out/>.

questions is mostly unnecessary, as the responses are already known and well rehearsed by the congregants, especially in the evangelical Calvary Chapel setting.¹⁴ Instead, I have mostly limited myself to asking neutral, non-controversial questions such as, How long have you been coming to this church? Where, if anywhere, did you attend before? Why did you leave your last church? What drew you to this church? The answers to these questions are valuable for the answers provided, but also simply get the person talking about themselves, their church and their larger community. Listening carefully to the responses allows spontaneous information to emerge related to my primary research question without the individual knowing it.

My research also has a substantial archival¹⁵ element through listening to or reading online sermons, and reviewing other online information provided by a given church. Particularly in the Calvary Chapel setting, there is a voluminous internet archive of past sermons and sometimes entire services. These digital archives are often updated immediately after upon the live delivery of a new sermon. This is because Calvary Chapels tend to view the digital archives as a vital part of their proselytizing mission. In like manner, the given church may also livestream its worship services. Some progressive Christian congregations also post their sermons or services online, but less so, because the goal of proselytizing is either low or absent altogether. If a church does not post individual files of their sermons, it is possible to capture a given livestream, and I have done so in a few instances.

¹⁴ Russell K. Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2009), 324-26.

¹⁵ Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology*, 448-50.

In all but one case, I have also conducted at my primary research sites on-the-record, taped key informant interviews with senior pastors. I have also conducted specialized informant interviews with key leaders in the religion and the environment arena, either live or by phone.¹⁶

Why Calvary Chapel and The Center for Progressive Christianity?

Jack Hibbs, the pastor I opened with above, was first called to my attention by his endorsement of a set of religious education DVDs produced and marketed in 2010 by the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, a politically conservative evangelical Protestant advocacy organization that asserts that climate change and environmental problems generally are either non-existent or minimal and therefore not topics that should concern evangelical Christians. I was seeking a representative exemplar denomination or confederation of congregations within conservative American evangelical Christianity. I first visited his church in April 2014, and then researched the Calvary Chapel Movement (“CCM”),¹⁷ and discovered it was a good exemplar based on its stated values and beliefs,¹⁸ and its commitment to creating online resources.

I will provide more detail about CCM in Chapter 7, but by way of

¹⁶ Ibid., 196-202.

¹⁷ Calvary Chapel, "Calvary Chapel, Website Home Page ", Web Page, URL <https://calvarychapel.com/>, (Accessed May 19, 2018),

¹⁸ Calvary Chapel, "Statement of Faith: What We Believe," Web Page, URL <https://calvarychapel.com/about/statement-of-faith>, (Accessed May 19, 2018),

introduction, it was founded in Southern California by Chuck Smith in the December 1965,¹⁹ and has now spread around the world with approximately 1,700 churches or congregations,²⁰ and a number of Bible Colleges, with its main Bible College in Murrieta, California.²¹

Road Map

This is a dissertation evaluating religious phenomena. Because religion is conceptualized a number of different ways, in Chapter 2, I briefly survey this diversity and set forth my own approach.

This dissertation evaluates Christian communities in the context of the United States, and how these communities engage with their primary religious texts, the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament, an anthology of 66 books that Christians simply refer to as “The Bible.” I begin with assumption that my readers may have little or no previous contact with this book and may know little or nothing about what modern scholarship has discovered about it. In Chapter 3, I lay out the history of this scholarship and summarize its findings, particularly as it relates to key

¹⁹ Chuck Smith and Chuck Smith Jr., *A Memoir of Grace [Chuck Smith Autobiography as Told to Chuck Smith Jr.]* (Costa Mesa, CA: The Word for Today, 2009), 160.

²⁰ Calvary Chapel, "Calvary Chapel History," Web Page, URL <https://calvarychapel.com/about/calvary-chapel-history>, (Accessed May 19, 2018),

²¹ Calvary Chapel Bible College, "Calvary Chapel Bible College, Website Home Page," Web Page, URL <https://calvarychapelbiblecollege.com/>, (Accessed May 19, 2018),

texts that are centrally important to both of my researched communities.

Chapter 4 is a brief religious history from the period Constantine up to the contemporary American moment, again concentrating on the developments that will be important to understanding the history behind both communities.

Chapter 5 lays out the history of American evangelical Christianity's evolving response over the last half century to Lynn White's environmental critique of Western Christianity.

In Chapter 6, I lay out my data, comprised of church visits, conversations with parishioners, formal and informal interviews with pastors, one focus group, and extensive analysis of the content in online sermons. I also detail three interviews with key individuals within the evangelical creation care movement about their experiences within it and their assessment about its current condition. I analyze what this information collectively reveals about attitudes toward the environment within Calvary Chapels and how this affects their environmental behavior.

Chapter 7, in a way similar to Chapter 5, lays out the history over the last half century of progressive Christianity's evolving and very different response in comparison to the evangelicals to Lynn White's critique.

In Chapter 8, I lay out my data comprised of visits to churches affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity, my conversations with parishioners, formal interviews with three pastors, and some analysis (but less than in Chapter 6, because less is available online) of the content in online sermons, the results of two focus groups, and analyze what these show about attitudes toward the environment within

TCPC.

I detail my analysis and conclusions in Chapter 9.

Chapter 2: What is Religion? How Does It Affect Environmental Behavior?

What is “Religion”? What motivates people to adhere to a given religion? I have listed an array of historic definitions declared by a variety of theorists of religion over time in Appendix R. In common usage, the word “religion” is often associated with belief in unseen, non-empirical beings or deities. Famed religion theorist Jonathan Z. Smith defined religion as “a system of beliefs and practices that are relative to superhuman beings,” and argued this common usage was the best definition. With the emergence of conceptions like Christian atheism, religious atheism, religious naturalism, atheopaganism, scientific pantheism, “religion without god,”²² “Christianity without God,”²³ the attempt to limit the term “religion” to belief in unseen deities has become increasingly untenable.

Within sociology, the supernatural understanding of religion has not held. British sociologist Linda Woodhead’s “Five Concepts of Religion” has shown the range of ways sociologists are conceptualizing religion. Woodhead’s lengthy 2011 review article identifies twenty concepts of religion used by sociologists, which she groups into five umbrella categories. The boundaries between the concepts are soft and necessarily overlap with each other. I list each of her concepts, and the category under which she groups them:

²² Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

²³ Daniel C. Maguire, *Christianity without God : Moving Beyond the Dogmas and Retrieving the Epic Moral Narrative* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014).

Religion as culture

1. Religion as belief and meaning
2. Religion as meaning and cultural order
3. Religion as values
4. Religion as discourse
5. Religion as ideology and mystification
6. Religion as tradition and memory

Religion as identity

7. Religion as community-creating and boundary-forming
8. Religion as identity-claim
9. Religion as organizational belonging

Religion as relationship

10. Religion as social relations
11. Religion as super-social relations
12. Religion as experience

Religion as practice

13. Religion as ritual and embodiment
14. Religion as quotidian practice
15. 'Popular' or 'folk' religion

Religion as power

16. Religion as 'compensator' and 'capital'
17. Religious resources
18. Religion, economic and political power
19. Religion as status and recognition
20. Religious power and status at micro-, meso- and macro-levels

Significantly, none of these concepts necessarily involves belief in supernatural, non-empirical beings, realms or powers, though each may involve such beliefs. She notes Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge's concept of "superempirical, supernatural compensators,"²⁴ or as she describes them, "other-worldly compensators."²⁵ But even

²⁴ Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1985), 352.

²⁵ Linda Woodhead, "Five Concepts of Religion," *International Review of Sociology* 21, no. 1 (2011): 134,

in this concept, the “compensator” provided by religion is not necessarily limited to hoped for otherworldly rewards or supernatural interventions in earthly existence.

I explored this question at length in my field statement on the sociology of religion, a shortened version of which was published in the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* as “‘Our Only Heaven’: Nature Veneration, Quest Religion, and Pro-Environment Behavior.”²⁶ For this dissertation, I used the definition I developed and explained there.

Relying on Max Weber and Clifford Geertz, anthropologist Carolyn Rouse argues, because “any strongly held belief and [cultural] orientation to the world” is religion, “atheism, secular humanism, Marxism, and of course Judaism, Christianity, and Islam” are all manifestations of religion and “all individuals are [therefore] religious” . Supplemental to this, the social psychologists Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis’ define religion as “whatever we as individuals do to come to grips personally” with the existential questions arising from our unavoidable mortality . In capsule form then, religion is *strong beliefs* (which need not include supernatural claims) *embraced to answer existential questions*. As such, it is not confined to religious institutions or people gathered within them as conventionally understood.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03906701.2011.544192>.

²⁶ Bernard Daley Zaleha, “‘Our Only Heaven’: Nature Veneration, Quest Religion, and Pro-Environment Behavior,” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* 7, no. 2.

Chapter 3: A Brief History of the Western Religious Tradition and Its Sacred Texts

The Hebrew Bible

Genesis

One of my key informants, assistant pastor Bill Bjorkman of the Regeneration Church, the Calvary Chapel for western Santa Cruz County, began a midweek Wednesday evening sermon on chapter 1 of the book of *Genesis*, the first book of the Hebrew Bible. The sermon was the beginning of a series of midweek sermons on the entire book of Genesis that would stretch from September 21, 2016 to August 2, 2017. Bjorkman was thus setting the stage for a nearly year-long study.

“Tonight, we’re going to go back to where it all began... In fact, we read in the very first words here of the first book of the Bible, it starts out with ‘In the beginning.’ This is the beginning of the record of God’s dealings with mankind... Penned by Moses, the pages of this book record the beginning of everything, the beginning of creation, the origins of the universe, the order, the complexity, the solar system, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the origin of life, man, marriage, evil, language, government, culture, nations, religion, all of these different things. And of course Moses wasn’t alive when all of the events in the book of genesis occurred... So we believe he wrote the book with the help of some actual written records from the

past that God had supernaturally preserved.”²⁷

Bjorkman then explained that he is relying on the ideas of Henry Morris, a professor of hydrologic engineering and primary founder of the contemporary resurgence of young-earth creationism.²⁸ Morris’ 1961 book, *The Genesis Flood*, had the effect of giving young-earth creationism a renewed “measure of respectability” and indeed elevating it, in the opinion of Ronald L. Numbers, the leading historian of American creationism, “to a position of fundamentalist orthodoxy.”²⁹ Such opinion was on strong display at all my Calvary Chapel locations. Bjorkman shared this quote from Morris:

Thus it is probable that the Book of Genesis was written originally by actual eyewitnesses of the events reported therein. Probably the original narratives were recorded on tables of stone or clay, in common practice of early times, and then handed down from father to son, finally coming into the possession of Moses. Moses perhaps selected the appropriate sections for compilation, inserted his own editorial additions and comments, and provided smooth transitions from one document to the next, with the final result being the Book of Genesis as we have received it.³⁰

This view of *Genesis* and its authorship by a figure known as Moses is

²⁷ Bill Bjorkman, "Genesis 1 (Wed. Night Service)," Scotts Valley, CA: The Regeneration Church, 1:02:35, Sept. 21, 2016, URL <https://goo.gl/dX8b28> (Accessed March 8, 2018), **00m43s-02m41s**.

²⁸ Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*, 1st ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 192-213.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 299.

³⁰ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 30, <http://www.vananne.com/evolutionvscreation/The%20Genesis%20Record.htm>. Bjorkman was likely led to this quote through his reliance on an online commentary by David Guzik, another Calvary Chapel pastor, which I found at <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-1/>

common among evangelicals, and universal among Calvary Chapels, at least all the ones I visited in the course of this research. How does it square with contemporary scholarship on the book of *Genesis* and on the Hebrew Bible? And how do interpretations of the Christian New Testament in Calvary Chapels compare to current scholarship regarding that book? The gulf in interpretation of this ancient literature between the poles of American Protestantism explored in this dissertation to a substantial degree revolves around core convictions about these ancient manuscripts. While the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament are core texts for many Americans and have been foundational to much of the history of Western Civilization, it is increasingly true that even cursory knowledge of these texts is declining (even among those who claim to revere them).³¹ I do not assume, therefore, that my readers will have any knowledge of these texts, so I will lay out the consensus view of mainstream scholars about what can be known about these manuscripts and the motivations of their authors in writing them in their historical context. Tens of thousands of books about have been written about “The Bible.” There are libraries filled with books and journals dedicated to its interpretation and exegesis. Here, I provide a brief survey of contemporary scholarship that will allow me to explain the various perspectives of my research subjects and informants.

These biblical materials, claimed by a plurality of humanity to be in some way sacred, constitute a complex anthology. The oldest material in the Hebrew Bible

³¹ Kenneth Berding, "The Crisis of Biblical Illiteracy," *Biola Magazine*, Spring 2014 <http://magazine.biola.edu/article/14-spring/the-crisis-of-biblical-illiteracy/>.

likely is a short passage in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*³² which has been dated to sometime in the third millennium before the common era (“BCE”), a paraphrased version of which is reproduced and integrated into the text of the Hebrew Bible book of *Ecclesiastes* (9:7-9). The last book written and included in the Christian New Testament is likely *Second Peter*, an anonymous letter falsely attributed to Jesus’ disciple Peter, which is dated to the mid-second century of the common era (“CE”), perhaps as late as 120 years after the likely life of the itinerant Galilean teacher and movement leader known as Jesus.³³ I will be relying on two widely used introductory college textbooks: Michael D. Coogan’s *The Old Testament: Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*³⁴ and Bart D. Ehrman’s *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*,³⁵ supplemented by other material as necessary, to set forth this summary.

³² Anonymous, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. N.K. Sandars (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1972), 102, https://books.google.com/books?id=_F-KlrmSe8QC. Siduri, a wise female goddess associated with fermentation of beer and wine, advises: “Gilgamesh, where are you hurrying to? You will never find that life for which you are looking. When the gods created man they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping. As for you, Gilgamesh, fill your belly with good things; day and night, night and day, dance and be merry, feast and rejoice. Let your clothes be fresh, bathe yourself in water, cherish the little child that holds your hand, and make your wife happy in your embrace; for this too is the lot of man.”

³³ Marcus J. Borg, *Evolution of the Word : The New Testament in the Order the Books Were Written*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2012); Marcus Borg, "A Chronological New Testament," (2012), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marcus-borg/a-chronological-new-testament_b_1823018.html.

³⁴ Michael D. Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³⁵ Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Before Genesis

Who wrote the Torah/Pentateuch?

The idea that the book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible was the world's oldest book held throughout most of the two millennia of Christian-influenced western history. It purports to faithfully record the origins of the universe, the world, and humanity, and it narrates a global flood. All this was simply accepted at face value through most of Christian and Jewish history, including the assertion that this history had been written by Moses.

This last point of Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Hebrew bible—referred to both as the Torah and the Pentateuch—was challenged at least as early as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*³⁶ published in 1668 where he briefly argued that at a minimum Moses could not have authored all of the Torah. Two years later, Baruch Spinoza, who had read Hobbes, went further and contended that “the belief that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch is ungrounded and even irrational” and argued that the ancient Israelite figure of Ezra had composed the Pentateuch.³⁷ Eight years after Spinoza's argument, the French Catholic priest Richard Simon produced a comprehensive critique of the idea of Mosaic authorship, noting that the Torah itself nowhere claims to have been written by Moses, and that various historical details in

³⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1662),
<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3207/pg3207.txt>.

³⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670), Chapter 8 (“of the authorship of the Pentateuch and the other historical books of the Old Testament”),
<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/990/pg990.txt>.

the Torah render Mosaic authorship impossible.³⁸

In the mid-18th century, a French physician to Louis XV attempted to uphold Mosaic authorship while acknowledging that Moses must have been relying on earlier written, but now lost sources. One of the details Astruc relied upon for this conclusion is that Genesis uses two different Hebrew words for the deity, *Elohim* and *Yahweh* (traditionally translated into English as “God” and “Lord God,” respectively).³⁹ Building on this recognition of at least two different sources, scholars over the next century identified multiple sources within the Torah.

In 1878, German scholar Julius Wellhausen published his *History of Israel*, which was translated into English under his supervision, as the *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*,⁴⁰ where he laid out the classic exposition that is now known as the “Documentary Hypothesis.” The hypothesis posits that the Torah is spliced together from four primary sources: 1) the oldest being materials written by the Yahwist (so named for his (or her)⁴¹ use of the divine name of “Yahweh” (“Jahweh” in German) for the deity) probably composed in the ninth or tenth century BCE; 2) the Elohist

³⁸ Richard Simon, *A Critical History of the Old Testament*, trans. Unknown (1682), <https://archive.org/details/SimonRichard1638-1712ACriticalHistoryOfTheOldTestament1682>.

³⁹ Astruc, Jean. 1753. Conjecture on the sources that Moses apparently used in composing Genesis, described in Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*.

⁴⁰ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (1885), <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4732/pg4732.txt>.

⁴¹ Some scholars do hypothesize that the Yahwist may have been a woman. See Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 86; Harold Bloom, *The Book of J*, trans. David Rosenberg, 1st ed. (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 34..

(who used *Elohim* as the divine name); 3) the Deuteronomist or Deuteronomic source found primarily in the last book of the Torah, and 4) a Priestly source (so named for its concern with religious law, observance and ritual, suggesting an origination among a priestly class). These four sources are by convention abbreviated as **J, E, D, and P**. P, being the last of the four sources, shaped the final form of the Torah, producing its own creation narrative placed it at the beginning, and wrote the concluding chapter of *Deuteronomy*.⁴² “A majority of scholars, if by no means all, continue to follow some version of the classic formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis.”⁴³

Two Genesis creation stories

The first words of Genesis—, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”—have great salience in American culture, so much so that the Apollo 8 astronauts did a live reading of the first 10 verses of Genesis on Christmas Eve 1968 as they were approaching the moon for the first time in human history. There’s a problem, however. According to Coogan, the proper translation would be “When God began to create the heavens and the earth...” or even more literally, “In the beginning of God’s creating.” This slight change makes it clearer that God/Elohim was not creating “out of nothing,” but instead is narrating “the formation of a cosmos, an ordered universe, out of preexisting but chaotic matter,”⁴⁴ referred to in the text as

⁴² See Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 23, 25-27.

⁴³ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.

“the deep” (Gen 1:2). The traditional translation of verse 1, according to Coogan, owes to an intent of the original King James Version (completion of which occurred in 1611) translators’ desire to align the verse with the opening “in the beginning” language in the first verse of Gospel of John in the Christian New Testament.⁴⁵

Curiously, another creation narrative, one very different and in some particulars in direct conflict with the first, begins in the second half of Genesis 2:4. This is the familiar Adam and Eve story, and begins: “On the day that the LORD God [Yahweh] made the earth and the heavens—no wild shrub was yet on the earth, and no wild plant had yet sprouted, for the LORD God [Yahweh] had not yet made it rain on the earth, and there was no human to work the ground. . . —then the LORD God [Yahweh] formed the human, from the soil of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” (Gen 2.4b-7; Coogan translation).⁴⁶ Yahweh, noting that “It is not good that the man should be alone; [said] I will make him a helper as his partner.” The deity next forms “out of the ground... every animal of the field and every bird of the air.” The animals and birds were formed out of the ground, just as with the creation of the man. The creation of animals and birds is not merely to create animals and birds but, by the express text, was to create “a helper” and “partner” for “the man.” Yahweh brings all the animals and birds to the man to be named, “but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner” (Gen. 2:18-20 NRSV). So

⁴⁵ Ibid. “[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1.1-3 KJV).

⁴⁶ Ibid., 11.

Yahweh creates a woman out of one of the man's ribs.

There are many differences between the Priestly source creation story in Genesis 1.1-2.4a, written in the sixth century BCE, likely during the Babylonian exile, and the Yahwist story in Genesis 2:4b-2.22, written about 400 years earlier in the tenth century BCE around the time King David or Solomon. In the J story, the deity is very anthropomorphic, while the P story envisions the deity much more abstractly and more remotely. Elohim speaks creation into existence with no apparent effort or expenditure of energy. Yahweh, in contrast, actively forms his creations out preexisting "dust of the ground" and "planted a garden." The most noticeable contradiction, however, concerns the order of creation in the two accounts. In the P story, Elohim creates all the birds, sea creatures, and land animals. Then, in their final creative act, they simultaneously create the "male and female" humans, in Elohim's image. In the J story, in contrast, Yahweh creates "man," then the animals and birds, and finally, "woman." As Coogan notes, it is "impossible to reconcile" these two accounts; both cannot be true. Coogan opines that this would have been obvious to the ancient readers as well, showing that they could not have regarded these conflicting stories as "literally true."⁴⁷

The Genesis stories, conflicting though they are, are not the first creation stories

For most of the history of subsequent to Constantine's conversion to

⁴⁷ Ibid., 7.

Christianity in the early fourth century CE, these Genesis creation stories were the primary ones on offer. That changed in 1853, when Hormuzd Rassam discovered some broken clay remains of the library of King Ashurbanipal, a seventh-century BCE ruler of ancient Assyria. There was an archeological dig underway in the ruins of Nineveh, the ancient capital city of the Assyrian Empire, which are just across the Tigris River from contemporary Mosul, Iraq. The significance of Rassam's discovery would take another two decades to decipher, but George Smith in late 1872 realized that the find narrated the epic journey of Gilgamesh who is on a quest for the source of immortality, a quest motivated by the death of his friend Enkidu.⁴⁸ Gilgamesh nearly succeeds when he obtains a magic plant that will give him immortality. But alas, he falls asleep, and a snake steals the plant, condemning him, and by extension, all humanity, to the fate of mortality. The epic also contained a flood narrative similar to the one in Genesis 7 and 8, but much older, probably by at least a 1,000 years, perhaps more.⁴⁹

Since Rassam's discovery, many more versions of "Gilgamesh" have been found throughout Mesopotamia proper, and in Turkey, Syria, Israel, and even Megiddo (the site, which according to evangelicals like Jack Hibbs, associated with the final conflict between good and evil envisioned Rev. 16:16). Coogan places the oldest and earliest versions of the Epic in the third millennium BCE.⁵⁰ George Smith

⁴⁸ Anonymous, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

⁴⁹ Daniel Silas Adamson, "The Men Who Uncovered Assyria," *BBC News Magazine* (2015), <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31941827>.

⁵⁰ Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew*

did a first public reading of *Gilgamesh* on December 3, 1872 in London. While some interpreted the finding as confirming the Genesis flood story, *The New York Times* reported the next day that the more likely conclusion to be drawn from the discovery of “various traditions of the deluge apart from the Biblical one” is that the Noachian flood in Genesis 8 and 9 was “legendary” as well.⁵¹ And this is indeed the contemporary majority position among scholars that the detailed parallels and similarities between the *Gilgamesh* flood narrative and the Genesis flood narrative (especially the J flood story (there is also a P flood story⁵²)) confirm that “the biblical writers made use of some preexisting Mesopotamian Flood story.”⁵³

Fragments from another story were also found in Ashurbanipal’s library. While this story took much longer to piece together, by 1965, the “Epic of Atrahasis” was published in English. It also contains a flood narrative which is now thought to predate the flood story in *Gilgamesh*. Indeed, the deluge event in Atrahasis was likely the source for the flood narrative in the *Gilgamesh* epic, because the flood story seems to have been a later add-on in “*Gilgamesh*.” The earliest known copy of Atrahasis dates to the 17th century BCE. Other flood stories that predate the composition of the Genesis narrative have now been found, further reinforcing the conclusion that “the biblical writers were drawing upon an ancient and widespread

Scriptures, 15.

⁵¹ Adamson, “The Men Who Uncovered Assyria”.

⁵² Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 24-26, 39-40.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 41..

tradition when they included the Flood story in their account of primeval history.”⁵⁴

Another important find in Ashurbanipal’s library was the *Enuma elish*, from the first two words of this epic, “when above.”⁵⁵ Its tablets were found in 1849, but were not deciphered and published until 1876. Lacking a flood story, it did not present the same immediate challenge to biblical inerrancy, and so did not create a stir. But in contemporary Hebrew Bible scholarship, it has proven vital to understanding Genesis. *Enuma elish* cannot be definitively dated, but the general opinion is that it was first composed in the 16th to 19th centuries BCE.⁵⁶

How did the pre-biblical writers understand the human condition?

Both *Enuma elish* and *Atrahasis* both contain creation stories. The *Atrahasis* epic opens: “When the gods instead of man did the work [and] bore the loads, the gods’ loads was too great, the work too hard, the trouble too much.” After many thousands of years of such hard labor, the lesser gods persuaded the chief gods to make humans by mixing clay with the blood of a slain god, thereby relieving the gods of their work load. In creating humanity, the gods forgot to make humans mortal, and after 600 years, the humans were overpopulating the world and “noisy as a bellowing

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁶ Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, Rev. ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 228-30, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0626/2005280227-d.html>; Dalley instead denotes the *Enuma elish* as the “The Epic of Creation.” Other scholars call it the “Babylonian Creation Epic.” Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 5.

bull,” disturbing the gods with their noise and causing them to lose “sleep over the racket.” To remedy this disturbance, the gods decide to send a flood to destroy humanity, but the god Enki directs Atrahasis to “build a boat” to save himself, his family and “other living things.” Specific details of the design of the boat are given to Atrahasis to ensure that it is up to its required task. To the annoyance of the other gods, Atrahasis successfully saves his family and the other living creatures. After the flood the gods impose random sterility and infant mortality to keep human numbers in check.⁵⁷

In *Enuma elish*, the supreme and preexisting gods Apsu and Tiamat give birth to the lesser gods in a primordial realm preceding the present cosmos. A fierce but lesser god, Marduk, kills Tiamat and forms the cosmos out of Tiamat’s body. Marduk then killed Kingu, Tiamat’s divine consort, and used Kingu’s blood to create humans to do all the work and toil that the gods had been doing themselves to nourish and sustain themselves. In this telling of cosmic origins, humans share in a divine substance and differ from the gods primarily by being less powerful and mortal.⁵⁸

How did these antecedent creation and flood stories affect the later versions in Genesis?

The ancient Israelite writers of the J and P creation and flood stories “adopted,

⁵⁷ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, 9, 14-15, 18, 29-31, 35.

⁵⁸ Kenneth C. Davis, *Don't Know Much About Mythology : Everything You Need to Know About the Greatest Stories in Human History but Never Learned*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 137-39.

adapted, and sometimes rejected myths from the rest of the ancient Near East.”⁵⁹ In both *Enuma elish* and *Atrahasis*, for example, humans were created to do the labor that these almost human gods had been doing for themselves. Humans would now build houses for the gods (their temples) and grow and prepare their food (sacrifices), creating for them a new life of ease. In this regime, humans were essentially slaves for the gods, the personified powers that control the cosmos. These gods, however, in contrast to the gods that would eventually be imagined, are surprisingly weak and fragile. They have to eat to survive, and prior to the creation of humans, that had to produce their own food. Their constitutions seem surprisingly fragile, being disturbed by the noise of humans, which prevents them from getting their required sleep. The primary distinction between the humans and the gods in the Mesopotamian myths is that humans are mortal (though the post-flood status of humans in *Atrahasis* is ambiguous).

This fragility has echoes in the older Genesis 2 Adam and Eve story. Unlike *Elohim* in Genesis 1, here *Yahweh* is “down to earth, immanent, and described in vividly anthropomorphic language, as if he were a human.”⁶⁰ *Yahweh* is depicted as only coming out in the cool of the evening, and in the whole story of chapter 3, the only substantial difference between humans and *Yahweh* and other members of the Divine Assembly (see Gen. 3:22's statement that after eating of the tree of knowledge, humans were now “like us”) was humanity's lack of knowledge of good and evil.

⁵⁹ Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 3, 9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

Both the gods and humanity were immortal. Once humans obtained knowledge, they were “like” the gods. Hence, to divest humanity of their new godly station, they had to be denied immortality by blocking access to the tree of life. Similar to the way Gilgamesh had been robbed of immortality by a snake, the humans are tricked out of it by a serpent that is then reduced to a snake as punishment. Hebrew Bible scholar Robert Kawashima illustrates it this way:⁶¹

Gods	Knowledge	Immortal
Humans (pre-transgression)	No knowledge	Immortal
Humans (post-transgression)	Knowledge	Immortal
Humans (post-Eden)	Knowledge	Not immortal
All other animals	No knowledge	Not immortal

In the later (four centuries or so later) creation story in Genesis 1, humans are now imagined as the rulers, created in the image of God from the beginning and expressly given “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth,” and commanded to “be fruitful and multiply, and

⁶¹ Kawashima’s Hebrew Scriptures lectures at the University of Florida, 2006.

fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1.26-28 NRSV).⁶²

Likely written during the Israelites period of the Babylonian captivity, the Priestly writers rejected the model of reality contained in the Mesopotamian creation myths like *Enuma elish* and *Atrahasis* and in a new feat of metaphysical imagination, gave both *Elohim* and humanity a promotion. The deity is often singular (though it still, inconsistently, sometimes speaks in the plural (“let us make humans in our image”), showing the continuing influence of the idea of “divine assembly” and the polytheism in other Mesopotamian myths) and of sufficient power to “speak” the created order into existence, an idea that the Priestly writers may have borrowed from the “Memphite theology of creation.”⁶³

⁶² In language likely inspired by Gen. 1:26-28, this divinely sanctioned dominance of humanity over all other parts of non-human earthly reality is reiterated in even stronger language in two of the Psalms:

“You have made [humans] little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas” (Ps. 8:5-8 NRSV).

“The heavens are the Lord’s heavens, but the earth he has given to human beings” (Ps. 115.16 NRSV).

⁶³ The oldest of the Egyptian creator gods, Ptah, also spoke the cosmos into existence. The “Memphite theology of creation” (also referred to as “Theology of Memphis [an ancient capital in Egypt]”) describes creation at follows: “The mighty Great One is Ptah” and “all the divine order really came into being through what [Ptah's] heart thought and [Ptah's] tongue commanded.” Ptah's “heart and tongue gained control over” all, and by “by thinking and commanding everything that he wishes,” Ptah becomes incarnate “in every body and in every mouth of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, and (everything) that lives.” After creating, Ptah was “satisfied,”

With the forgoing as background, here are the first lines of the creation stories
(from oldest to most recent):

Atrahasis: “When the gods instead of man did the work [and] bore the loads, the gods’ loads was [sic] too great, the work too hard, the trouble too much.”⁶⁴

Enuma elish: “When above the skies had not been named, nor earth below pronounced by name.”⁶⁵

Genesis 2.4b: “On the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,...” (Coogan translation)⁶⁶

Genesis 1.1: “When God began to create the heavens and the earth,...” (Coogan translation).⁶⁷

John 1.1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.”

With these innovations, the ancient Israelites writers created a distinctive, three-tiered created order: (1) a single deity, (2) humans who are just a little lower, and (3) all the rest of creation. Ancient Israelites thereby produced the first enduring monotheism and a conception of humans as destined for dominion and rule over non-human creation. The difference, however, “between Israelite monotheism and pagan religion[s]” of that era was not simply a “matter of arithmetic: one God rather than

or in some translations, he “rested,” a term paralleling Elohim’s “rest” in Gen. 2:2-3 Anonymous, “Egyptian Myths and Tales: The Memphite Theology of Creation,” in *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁶⁴ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 233.

⁶⁶ Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 11.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

many.” The pagan religions, notes Hebrew Bible scholar Richard Elliott Friedman, had “personified [nature’s] forces, ascribed a will to them, and called them: gods.” In contrast, Israel’s new monotheism, for the first time in recorded human history, conceived of a God who was outside of nature,” who through omnipotent power controlled the now desacralized forces of nature.⁶⁸

This concept of human superiority to and dominion over the rest of non-human nature was decisively carried forward into early Christianity by the church father, missionary, and theologian, Paul of Tarsus. In his Epistle to the Romans, a book included in the Christian New Testament, Paul declared that God had abandoned pagans because they “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25, NRSV), thereby incorporating into early Christianity the Jewish idea of this absolute separation between God and the natural created order, and that to venerate nature was to engage in idolatry.

Germane to my project here, this passage is one of the most cited whenever conservative Protestant Christians discuss human responsibility (or lack thereof) for the environment, and it is why the famed Protestant theologian Paul Tillich declared that within Christianity the term pantheist is “a ‘heresy’ label of the worst kind.”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Hidden Face of God* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 87-87.

⁶⁹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 233.

“Daniel,” Life After Death, and the Resurrection of the Righteous

The ancient Israelites had two more contributions to make in terms of metaphysical innovation. In the fourth century BCE Alexander's army brought Hellenism (Greek culture) to the Middle East, creating a variety of tensions among ancient Israelites. A low point was Antiochus IV Epiphanes' attempt to destroy Judaism in 165 BCE, which had two major effects. First, it led to the Maccabean revolt and then to a period of independence of nearly a century that is often remembered as a golden age. Second, and prior to that victory, many who refused to abandon the religious practices of their Jewish ancestors experienced harsh persecution and executions. The stories of these martyrs are enshrined in 2 Maccabees 6 and 7.

The experience of large scale martyrdom had a profound impact on Israel's understanding of God. The execution of those faithful to the God of Israel produced a theological trauma and dilemma. Past Israelite travails had been explained in terms of the people's unfaithfulness to the demands of Yahweh. In the present persecution, the martyrs were put to death precisely because they remained faithful to God. What then could be said of God's faithfulness?

One response was the rise of apocalyptic literature, which posited that, in the near future, God would restore his people and be faithful to his promises. Another was the emergence of the belief that those righteous martyrs would be raised up. Until this period, Israel had developed no notion of the afterlife, at least not an afterlife anyone would desire. (The realm of the dead, or Sheol was a fuzzy idea; not quite a

full extinguishing, but also not anything to look forward to). A human lived a predictable span of life and then was no more. This assumption, however, became intolerable in the face of the horrible deaths of righteous people who were executed precisely for their righteousness. The solution was that – in the future – God would raise them up from the very dust into “everlasting life” as a reward for righteousness. See Daniel 12:2 (“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”) The proof that God could raise them up from nothingness was that God had created the world out of nothing. In 2 Maccabees the mother encourages her sons to persevere as they were being tortured to death:

I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being. Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers. (2 Macc 7:27-29)

The statement that "God did not make them out of things that existed" (2 Macc 7:28) marks the first occurrence in Judaism of the notion of creation out of nothing, “creation *ex nihilo*.” Creation from nothing solves the problem of how God will raise up the martyr if there is nothing left of the martyr's body. If God can create the world from nothing, he can raise up the martyr from nothingness.

The idea of creation from nothing thus comes into ancient Judaism, not through philosophical speculation on the nature of God, but to solve the challenge

that martyrdom posed to the belief in God's faithfulness.⁷⁰ Now a bodily afterlife is conceived, and it is the divine power of creation *ex nihilo* that makes this possible. Having thus innovated, this power of “creation out of nothing” gets read back into the Genesis creation stories, even though it does not exist in these original stories.

As noted above, another major innovation was this turn toward apocalypticism. The Book of Daniel, beside introducing to idea of a future resurrection to life as a reward for the faithful, introduced a genre of literature making detailed predictions of when this reward might arrive. Indeed, it is because of the detail predictions contained in the book that Hebrew Bible scholars are so confident in their opinion about when Daniel was written. Scholars examine where the writers “get the history right,” and where the material suddenly ceases to correspond to the actual history. In the Book of Daniel, that happens in chapter 11, between verses 35 and 36. Through verse 35, the history described tracks with what is otherwise known about the conflicts between the Seleucids and the Egyptians. Then the description, particularly as it relates to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, stops tracking actual history known from other sources. At a minimum, this is when this material must have been written.⁷¹ The anonymous author, in writing this tale of what Coogan calls “heroic

⁷⁰ Bernard Brandon Scott, "God of the Crucified Messiah," *Fourth R* 30, no. 6 (2017).

⁷¹ See notes for Daniel, Chapter 11, in Michael D. Coogan et al., eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Dale B. Martin, "Lecture 4 - Judaism in the First Century (Rlst 152: Introduction to the New Testament History and Literature)," New Haven, CT: Open Yale Courses, Unused 1, Spring Semester 2009, URL <https://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/rlst-152/lecture-4>. Accessed April 28, 2018.

fiction,”⁷² had up to this point been narrating history that had already occurred. After this, he was writing hopeful speculation about what was about to happen in the near future as an attempted encouragement to a community experiencing persecution. As will become apparent, this “apocalyptic mentality,” as Dale B. Martin has called it, is carried forward in a big way into movements that formed in the wake of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth and would eventually become early Christianity.⁷³ Indeed, it is hard to imagine that the Christian New Testament’s final book, which is titled “Revelation,” would have been written had “Daniel” not preceded it.

Key Textual Elements of Christianity, with an emphasis on the New Testament

Christianity is the world’s dominant religion, claiming 1 in 3 humans as adherents. A key text perhaps explaining its rise to dominance over the last two millennia is found in the vision contained in the penultimate chapter of the New Testament’s last book, “Revelation”:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ (Rev. 21:1-4).

⁷² Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 537.

⁷³ Martin, "Lecture 4 - Judaism in the First Century (R1st 152: Introduction to the New Testament History and Literature)."

Perhaps more vividly than anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible or the Christian New Testament, these verses set out a future vision of a world, a cosmic order, set right. It will be, in this telling, the victory of the one righteous God over his adversary, known variously as Satan, the Devil, Lucifer, the antichrist, or the serpent. The reality of death that tragically entered this worldly order due to Adam and Eve's primordial sin will be no more. God's original plan will be restored.

In terms of the chronological order in which these books were written, however, "Revelation" is about in middle of the books that would ultimately become the Christian New Testament, a list of twenty-seven books that would not be finalized until well into the 4th century. "Revelation" may play a central role for many Christians now, but this was not so at the outset. In what follows, I set out a condensed summary of the first century history that gave rise to Christianity.

Jesus of Nazareth

Christianity centers on the belief that the figure of Jesus was the promised messiah expected within Judaism. The Hebrew word *mashiach* is translated into English as "messiah." In antiquity, it was translated into Greek as *khristos*, into Latin as *Christus*, which in turn was translated into English as "Christ," giving rise to the eventual name of the religion and the name used for its adherents.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ The first person who used the term "Christian" to describe himself as a follower of Jesus was Ignatius of Antioch. According to Elaine Pagels, he was a non-Jewish convert to the Pauline form of the movement in the 80s or 90s CE. He used this term to clearly distinguish himself from Jewish communities. He was also the first person

The overwhelming majority of historians and theologians, whether conservative Christian, liberal Christian, or secular, agree that there was indeed a historical person known as Yeshua (in Hebrew), *Iesous* (in Greek), *Iesus* (in Latin), and as “Jesus” in English. The consensus further agrees that he was from the Galilean region, probably from Nazareth, that a movement of some sort formed around him, that he was executed under the authority of Rome, likely for causing a disturbance in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Subsequent to his death, a small number of his followers⁷⁵ had experiences of Jesus alive, and began building a movement around their experience. Beyond this, the consensus quickly breaks down. Outside this consensus, there is even a small group of scholars and thinkers that assert Jesus is entirely fictional.⁷⁶

The website “Early Christian Writings” lists nine theories of who Jesus was and the scholars associated with each.⁷⁷ For my purposes here, just three of these

who was recorded to use the term “Christianity” as the label for his religion. Exactly when he started using these terms cannot be precisely dated, but it is known that around 112 CE, the Roman magistrate Pliny used the term in a report to Emperor Trajan, when reporting his torture and execution of two “Christian” female slaves who refused to make sacrifices to the Roman gods. Elaine H. Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Viking, 2012), 61, 65, 70.

⁷⁵ New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman argues that this initial group numbered about 20. Bart D. Ehrman, *The Triumph of Christianity: How a Forbidden Religion Swept the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

⁷⁶ The most credentialed of these is Robert M. Price, whose has written several books making what has come to be called “the mythicist hypothesis” or “Christ myth theory.” See Robert M. Price, *The Christ-Myth Theory and Its Problems* (Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 2011).

⁷⁷ Peter Kirby, “Historical Jesus Theories,” Web Page, **URL** <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/theories.html>, (Accessed April 18, 2018),

really have bearing: 1) Jesus as incarnated deity come to earth to save humanity from its sinful state and provide a blissful afterlife for those who believe in his atoning death; 2) Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet who was wrong, and 3) Jesus as a wisdom sage/social reformer. The first is the Jesus of traditional Christianity in all of its three major categories: Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. Christians who accept the second and third understandings are small in number, but are significant in various institutional settings and geographical regions, and comprise a small but enthusiastic segment of practicing Christians in the American context. Indeed, they are most concentrated among the congregations that align themselves with The Center for Progressive Christianity. Each of these views is rooted in the texts of the New Testament, a summary of which I will set out now.

The late Marcus Borg (1942-2015) was a historian of early Christianity, and in particular of Jesus. He was a member of the Jesus Seminar (discussed in more detail in Chapter 8), and in one of his last books he set out the latest scholarly opinion on the chronological order in which the books contained in the New Testament were most likely written, beginning with First Thessalonians (dated around 50 CE) and concluding with Second Peter (dated between 120-150 CE).⁷⁸ The list is as follows (with dates for some of the key books): 1 Thessalonians (50 CE); 2 Galatians; 3) 1 Corinthians; 4) Philemon; 5) Philippians; 6) 2 Corinthians; 7) Romans (58 CE); 8) Mark (70 CE); 9) James; 10) Colossians; 11) Matthew (80s or 90s CE); 12) Hebrews;

⁷⁸ Borg, *Evolution of the Word : The New Testament in the Order the Books Were Written*. For a concise summary of this ordering and the rationale supporting it, see Borg, "A Chronological New Testament".

13) John (90s CE); 14) Ephesians; 15) Revelation (90-120 CE); 16) Jude; 17) 1 John (100 CE); 18) 2 John; 19) 3 John; 20) Luke (120-150 CE); 21) Acts (120-150 CE)⁷⁹; 22) 2 Thessalonians; 23) 1 Peter; 24) 1 Timothy; 25) 2 Timothy; 26) Titus; 27) 2 Peter (120-150 CE).

The first 7 books were written by the missionary of the early Jesus movement to the non-Jewish Mediterranean world, Paul of Tarsus. These books were written between about 50 and 58 CE. So all of the gospels were likely written with an understanding of Paul's early articulations of theology for the emerging Jesus movement. It did not really become the new religion of Christianity until well into the 2nd century.

Stories about Jesus: the four canonical gospels

Mark is the first of the gospels written (c. 70 CE). It has been called the most influential work of historical fiction ever written, historical because it is loosely inspired by the historical teacher Jesus, but fictional because the narrative telling appears to be largely a work of imaginative fiction by an unknown anonymous author that would later be labeled "Mark" sometime in the second century, just as the other three anonymous canonical gospels would eventually acquire their respective names.

This gospel begins with Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist, a contemporary of

⁷⁹ This dating of Luke and Acts is not yet the consensus position, but according to Borg is trending in this direction. Many New Testament scholars would still date Luke and Acts in the 80s or 90s CE.

Jesus who led an apocalyptic movement in first century Palestine. This baptism leads many New Testament scholars to conclude that Jesus was originally a follower of the Baptist before breaking off to form his own movement. Unique to this gospel, Jesus is portrayed as in conflict with his family. In chapter 3, Jesus' mother and siblings attempt to bring Jesus home because they think he had "gone out of his mind." (Mark 3:21,31). Mark also gives the first account of an empty tomb, but no postmortem sightings of Jesus, and the women who find the empty tomb flee in "terror and amazement" and, according to the author, "said nothing to anyone" (Mark 16:8). This failure to tell anyone else is noted by some scholars as evidence that this story is the product of the author's imagination. If the women told no one, how would the author know of the women's account? Further evidence of the author's imaginative license is the close parallels between this gospel's narration of Jesus' passion story (the collective story of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial) and the Hebrew Bible book, Psalms 22.⁸⁰

The next gospel written was "Matthew," and then "John," and finally "Luke" and its companion chronicle by the same author, "Acts (of the Apostles)," which narrates the events of the early community immediately after Jesus' reported ascension to heaven. Unlike "Mark," the anonymous books that eventually became known as "Matthew" and "Luke" had birth narratives where Jesus' mother Mary is impregnated miraculously by the Holy Spirit. In "John," Jesus' divine status is moved

⁸⁰ Robert M. Price, *The Case against the Case for Christ: A New Testament Scholar Refutes the Reverend Lee Strobel* (Cranford, NJ: American Atheist Press, 2010), 228.

dramatically backward, where he is now a God figure who preexists the universe and creates it. Then, at the beginning of the common era, he incarnates in human form, without any particular explanation of how that might have happened. He has an earthly mother identified as Mary, but the narrative starts with Jesus' visit to see John the Baptist and, pointedly, is not baptized by him as in the other three gospels. Instead, immediately upon seeing Jesus, John the Baptist proclaims, "This is he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me'" (John 1:15).

In this gospel, a very exalted portrait of Jesus is set forth, and in a text that defines conservative Christianity to this day, it is declared that "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). This is the verse frequently held up at sporting events. One of my informants herein calls this verse "Christianity 101." The exclusivistic ideology of Christian belief as the only path to salvation and eternal life is rooted in this book ("Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6)), as is the requirement that one must be "born again" in order to share in the afterlife reward ("Jesus answered and said unto [the Pharisee Nicodemus], a ruler of the Jews..., 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3)).

Scholars have noted that the New Testament books show a progression in when exactly Jesus became divine. While Paul's seven epistles are the earliest New

Testament materials, it has long been the consensus opinion of New Testament scholars that a pre-Pauline creed is quoted in Romans 1: 3-4, which declared Jesus: 1) to be biologically descended from ancient Israel's King David, and 2) was "declared to be Son of God" by the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' "resurrection from the dead." Jesus, under this very early creed, was not the Son of God during his lifetime, or even while in his grave after execution, but only upon being resurrected through divine power. In this early understanding, this is when Jesus becomes divine and adopted by God as his Messiah.⁸¹ In this initial understanding, Jesus' resurrection was "the first fruits of those who have died" (1 Cor. 15:20), and a "beginning of the apocalyptic harvest, the start of the end (but not the end itself)."⁸²

In the earliest gospel of Mark, upon Jesus baptism by the John the Baptist, Jesus sees the "heavens torn apart" and God's spirit descending upon him and he hears a voice from heaven declaring "you are my Son, the Beloved." (Mark 1:10-11). The text does not indicate if anyone beside Jesus observed these supernatural events, but this is when Jesus becomes divine for the writer of Mark.

In the gospels attributed to Luke and Matthew, Jesus is divine from his conception by the working of Holy Spirit. In Matthew, Mary is found, without more detail, "to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18). In Luke, the angel Gabriel

⁸¹ Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God : The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, First edition. ed. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2014), 220-24.

⁸² John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), xix, 145, 451, 89, 550; John Dominic Crossan, "The Resurrection of Jesus in Its Jewish Context," *Neotestamentica* 37, no. 1 (2003): 48.

is sent by God to tell Mary that “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you... and you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus... The child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.” In Luke’s telling, in contrast to Matthew, Mary is provided this additional information about Jesus destiny: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:31-35).

In John’s gospel, as noted above, Jesus is a deity from before the Creation of the Universe. With the passage of time after his lifetime, therefore, Jesus’ ontological status become ever more exalted, ever earlier in time (from resurrection, to baptism, to conception, and finally, deity from the beginning of time).

The narratives of the gospels also depict Jesus’ life in very different, and in many areas, fundamentally inconsistent and mutually exclusive ways. As noted above, in Mark, Jesus family thinks he has gone insane, and Jesus rejects his family in favor of his followers (Mark 3:21, 31-35). In the other three gospels, Jesus mother Mary knows Jesus divine status (though how she knows this is unexplained in John).

Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and appearances vary in striking ways,⁸³ not the least being Jesus’ whole attitude and demeanor as he approached

⁸³ For detailed cataloguing of these differences and their significance, see John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus : The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't*

death. In Mark, Jesus is silent throughout events until the moment of his death, when he cries out in dejection “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (borrowed from Psalm 22:1) and shortly thereafter dies. In Luke, Jesus is “far from silent, and when he speaks, he shows that he is still in control, trustful of God his Father, confident of his fate, concerned for the fate of others... On the cross, ... he prays ... ‘Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing (23:34)... Jesus engages in intelligent conversation with of the robbers crucified beside him, assuring him that they will be together that day in paradise (23:43). [And] most telling of all, rather than uttering his pathetic cry of dereliction at the end, Luke’s Jesus, in full confidence of his standing before God, commends his soul to his loving Father: ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit’ (24:46).”⁸⁴ (For Jesus’ final words, Luke borrows from Psalm 31:5).

Conflicts in the philosophical/theological/ethical content of the gospels

The canonical gospels in particular, and the New Testament in general, varies considerably in its philosophical/theological/ethical content. The most striking concerns how Jesus’ teachings are depicted regarding poor people, and the nature of our ethical duties to our fellow humans. This is most strikingly observed by

Know About Them), 1st ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2009); Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸⁴ Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus : The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 142-44.

contrasting the moral teachings of the synoptic gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke) with certain passages in the gospel of John, and with that gospel generally.

All three of the synoptic gospels depict an event in Jesus' teaching ministry where a man approaches Jesus and asks what he must do to "inherit eternal life." In response, Jesus lists the most important commandments to follow: Do not murder, commit adultery, steal, or bear false witness, and honor one's parents (Matthew adds "love your neighbor as yourself"). After the man assures Jesus that he has followed these rules since his youth, Jesus adds a final (and to many, surprising) injunction: "go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." The man turns away dejected and leaves, because he is respectively described as having "many possessions" or being "very rich." Jesus then makes his famed observation about the extreme difficulty rich people will have in attaining salvation. (Mark 10:17-25; cf. Matthew 19:16-24; Luke 18:18-25).

Matthew, uniquely, describes Jesus giving an account of a future apocalyptic judgment of humanity by "the Son of Man" (often called "the parable of the sheep and the goats," though it is not in the normal structure of a parable). Given the centrality of this account to many contemporary articulations of Christian morality and ethics, I will provide the full account:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matthew 25: 31-46)

Here, the reader is told that the divine is embodied and literally resides in the oppressed and downtrodden, service to the oppressed is a direct service to God, and is the primary measure of individual righteousness, and indeed, in this telling, is the only measure of an individual’s righteousness and worthiness for salvation. In this story, the righteous judge of human history is utterly indifferent to whether someone believed in any god. It is a person’s deeds in aid of the disadvantaged and oppressed that are the measure of one’s moral standing.

One other parable, this one only from Luke, also relates to his theme: the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). Here, responding to a question about “Who is my neighbor?,” Jesus tells the parable of a compassionate Samaritan who comes to the aid of a mugged and wounded traveler after a Levite and a priest pass

him by and do nothing. It is noteworthy that the hero of Jesus' story was a Samaritan, someone Jesus' Judean listeners in the first century, due to historic animosities between the Judeans and Samaritans, would have been seen as a hated, heretical, unholy half-breed.⁸⁵ Yet, it was the Samaritan who went to the victim, "bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'" Jesus then asked his interlocutor, "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" Jesus' questioner acknowledged that it was "the one who showed him mercy." The story concludes with Jesus saying, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:34–37).

The moral outlook illustrated by these synoptic materials stands in stark contrast to the outlook in John's gospel. There, Jesus shows no interest in the poor or oppressed, and indeed at one point states that needs of the poor may properly be ignored so his feet can be anointed with expensive oil. Only Judas, Jesus' eventual betrayer, objects to this and expresses concerns for the poor. The omniscient narrator, however, assures the reader that Judas' concern is insincere (John 12:3-8). This is the only location in this gospel where concern for the poor is mentioned, and ultimately dismissed. Jesus is also depicted as having the rich followers and patrons, Nicodemus

⁸⁵ Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Jesus against Christianity : Reclaiming the Missing Jesus* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 207.

and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-39).

In John, instead of service and concern for others, the primary focus is on how eternal life comes through a person's belief in Jesus. John 3:16 is the most important example of this: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son [to be martyred], so that everyone who believes in [Jesus] may not perish but may have eternal life." And Jesus himself is depicted as emphasizing "belief" as the core duty, and "eating his flesh" and "drinking his blood" as some sort of key ritual for the attainment of salvation (John 6:29, 47-48, 50-51, 53-54).⁸⁶ And in John, unlike in the synoptic gospels, Jesus explicitly declares himself to be the "Son of God" and the apocalyptic figure, "the Son of Man," who has the authority to "execute judgement" upon all humanity and determine each human's eternal fate (John 5:25-29). Elaine Pagels also argues that John is the most anti-Semitic of the Gospels, because it depicts "the Jews" as having sole responsibility for Jesus' execution, against the will of Pilate, who is depicted as repeatedly trying to free Jesus, and finally acceding to

⁸⁶ "[29] 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent... [47] Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. [48] I am the bread of life ... [50] so that one may eat of it and not die. [51] I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh...' [53] Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. [54] Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'" For people not already socialized into the Christian tradition, these words are shocking words to read, and are even more shocking to see acted out in film. See the 0hour,54minute,30second point in the 2003 movie, "The Gospel of John," which uses the Today's English Version of John's Gospel as a screen play, and the full text is acted out. Philip Saville, "The Gospel of John," THINKFilm, Film or Broadcast, URL <https://youtu.be/4iqN-4v8E5U>. URL 2 Accessed April 23, 2018.

the demands of “the Jews,” a view that many scholars note is patently unbelievable in light of what is otherwise known about Pilate, namely, that he was a ruthless tyrant.⁸⁷

Did Jesus teach an imminent apocalyptic end to the world?

The apostle Paul makes predictions of the imminent end of the world in First Thessalonians (4:15-17), the earliest of the New Testament books. It is further undeniable that Jesus is depicted in places as predicting an imminent end of the world in the first of the gospels written. Mark 13:30 has Jesus seemingly predicting that his hearers would “not pass away until all these things have taken place,” leading the famed Christian apologist, C.S. Lewis, to call that verse “the most embarrassing verse in the Bible” because it showed Jesus was wrong.⁸⁸ And this mistake is repeated in Matt. 24:34 and Luke 21:32.

Beginning in the mid-1980s a group of New Testament scholars began a quest for the authentic sayings of Jesus, and published their findings in a 1993 concluding that the Jesus of history was a non-apocalyptic teacher of a counter-cultural wisdom, a rural Galilean sage that in some ways mirrored the cynics.⁸⁹ Indeed, John Dominic Crossan, one of the prominent scholars associated with the Jesus Seminar explicitly

⁸⁷ Elaine H. Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Random House, 1995), 110-11.

⁸⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Essential C.S. Lewis* (New York: Scribner, 1988), 385.

⁸⁹ Jesus Seminar, Robert Walter Funk, and Roy W. Hoover, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus: New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

argued that Jesus was “a peasant Jewish cynic.”⁹⁰ The other prominent historian associated with the Jesus Seminar project was the late Marcus Borg. He too rejected the apocalyptic understanding of Jesus and instead believed the data in the canonical gospels and additional non-canonical materials—discovered in the 1940s but only available to scholars starting in the 1970s—that disclose a historical Jesus who was a combination of peasant “Jewish mystic,” “wisdom teacher,” “social prophet,” and “movement initiator.” Borg’s Jesus is different from but congruent with Crossan’s itinerant Jewish cynic.

The leading contemporary proponent that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet who was wrong about the imminent end of the world is Bart Ehrman, an argument first championed by Albert Schweitzer in his 1906 “The Quest of the Historical Jesus.”⁹¹ The thumbnail of Ehrman’s argument is that John the Baptist was an apocalyptic prophet before Jesus, and all available evidence about the initiators after Jesus’ death who worked to continue his movement suggests they had intense apocalyptic expectations. The apostle Paul was unquestionably apocalyptic. It only stands to reason Jesus himself must have also been apocalyptic.⁹² Many contemporary New Testament scholars agree.

The Jesus Seminar affiliated scholars and those that follow them make this

⁹⁰ Crossan, *The Historical Jesus : The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, 421.

⁹¹ Albert Schweitzer and W. Montgomery, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus; a Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, 2d English ed. (London,: A. & C. Black, ltd., 1931).

⁹² Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

main counterargument. When Jesus' parables and aphorisms are studied by themselves, they display a consistent absence of apocalyptic content. And it is quite plausible that an apocalyptic re-imagining of Jesus might have occurred after the trauma of the Roman-Jewish War from 66-73 CE and the resultant destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. The historical context certainly provided a reason for an apocalyptic outlook. If the best reconstructions of the Jesus' sayings, parables, and aphorisms are non-apocalyptic, however, then it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus himself was not apocalyptic, nor was he trying to start an apocalyptic movement.⁹³

The Mush Gospel: What is it?

As a preview to my analysis later, it is worth noting that this information about the conflicting material in the gospels, and indeed, throughout the New Testament is barely known among the average believers sitting in church pews, whether conservative or liberal. These differences are not dwelled on or even mentioned in church. I've never heard a pastor, conservative or liberal, preach on these conflicts. And it is a rare believer indeed that knows that "there are more differences among [available New Testament] manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament."⁹⁴ And few of the believers who have read the Bible from Genesis 1

⁹³ Bernard Brandon Scott, "The Historical Jesus," St. Jude's Episcopal Church, Cupertino, CA: Westar Institute's Jesus Seminar on the Road, Unused 1, Feb. 2, 2018, URL.

⁹⁴ Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus : The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, 10.

to Revelation 22 would notice the conflicts, because spotting them takes a very close and astute reading.

Instead, most Christian believers encounter in church something that New Testament scholar Bernard Brandon Scott calls “the mush gospel.” By this Scott means, speaking as someone who stands in the tradition, that Christians of all stripes “mush together the various stories from all the gospels into a single story/gospel that is idiosyncratic. This mush gospel is built up from reading, from hearing the gospel stories read, and from sermons and hymns. We use that mush gospel to make sense of gospel stories when we hear them; that is the context into which we fit them. For the most part, we never understand a single gospel as a complete story with a complex plot and characters. The individuality of each gospel narrative is lost.”⁹⁵

The rock opera “Jesus Christ Superstar” provides one example of how the Mush Gospel displays in popular culture. The following is the last stanza of the opera, which depicts Jesus’ final moments on the cross, with the gospel source of each verse noted:

God, forgive them - they don't know what they're doing. [Luke 23:34]
Who is my mother? Where is my mother? [allusion to John 19:25]
My God, my God, why have you forgotten me? [Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46]
I am thirsty! I am thirsty! Oh God! I am thirsty! I am thirsty!
I am thirsty! [John 19:28; says "I am thirsty" only once]
It is finished. [John 19:30]
Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. [Luke 23:46]

All four gospels get “mushed” into this piece of popular culture, concealing the

⁹⁵ Bernard Brandon Scott, "Christmas Stories: The Gospel of Matthew," (2017), <https://www.westarinstitute.org/blog/christmas-stories/>.

uniqueness of each gospel's depiction.

Revelation

Three more books need mention for this brief walkthrough of key New Testament texts: "Revelation," "First John," and "Second Peter." "Revelation," perhaps more than any other biblical book, serves to effectively divide Protestant Christianity into conservative Protestant and liberal/progressive Protestant camps. The former has very high regard for the book, regarding it as a faithful account of how the world will be set right, restoring the pre-fall paradise that was rendered asunder by Adam and Eve's primordial sin, where death, mourning, crying and pain "will be no more" (Rev. 21.4). In contrast, progressive Protestants do not like the book, and find its presence inside the Bible to be a scandal, an embarrassment, because it presents a picture God that is ultimately unworthy of worship. No one equivocates. They either love it or hate it. To illustrate this divide, the comedian Julia Sweeney in her one woman play,⁹⁶ quotes "Ken's Guide to the Bible" for the proposition that the "Revelation" is the result of "John [of Patmos] on acid."⁹⁷ The imagery of God's final punishment certainly seems like it could be the product of hallucinogens, where all who refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ will be "thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15). The last chapters of Revelation promise

⁹⁶ Julia Sweeney, "Letting Go of God: Breaking up Is Hard to Do," Santa Monica, CA, Film or Broadcast, URL. URL 2.

⁹⁷ Ken Smith, *Ken's Guide to the Bible* (New York: Blast Books, 1995).

fiery punishment of all believers' theological and temporal enemies, and rewards them with eternal life in the most perfect of paradise.

“Revelation” also promises a reckoning for what the author calls “the synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9 and 3:9). Elaine Pagels persuasively demonstrates that the author, who is Jewish and has come to believe that Jesus was the expected Messiah for Israel, is here castigating the non-Jewish converts to Paul’s universalistic interpretation of Jesus as the savior of all humanity, not just the Jewish community. In the author’s view, these communities of Pauline converts “say that they are Jews [by conversion] and are not, but are lying” (Rev. 3:9). The author assures his readers that these pretenders will be compelled to “come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you[, the original Jewish community]” (Rev. 3:9). So besides describing the ultimate supernatural vanquishing of their primary persecutors, Roman emperors and their functionaries, through a glorious divine intervention in human history, “Revelation” is also an account of an internal conflict within the various communities that were forming around belief in the life, death, and divine salvific resurrection of Jesus, the itinerant teacher turned divine universal savior.

Whatever may have been John of Patmos’ intended message in “Revelation,” it has proven very flexible in interpretation. Indeed, it has served as a sort of theological Rorschach test in which a reader can spot his or her enemies or adversaries, whoever they might be. It made it into the canon of approved books, in no small measure, because the Egyptian bishop Athanasius saw “how to use it as a weapon—not against Rome and its rulers but against other Christians whom he called

heretics.”⁹⁸ Few Christians have ever heard of him, but Athanasius produced the first definitive list of the twenty-seven books that are in what is now called the Christian New Testament, and he chose to include “Revelation.” He did this in 367 CE,⁹⁹ more than four decades after he prevailed at the Council of Nicea in forcing the adoption of the first version of the Nicene Creed,¹⁰⁰ the document that would be finalized in 381 CE into the creed recited weekly in a majority of Christian churches to this day,¹⁰¹ and which declared the strange doctrine of the Trinity (God is the three persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and yet somehow still only One God, as required for monotheism) to be a required element of Christian belief.¹⁰²

After initially disliking the book and suggesting that it should be ejected from the New Testament canon, Martin Luther came round and embraced it, once he

⁹⁸ Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation*, 135.

⁹⁹ Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God : The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, 349-52.

¹⁰¹ Richard E. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God : The Epic Fight over Christ's Divinity in the Last Days of Rome* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999), 221-24.

¹⁰² Though little known by Christians, the Jewish scholar, Richard E. Rubenstein, argues that Athanasius was supremely important in shaping what would become the orthodox doctrines of traditional Christianity, describing him as follows: “The redheaded deacon was one of the fourth century’s ‘new men’ ... whose ambition was boundless, and who was very much at home in the ‘real’ world of power relations and political skulduggery. For a similar combination of theoretical acumen, dogged adherence to principle, and political ruthlessness, one would have to await the advent of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Vladimir Lenin.” And Rubenstein recounts that Athanasius’ main theological opponent, Arius (who argued against the adoption of the Trinitarian doctrine and for the supreme divinity of God the Father, and only a lesser divinity for his son Jesus), died suddenly during the Council of Nicea in a manner consistent with poisoning just before Arius was to address the Council. Athanasius, now a saint within Catholicism, may indeed have been very ruthless. *Ibid.*, 104-05, 35-37.

realized how he could use its powerful imagery against his Catholic adversaries. To this day, Seventh-day Adventists regard the system of world Catholicism to represent the beast and antichrist of Revelation. Many contemporary evangelicals see in it signs of an emerging world tyrant in the form of the United Nations, perhaps embodied in the U.N.'s Secretary General. Sometimes, evangelicals will argue that the beast of "Revelation" is the president of European Union. The identity of beast and antichrist seems to shift based on what is then happening in the news, as I will lay out in my research data chapters.

First John

The New Testament contains three letters attributed to a John, and there is broad consensus among New Testament scholars that the same community (called "the Johannine community") that produced the gospel attributed John also produced these letters. "First John" explores the theme of "God" as "love":

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:7-12)

The command to "love one another" is one that echoes the same command in John's

gospel.¹⁰³ At face value, an exhortation to “love one another” seems laudable, even New Agey, evoking San Francisco’s 1967 “Summer of Love.” That, according both to Ehrman and Martin, would be a mistake. The exhortation to “love one another” was an exhortation for members within the Johannine community to love each other. It was not a commitment to love all humans.¹⁰⁴

“First John” also introduces the concept of the “antichrist” which is anyone who “denies that Jesus is the Christ” (1 John 2:22). This is very consonant with the theme in John’s gospel on “belief” in the divinity of Jesus as the matter of most importance to God. (“Second John” also introduces the idea that anyone that does not believe Jesus came “in the flesh” is an “antichrist” (2 John 1:7), reflecting the raging controversies in the late first and early second centuries of whether Jesus was all God, all human, some mix of the two, or both all God and all human simultaneously).

Finally, “Second Peter,” compliments the apocalyptic tone of “Revelation,” though written 30 to 50 years later. For the purpose of this dissertation, the key passage is the following:

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with

¹⁰³ John 13:34, 15:12, 15:17.

¹⁰⁴ Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 160, 267; Dale B. Martin, "Lecture 12 - Johannine Christianity: The Letters (R1st 152: Introduction to the New Testament History and Literature)," New Haven, CT: Open Yale Courses, Unused 1, Spring Semester 2009, URL <https://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/r1st-152/lecture-12>. Accessed April 28, 2018.

fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. (2 Peter 3:8-13)

This book shows that the believers, now approximately a century later, are having to cope with the fact that apocalypse was not as imminent as expected. The anonymous writer (claiming to be Peter, Jesus' chief disciple) is attempting to get what are now emerging as distinctly Christian communities to adjust their expectations and realize that they are going to have to continue to live in this world for some indeterminate period of time because Jesus, for his own reasons, has delayed his return. However, vigilance must be maintained. He could still show up at any moment, "like a thief," just as predicted in Paul's opening book of the New Testament (1 Thess. 5:2). And, when he does, "the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire." As will become clear, this last passage continues to shape some Christian communities, especially evangelicals. Unsurprisingly, it serves to suppress environmental concern and pro-environmental behavior.

Chapter 4: American Protestantism-From Constantine to the Contemporary Moment

As was noted in the previous chapter, the early Jesus movements, both Jewish and non-Jewish, and the early Christianity that emerged out of these movements, were characterized by fervent apocalyptic expectation. Jesus is depicted in all three of the synoptic gospels as saying he would return before the generation then living had died. With this expected deliverance, worldly affairs would be set right by God, the righteous would be resurrected and experience eternal life here on this earth. Bart Ehrman calls this model of apocalyptic unfolding “horizontal dualism.” There is a past ruled by wickedness that is brought to a divine supernatural end, followed by an eternal reign of divine righteousness, all occurring here on this earth. During the first two centuries this expectation persisted, but its non-occurrence eventually took a toll. By mid-second century, at least some within these movements were starting to grapple with how to account for the delay in Jesus’ return, and, as was noted in Chapter 3, this is most clearly shown in “Second Peter,” the last book written that was ultimately included in the New Testament canon. Some communities began to conceive a new “vertical” model of heaven and hell. Life on this planet was irredeemable and God’s ultimate triumph would occur by redeeming the righteous into heaven and committing the wicked to hell. This planet became a stage on which each individual’s eternal fate, either in heaven or in hell, is determined. This vertical model persists in many Christian communities to this day. Here in the United States,

this view is concentrated in churches that self-identify as evangelical or fundamentalist and it remains official doctrine of Roman Catholicism.

I have not addressed or summarized the majority of Christian history for the most of the last two millennia, as it does not directly bear on my research questions. It is worth briefly mentioning that after the Nicene Creed was declared in its final form at the Council of Constantinople in 381¹⁰⁵ and after emperor Theodosius I took power in the 390s. He was the final emperor to rule both Western and Eastern Roman empire, and during his rule “Christianity did indeed become, for all intents and purposes, the ‘official’ Roman religion. Pagan religious practices were outlawed.”¹⁰⁶ A four-century, periodically violent, campaign to stamp out any vestiges of pre-Christian paganism was waged,¹⁰⁷ and was largely able to destroy most texts that were unapproved or that in any way did not support the emerging form of orthodoxy that would hold hegemony over Christian thought for more than a millennium. The (mostly) unified church cleaved in two in 1054 CE (for complex reasons not germane here). Thereafter western Roman Catholicism ruled over the western church from Rome, and the eastern church, now called the Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox and various other regional branches, was initially administered from Constantinople.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God : The Epic Fight over Christ's Divinity in the Last Days of Rome*, 222-23.

¹⁰⁶ Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God : The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, 346.

¹⁰⁷ Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 27.

The next big schism was Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation, commenced in 1517. This would lead to an explosion in Protestantism's branches, which now number in the tens of thousands at least. The key element of the reformation for this dissertation is the elevation of biblical scripture as the sole determinant of proper doctrine, sometimes labeled with the Latin phrase, *sola scriptura*.¹⁰⁹ It constituted a rejection of the authority of the Roman Catholic church to set proper interpretation of the Bible and determine its proper meaning, and to regulate access to salvation via its rituals. The doctrine of salvation by faith alone granted through God's free gift of grace¹¹⁰ is also associated with the Reformation.

Anti-Catholicism in American Protestantism and Its Effects

During the colonial period and well into the 20th century, the United States was overwhelmingly Protestant, tracing its roots to northern Europe.¹¹¹ When Irish Catholics began immigrating to the U.S. in large numbers, they were rarely welcomed. The Philadelphia Bible riots of 1844, triggered by mandated public school readings from the King James Version of the Bible was one vivid example where Catholic/Protestant animosities erupted into deadly violence.¹¹² In 1921, a Methodist

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 502; John Westerdale Bowker, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 912.

¹¹⁰ Bowker, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, 334, 85, 805-09.

¹¹¹ Robert P. Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 30.

¹¹² Ann T. Snyder, "The Bible Riots," *Christian History*, no. 100 (2010), <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/bible-riots-kjv>.

minister and Klu Klux Klan member in Birmingham, Alabama, murdered a Catholic priest sitting on his porch because he had performed a marriage of the minister's daughter earlier that day to a Catholic man of Puerto Rican descent, but was acquitted at trial. In 1928, Catholic Al Smith won the Democratic nomination to run for president against Herbert Hoover, a Quaker. In opposition to Smith, the Klan mailed thousands of postcards drawing on New Testament apocalypticism, saying "we now face the darkest hour in American history. In a [Democratic] convention ruled by political Romanism, anti-Christ has won."¹¹³

Because of these sorts of antipathies, theorists of American religion long assumed that the existing denominational divides in American Christianity were the central factors to be analyzed, with the Catholic/Protestant divide being a primary factor. An influential proponent of this approach was Will Herberg, who in 1955 posited that the varieties of American religion were best understood by examining the differences between confessional statements made by Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders and institutions.¹¹⁴

Major divides within American Protestantism had begun to emerge around the issue of slavery in the mid 19th century, causing the Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians to divide into North and South divisions, and much of that divide persists. White evangelicals largely abstained for the struggle for civil rights, while mainline Protestants marched together with Catholics in support of ending Jim Crow

¹¹³ Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, 31, 62.

¹¹⁴ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955).

segregation and in favor of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965.¹¹⁵

As sociologist Robert P. Jones explains, this divide was “marked by differences in social class and by their perspectives on race relations in the wake of the Civil War and Reconstruction” and differences “rooted in disagreements over fundamental tenets of theology, approaches to diversity, and accommodations to the modern world and science.” The modernists welcomed “new scholarship, even when it challenged traditional conceptions of faith” and modified their conceptions of creation to “incorporate Darwinism” through a model still called “‘theistic evolution.’” They pushed to include evolution in the science curricula of the country's newly forming public school system, arguing that children should be armed with all available scientific knowledge.” Traditional Protestants, who came to be called “Fundamentalists” (a term coined by Curtis Lee Laws in 1920, who was the editor of a Baptist periodical) and then evangelicals, were “horrified by these concessions,” rejected both evolutionary theory and the findings of biblical criticism by adamantly asserting “the Bible’s truth and authority, and prophesying a literal second coming where Jesus would descend physically from heaven.” They further asserted that “allowing evolution to be taught in schools would lead to a denial of Christian doctrine,” and would destroy “America's moral and spiritual core.” Curtis Lee Laws explained that the fundamentalist response was “a protest against that rationalistic interpretation of Christianity which seeks to discredit supernaturalism.” This contest

¹¹⁵ Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, 31, 65.

culminated in 1925 what came to be known as the “Monkey Trial” in which John Scopes was prosecuted for violating a Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolutionary science.¹¹⁶

Beginning in the 19th century, the modernist wing of American Protestantism became very this-worldly in their focus. Indeed, 20 of the 50 economists who in 1885 founded the American Economics Association were either former or practicing Protestant ministers.¹¹⁷ Richard Ely, the founding Secretary of the Association, declared that “Christianity is primarily concerned with the world, and it is the mission of Christianity to bring to pass here a kingdom of righteousness.” Economics, in his view, was a means to bring expertise to “a never ceasing attack on every wrong institution, until the earth becomes a new earth, and all its cities, cities of God.”¹¹⁸ His was an optimistic vision for an ever-improving human condition.

Jones notes that while “fights over theological doctrine and church authority had been a familiar part of white Protestant life throughout its four-hundred-year history, the Modernist/ Fundamentalist controversy exposed deep epistemological fault lines” between those who came to be known as mainline Protestants who embraced modernism and evangelical Protestants who championed a fundamentalist

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 32-33.

¹¹⁷ Robert H. Nelson, *The New Holy Wars: Economic Religion Vs. Environmental Religion in Contemporary America* (University Park, PA; Oakland, CA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 24.

¹¹⁸ Richard T. Ely, *Social Aspects of Christianity and Other Essays* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1889), 53, 73,
<https://books.google.com/books?id=0Ik3AQAAMAAJ>.

metaphysical stance.¹¹⁹ Historian David A. Hollinger called this the “Protestant dialectic, within which the two great rivals for control of the symbolic capital of Christianity define themselves in terms of each other.”

One issue where both mainline and evangelical Protestants remained largely in agreement was over abortion rights: they were for them. It is hard to imagine now, but many and perhaps most evangelicals were in favor of expanding the right to a legal abortion during the period when it was still largely illegal. Opposition to abortion was still thought of as “primarily a Catholic issue well into the 1970s,” and therefore regarded as suspect by evangelicals.¹²⁰ For example, in June 1971, the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis passed the following resolution: “we call upon Southern Baptists to work for legislation that will allow the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother.”¹²¹ When *Roe vs. Wade* was issued, W. A. Criswell, a prominent fundamentalist and president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1968-1970, said this in praise of the *Roe* decision: “I have always felt that it was only after a child was born and had a life separate from its mother that it became an individual person and it has always, therefore, seemed to me that what is best for the mother and for the future should be allowed.”¹²² In June

¹¹⁹ Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, 33.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 170.

¹²¹ <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/13/resolution-on-abortion>

¹²² Randall Balmer, "Fundamentalism, the First Amendment, and the Rise of the

1974, a year and a half after the Roe decision, the Southern Baptist Convention declared “we reaffirm the resolution on the subject adopted by the messengers to the St. Louis Southern Baptist Convention meeting in 1971.”¹²³

As historian of religion Randall Balmer has documented, in the late 1970s, the Republican Party was looking for new political foot soldiers and made a conscious decision to increase anti-abortion sentiment among evangelicals. Evangelical anger over government attempts to restrict racial segregation at conservative evangelical colleges like Bob Jones University had erupted, but Republican political operatives felt they could not overtly campaign around maintaining race-based segregation. Instead, they strategically settled on anti-abortion sentiment as a potential rallying point. Seeing such sentiment, however, was either weak or non-existent in evangelical circles, it had to be manufactured.¹²⁴ This was done with videos produced by Frank Schaeffer, son of the famed evangelical theologian, Francis Schaeffer (discussed in the next chapter). These videos were played and distributed in evangelical settings.¹²⁵ This strategy worked. Evangelicals began to become the fiercest opponents of abortion. And, this lessened the tensions between Catholics and evangelicals, who were now politically united in opposition to abortion rights and legal protections the LGBTQ community. By the mid-1990s, a number of conservative evangelical and

Religious Right," *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 18 (2010).

¹²³ <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/14>

¹²⁴ Balmer, "Fundamentalism, the First Amendment, and the Rise of the Religious Right."

¹²⁵ Frank Schaeffer, "Web Extra: Full Frank Schaeffer Interview," New York: Full Frontal with Samantha Bee, 0:05:26, May 24, 2016, **URL** <https://youtu.be/MhLY0JqXP-s>, (Accessed May 13, 2018).

Catholic thought leaders including Charles Colson and Father John Neuhaus were experimenting with further formal attempts to bridge the gaps between their respective constituencies. One such effort in 1994 produced a document called “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.”¹²⁶

Consistent with the foregoing, in 1988, Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow argued that the key divisions within American Christianity are not primarily between Catholics and Protestants or among the various denominational and doctrinal differences within Protestantism, but reflected differences that cut across all Christian denominations: on the one hand, theological conservatism versus liberalism tends to be connected with political conservatism and liberalism, leaving in between a broad swath of moderates (again, both theologically and politically), who are located in between.¹²⁷ Wuthnow revisited his thesis based on data from 1984, 1988, and 1992, and again found a gradient from conservative to liberal across most denominations and argued that this is the best way to understand American Christianity.¹²⁸ Indeed, Wuthnow contended that by 1992, American Christianity had diverged into three main groups: one conservative, another liberal, each with distinct and substantial theological, political, and ethical differences. In between these poles was a third, more heterogenous and moderate group. The only things conservative American

¹²⁶ Elizabeth Bruenig, "Evangelicals and Catholics Made Their Peace. Catholics Are Paying the Price.," *Washington Post*, October 27, 2017, <https://wapo.st/2yRct2A>; Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, 65-66.

¹²⁷ Robert Wuthnow, "The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II," (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

¹²⁸ Robert Wuthnow, "Restructuring of American Religion: Further Evidence*," *Sociological Inquiry* 66, no. 3 (1996).

Christians share in common with liberal Christians, Wuthnow concluded, is their desire for an emotionally fulfilling and economically successful life.¹²⁹

The division between Protestantism and Catholicism does continue to find expression. A simple internet search of “are catholics saved” will produce of plethora of commentary informing the reader that only born again evangelicals can be saved, and in opposition, that only Catholics who have access to the rites and rituals of the Roman Catholic church will attain salvation. In the U.S., however, the significance of this divide has lessened. The Catholic Workers and the Nuns on the Bus are likely to be in solidarity with social justice mainline Protestants, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) routinely allies itself of conservative evangelicals in opposition to abortion, to contraception access, to LGBTQ protections.

Empirical research on Christianity in the U.S. continues to show that evangelicals tend to be conservative both theologically and politically.¹³⁰ A year and half after the election of Donald Trump, evangelical support of him is at its all time high.¹³¹ The degree of polarization within both mainline Protestantism and Catholicism, however, has not typically been a focus of research. And Catholicism is

¹²⁹ Ibid., 320.

¹³⁰ Steven Brint and Seth Abrutyn, "Who's Right About the Right? Comparing Competing Explanations of the Link between White Evangelicals and Conservative Politics in the United States," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (2010).

¹³¹ Robert P. Jones, "White Evangelical Support for Donald Trump at All-Time High," *Spotlight Overview* (2018), <https://www.prii.org/spotlight/white-evangelical-support-for-donald-trump-at-all-time-high/>.

still usually treated as a homogenous whole by social scientists. There has been little effort to measure whether conservative Protestants really have more in common with conservative Catholics than they have with liberals who ostensibly belong to their own traditions, and whether the same holds true for liberal Protestants and Catholics. Two studies based on data from 2010 and 2014, however, have demonstrated this is indeed the case, at least as it relates to climate change. In the U.S., particularly in relation to their low level of concern about climate change, white evangelicals and white Catholics are statistically indistinguishable.¹³²

For American Christianity in the contemporary moment, an additional significant circumstance is demographic, namely, the dramatic decline in the proportion of the American public that expresses a Christian identity (from 86% in 1990¹³³ to 70.6% in 2014,¹³⁴ an 18% decline overall).

¹³² Robert P. Jones, Daniel Cox, and Juhem Navarro-Rivera, "Believers, Sympathizers, & Skeptics: Why Americans Are Conflicted About Climate Change, Environmental Policy, and Science" *publicreligion.org* (2014), <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2014-Climate-Change-FINAL1.pdf>; Matthew B. Arbuckle and David M. Konisky, "The Role of Religion in Environmental Attitudes," *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 5 (2015).

¹³³ Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, "American Religious Identity Survey," Hartford, CT: Trinity College, Report, March 2009, URL http://www.americanreligionsurvey-aris.org/reports/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf.

¹³⁴ Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life, "America's Changing Religious Landscape: Christians Decline Sharply as Share of Population; Unaffiliated and Other Faiths Continue to Grow," (2015), <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>.

Chapter 5: The Evolution of Conservative Protestantism in the U.S. and Its Discourse on the Environment: 1950s-Present

Early Conservative Protestant Reaction to Environmentalism

As set out in Chapter 1, a key development in the discussion of the role of Christianity in American attitudes toward the environment was the publication in 1967 of Lynn White's still influential and widely cited essay, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." There, recounting the separation of God from Nature within Judaism and Christianity, White declared that "in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen," and argued that much—if not most—environmental degradation is directly traceable to Christianity's radical anthropocentrism.¹³⁵ White's indictment provoked an explosion of theological and philosophical reflection, both within and outside Christianity.¹³⁶ Poet and environmentalist Wendell Berry has gone so far as to assert that because of White's argument, "the culpability of Christianity in the destruction of the natural world, and the uselessness of Christianity to any effort to correct that destruction, are now established clichés of the conservation movement."¹³⁷

¹³⁵ White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1205.

¹³⁶ Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 20.

¹³⁷ Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community: Eight Essays*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 93-94.

Evolution of the Evangelical Protestant Discourse on the Environment: 1970-Present

The first major Christian response to White came in 1970 from then prominent and still a widely cited thinker within evangelical Christianity, Francis Schaeffer. In *Pollution and the Death of Man*,¹³⁸ Schaeffer acknowledged the intensifying problems of environmental pollution, but denied that these problems stemmed from Christian arrogance and anthropocentrism. He confirmed that, yes, unique in all nature, only humans were created in “the image of God” and were therefore uniquely exalted by God. According to Schaeffer, however, humans only held nature “in stewardship for the true Owner. When we have dominion over nature, *it is not ours*, either. It belongs to God, and we are to exercise our dominion over these things not as though entitled to exploit them, but as things borrowed or held in trust, which we are to use realizing that they are not ours intrinsically. [Humanity’s] dominion is under God’s dominion and under God’s Domain.”¹³⁹

Schaeffer was no doubt aware that more pantheistic reinterpretations of Christian doctrine were already well underway within mainline Christian denominations under the influence of the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and the Christian process theology of Charles Hartshorne.¹⁴⁰ Thus, though he argued that human authority over God’s creation was not unlimited, Schaeffer also

¹³⁸ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970).

¹³⁹ Ibid., 51, 70. emphasis in the original)

¹⁴⁰ John W. Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers: From Plato to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0614/2006016976.html>

cautioned throughout his book, faithful to Paul of Tarsus's creator/creation distinction and consistent with White's thesis, that humans must not let worries over environmental pollution tempt them into a more pantheistic understanding of nature. The idea that humanity's God-given dominion over non-human nature means that humans are in effect God's "steward" is an old one.¹⁴¹ According to Schaeffer, Faithful Christians must stay within the framework of humanity as the proper and rightful stewards of God's creation.¹⁴² Other evangelical theorists and theologians such as Loren Wilkinson¹⁴³ and Calvin B. DeWitt¹⁴⁴ also studied how the stewardship model of old should be applied in the present moment. The basic framework of the stewardship model remains in place to the present and stewardship is the main trope that is used by all evangelicals and literalistic fundamentalists who discuss

¹⁴¹ See Glacken's articulation of Sir Matthew Hale's 17th century ideas about humans as God's "steward." Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Nulure in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 481.

¹⁴² In 2017, Baptist theologian and academic Andrew Spencer urged a return to Schaeffer's 1970 book as the proper foundation for an evangelical theology of environmental concern. Predictably, he attacks Lynn White as a primary reason evangelicals think engaging in environmental activism is to court spiritual danger. He also blames John Muir. He sees Muir's use of Christian religious language to describe his experiencing of God in nature in support of his arguments for national parks and environmental preservation as raising concerns of "paganization" among many conservative Christians who might have otherwise been supportive of parks and environmental concern. Andrew Spencer, "Three Reasons Why Evangelicals Stopped Advocating for the Environment: It's Not Theology, It's Politics," *Christianity Today* 2017 <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/june-web-only/three-reasons-evangelicals-dont-advocate-for-environment.html>.

¹⁴³ Peter De Vos, Loren Wilkinson, and Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship, *Earthkeeping, Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980).

¹⁴⁴ Calvin B. DeWitt, *Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues*, Issues in Christian Living (Grand Rapids, Mich.: CRC Publications, 1994).

environmental issues. It is also used by many, perhaps most, mainline Protestants when addressing environmental concerns.

The next significant development within evangelical environmentalism was its move into policy advocacy. In 1993, the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) formed as a subsidiary ministry of Evangelicals for Social Action,¹⁴⁵ a social justice advocacy organization founded in 1973. It formed in order to provide evangelical participation in the then emerging National Religious Partnership for the Environment, a Jewish and Christian umbrella organization whose purpose was to “promote environmental causes in church and temple teaching.”¹⁴⁶ Though primarily an educational organization formed to distribute environmental information to evangelical congregations, the EEN also led a political campaign in 1996 to help fend off Republican efforts in Congress to weaken the federal Endangered Species Act.¹⁴⁷ In the course of that campaign, evangelical lay-theologian and environmental studies professor Calvin B. DeWitt declared that the federal Endangered Species Act was “the Noah’s ark of our day” and that “Congress and special interests are trying to sink it.”¹⁴⁸ As part of the campaign to protect the Act, DeWitt and other evangelical

¹⁴⁵ David Larsen, "Evangelical Environmental Network," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London & New York: Continuum International., 2005), 624.

¹⁴⁶ Mick Womersley, "National Religious Partnership for the Environment," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London & New York: Continuum International, 2005), 1158.

¹⁴⁷ Larsen, "Evangelical Environmental Network," 625.

¹⁴⁸ Peter Steinfels, "Evangelical Group Defends Laws Protecting Endangered Species as a Modern 'Noah's Ark'," *New York Times*, January 31, 1996 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/31/us/evangelical-group-defends-laws-protecting->

leaders organized a network of evangelical “Noah” congregations who pledged to oppose the congressional efforts to weaken federal species protection.¹⁴⁹ The campaign was successful, and evangelical participation in the campaign was widely credited as a substantial factor in this political victory.

The Beginning of Conservative Protestant Backlash to Creation Care

Even before the EEN’s Noah campaign in support of the Endangered Species Act, some Christian thinkers were beginning to push back on what they regarded as an unfortunate entanglement of some Christians in advocating for and promoting environmental regulation by government. An early leader in this backlash and counter-movement was Catholic priest Robert Sirico. In 1990, shortly after his ordination, he founded a libertarian think tank and advocacy organization, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty in order “to promote a society that embraces civil liberties and free-market economics.”¹⁵⁰

Within evangelical Protestantism, E. Calvin Beisner—in the early 90s still a little known Orthodox Presbyterian theologian and interdisciplinary studies professor at Covenant College, a small conservative Christian college in Georgia—was an early critic and opponent of the EEN. Shortly after the formation of the EEN, he penned a

endangered-species-amodern-noah-s-ark.html.

¹⁴⁹ Laurel Kearns, "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism," *Social Compass* 44, no. 3 (1997).

¹⁵⁰ David Larsen, "Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London & New York: Continuum International, 2005), 849.

critical article in the Christian news magazine, *World*, in which he challenged the allegations of environmental problems laid out in the EEN's foundational document, "The Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation" ("Creation Care Declaration").¹⁵¹ There, Beisner pioneered his basic manner of attack. First, while acknowledging that caring about the environment is important and expressing appreciation to the drafters for firmly asserting "the distinction between Creator and creature," Beisner asserted that the problems alleged either do not exist at all or are much less severe than suggested in the Creation Care Declaration. Second, Beisner says the only scientist involved with drafting the Declaration was Calvin DeWitt, and that the drafters therefore lacked sufficient scientific expertise. Third, Beisner associated the EEN with figures considered questionable within conservative Christian circles. For instance, Beisner suggested the EEN and the declaration drafters had fallen under the influence of secularists like "Carl Sagan, a Marxist professor of astronomy" and the "well-known theological liberal Rev. James Morton, dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine," which is code within conservative Christianity for being a center of illegitimate forms of "New Age" Christianity.¹⁵² Finally, Beisner accused EEN of theological error for failing to acknowledge, pursuant to Psalms 115:16, that God specifically gave the earth to

¹⁵¹ E. Calvin Beisner, "Are God's Resources Finite? A Group of Christian Leaders Claim They Are, but Does the Claim Square with the Evidence?," *World* 8, no. 27 (1993), <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/articles/read/evangelical-environmental-declaration-seeks-consensus-on-controversial-views/>.

¹⁵² Texe W. Marris, *Texe Marris Book of New Age Cults & Religions* (Austin, TX: Living Truth Publishers, 1990), 283-84.

humans, and that God specifically expects humans to transform “cursed earth—the wilderness—into a garden” such as existed before Adam and Eve’s sin.¹⁵³

Perhaps in response to the EEN’s successful 1996 Noah campaign, Sirico’s Acton Institute published a book about a year later by Beisner. In *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate*, Beisner expressed appreciation for evangelicals’ entry into the discourse about environmental issues, but then expanded his 1993 article into a book length critique of what he regards as theological mistakes being committed by his fellow evangelicals.¹⁵⁴ In particular, Beisner seems especially interested in criticizing Calvin DeWitt—a scientist who became an important leader of the evangelical Creation Care movement. He targets DeWitt’s view that the earth is properly analogized to the Garden of Eden in all its perfection and fruitfulness, and that the divine command to humans to “subdue” and exercise “dominion over” the earth found in Genesis 1:26-28 is constrained and modified by the subsequent command to Adam to “till” and “keep” the “garden of Eden” found in Genesis 2:15. According to DeWitt, “Creation’s garden abundantly yields blessed fruits, sustainably supporting us and all life in its God-declared goodness. We ‘disciples of the first Adam’ have made the choice to extract more and yet more of the fruits of creation—even at the expense of destroying creation’s protective provisions and blessed fruitfulness.” Yet, “even from the time of Adam and

¹⁵³ Beisner, "Are God’s Resources Finite? A Group of Christian Leaders Claim They Are, but Does the Claim Square with the Evidence?."

¹⁵⁴ E. Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty; W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1997).

Eve, humanity has not been satisfied with the fruitfulness and grace of the Garden—the productive and beautiful creation that God has provided us.”¹⁵⁵

Beisner flatly rejects this view, arguing in a literalistic fundamentalist manner that “The Garden of Eden ceased to exist—and essentially the whole earth became wilderness—with [Noah’s] Flood.” Because God himself put a curse upon the earth due to Adam and Eve’s sin, “creation by itself simply does not abundantly yield blessed fruits . . . but it becomes abundantly fruitful only under the wise and resolute hand of man,” especially by Christians who must now “seek to transform cursed ground back into blessed ground.” Noting the “forcefulness” that God must have used when separating “light from darkness” or “the waters from dry land,” Beisner concludes that “while tender cultivation is suited to a garden, forceful subduing is suited to all of the earth that has not yet be transformed in the garden.” Only a “strong, forceful subjugation” of the earth by humans will accomplish the redemption of the fallen and cursed earth to being again blessed and fruitful. Citing the Psalms 115:16 passage noted above, Beisner chastises and laments the “tendency among some environmentalists to blur or erase the metaphysical and ethical hierarchy of man over other living creatures,” thereby failing to recognize “the Biblical teaching that God gave man a mandate to rule the earth.”¹⁵⁶

ExxonMobile, the Koch brothers, and other extractive industries subsequently provided funding to spread of Beisner’s message as Beisner himself acknowledge to

¹⁵⁵ DeWitt, *Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues*, 35, 45.

¹⁵⁶ Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate*, 16, 20, 103, 78.

Bill Moyers (discussed below). Given Beisner's articulation of what he has elsewhere simply called "forceful rule,"¹⁵⁷ it is perhaps easy to see that extractive industries might indeed want to see his message spread as a counter-force to evangelical creation care.

The Cornwall Declaration: Packaging Christian Anti-Environmentalism for the Public

Beisner's book articulating humanity's Christian duty of "forceful rule" over the earth was an innovative conservative Christian polemic in favor of industrial capitalism. But of course few people would ever read or even hear about Beisner's book. How might Beisner's new gospel be spread? Robert Sirico's next move in October 1999 was to have the Acton Institute bring together a group theologically and politically conservative Jewish, Catholic and Protestant leaders at a conference center in West Cornwall, Connecticut. They drafted a document called the Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship. Acton then founded the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES) in 2000 to promote the document as a challenge to the National Religious Partnership for the Environment.¹⁵⁸

The Cornwall Declaration is primarily a two-page distillation of the main

¹⁵⁷ E. Calvin Beisner, "Shining a Light in a Dark Place," *Religion & Liberty* 7, no. 2 (1997): 10, <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-7-number-2/shining-light-dark-place>.

¹⁵⁸ Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, "The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship," Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, Web Page, URL <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/articles/read/the-cornwall-declaration-on-environmental-stewardship/>.

arguments of Beisner's book. The declaration acknowledges ongoing harmful pollution in developing countries while asserting that environmental problems have mostly been solved in the developed world due to the application of free market capitalism and its resulting development of natural resources. The key to solving problems in developing countries will be to ensure that the "relationships between stewardship and private property are fully appreciated, allowing people's natural incentive to care for their own property to reduce the need for collective ownership and control of resources and enterprises, and in which collective action, when deemed necessary, takes place at the most local level possible." Curiously, this preference for "private property" and lack of collective control receives no theological justification, but is merely asserted. The declaration also asserts that "fears of destructive manmade global warming, overpopulation, and rampant species loss," are "unfounded" or "undue," and that such concerns are at most "speculative," calling for "solutions" that "are unjustifiably costly and of dubious benefit." Predictably, the declaration reminds its readers that they must not "deify nature or oppose human dominion over creation," but must instead remember that as the sole "bearers of God's image" on earth, only humans are capable of adding to the "to the earth's abundance." In a passage echoing the late Cornucopian economist Julian Simon¹⁵⁹ (with whom Beisner had

¹⁵⁹ In 1981, Simon said the following: "I believe that human ingenuity, rather than nature, is limitlessly bountiful. I believe that with knowledge, imagination, and enterprise, we and our descendants can muster from the earth all the mineral raw materials that we need and desire, at prices that grow smaller relative to other prices and to our total income. In short, our cornucopia is the human mind and heart. So it has been in the past, and therefore, I believe, so it is likely to be in the future." Julian

collaborated and whom he extolled in his book), the declaration proclaims, in a robust display of human exemptionalism,¹⁶⁰ that “the human person is the most valuable resource on earth.”¹⁶¹

The declaration attracted the support of a number of well-known conservative Protestant leaders, including Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, James Dobson, and Charles Colson. It also attracted support from outside Protestantism, including figures such as conservative Catholic priest John Neuhaus and Rabbi Daniel Lapin. The ICES sent the declaration out to 37,000 religious leaders, along with an explanation of the dangers being posed to traditional Abrahamic faiths by the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, who they accused of attempting to “redefine traditional Judeo-Christian teachings on stewardship.” The wholesale attack forced EEN to defend itself to its evangelical constituents in “a series of semi-public letters with ICES leaders.”¹⁶²

Evangelical Climate Care and Its Backlash: 2004 to present

In 2004, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) published “For the Health of the Nation,” adding “creation care,” “peace,” and “human rights” to more

L. Simon, "The Scarcity of Raw Materials," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1981 1981, 41.

¹⁶⁰ Jr. Catton, William R. and Riley E. Dunlap, "A New Ecological Paradigm for Post-Exuberant Sociology," *American Behavioral Scientist* 24, no. 1 (1980).

¹⁶¹ Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, "The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship".

¹⁶² Larsen, "Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship," 850.

traditional Evangelical concerns, such as the “sanctity of life,” thereby creating a foundation for potential engagement by evangelicals in the issue of climate change.¹⁶³

Two years later in 2006, the Evangelical Environmental Network launched its Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI), and issued its “Evangelical Call to Action” on Climate Change. This short document laid out “four simple but urgent claims”: 1) “Human-Induced Climate Change is Real and increasing international instability”; 2) “The Consequences of Climate Change Will Be Significant, and Will Hit the Poor the Hardest”; 3) “Christian Moral Convictions Demand Our Response to the Climate Change Problem”; and 4) “The need to act now is urgent.”¹⁶⁴

To oppose this, Beisner renamed the ICES as the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (“ISA”) and in its name drafted and delivered an open letter to the leadership of the NAE urging that they decline to sign or endorse the ECI’s “Call to Action.”¹⁶⁵ The letter was signed by twenty-two politically powerful evangelical leaders,¹⁶⁶ a group described by the Washington Post as a “Who’s Who of politically powerful

¹⁶³ National Association of Evangelicals, “For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility,” National Association of Evangelicals, Report, URL <http://www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org/document.doc?id=116> or www.nae.net/images/content/For_The_Health_Of_The_Nation.pdf.

¹⁶⁴ Evangelical Climate Initiative, “Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action,” *christiansandclimate.org* (2006), <http://christiansandclimate.org/statement/> or <http://www.npr.org/documents/2006/feb/evangelical/calltoaction.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ David Barton et al., “Interfaith Stewardship Alliance’s Letter to the National Association of Evangelicals on the Issue of Global Warming,” Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, Web Page, URL http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/green/nae_response.pdf.

¹⁶⁶ Alan Cooperman, “Evangelicals Will Not Take Stand on Global Warming,” *The Washington Post*, February 2, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/01/AR2006020102132.html>.

evangelicals,” including the late Chuck Colson, the Watergate conspirator who converted to Christianity while in prison and subsequently became an evangelical prison outreach advocate; James Dobson, the founder of Focus on the Family; Richard Land, the then head of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (“ERLC”) of the Southern Baptist Convention, America’s largest Protestant denomination; Richard Roberts of Oral Roberts University; and Donald E. Wildmon, founder and then chairman of the American Family Association.¹⁶⁷ This high profile intervention also received coverage from the New York Times.¹⁶⁸

The Rev. Ted Haggard, the NAE’s President at the time, had spoken positively about the environment being “a values issue.”¹⁶⁹ The NAE’s Vice President for Governmental Affairs, the NAE’s top lobbyist in Washington, Richard Cizik, said he had “had a conversion experience on the climate issue not unlike conversion to Christ.”¹⁷⁰ The NAE had nearly endorsed the Call. The conservatives’ intervention had the desired effect, however; neither Haggard nor Cizik signed the Call and the NAE refrained from endorsing it.

This clash within the evangelical community received considerable attention, not only in the media, but from scholars as well.¹⁷¹ Indeed, famed journalist Bill

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Laurie Goodstein, "Evangelical Leaders Join Global Warming Initiative," *The New York Times*, February 8, 2006 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/08/national/08warm.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Cooperman, "Evangelicals Will Not Take Stand on Global Warming."

¹⁷⁰ Amanda Little, "Cizik Matters: An Interview with Green Evangelical Leader Richard Cizik," *Grist* (2005), <http://grist.org/article/cizik/>.

¹⁷¹ Brian McCammack, "Hot Damned America: Evangelicalism and the Climate

Moyers produced a PBS documentary that aired in late 2006 entitled, “Is God Green?,” which explored the conflicts within evangelical Christianity over climate change and environmental policy generally. When seeking interviews for the documentary with prominent evangelical leaders like Dobson and Colson who had signed the ISA’s letter opposing the ECI, he was instead directed to interview, in Moyers words, “Calvin Beisner, Ph.D.” Beisner had by this time earned a doctorate in Scottish religious history at the University of St. Andrews in 2003, conferring a new level of professional prestige. In Moyers’ documentary, he is identified as a professor of historical theology and social ethics at Knox Theological Seminary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (a position he left in 2008).¹⁷²

In the course of his interview, the full, unabridged text of which is published on Moyers website,¹⁷³ Moyers queried Beiser about his doctrine of “forceful rule.” Beisner explained that “Well, quite frankly, if you are going to mine for precious metals, for fossil fuels, for anything else, you don’t do that with a feather brush, you know. You don’t do it by quietly blowing a breath on something as you would to blow out a candle.” When asked if humans have “a moral obligation to clean up the consequences of that force,” Beisner said, “as far as we are able to and, always, we

Change Policy Debate," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2007).

¹⁷² Bill Moyers, Tom Casciato, and Betsy Rate, "Is God Green?," USA: PBS, 56:00, Oct. 11, 2006, URL <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/green/index.html>, URL2

http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/print/isgodgreen_transcript_print.html (Accessed May 20, 2016).

¹⁷³ Bill Moyers and E. Calvin Beisner, "Is God Green? The Moyers/Beisner Interview (Full Transcript)," (2006), http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/print/beisner_print.html.

also have a moral obligation to do rational, cost benefit analysis,” implying that the cost of cleanup might not survive a cost-benefit analysis. Beisner also acknowledged that his work has received funding from ExxonMobile, but saw nothing scandalous in this, saying that it is only to be expected that ExxonMobile would want voices such as his to be heard.

One more insight into Beisner’s thinking emerged from Moyers interview that does not surface either from the Cornwall Declaration, or from Beisner’s book. When pressed by Moyers as to whether he worried that he might be wrong about global warming, Beisner said that global warming, even if it turns out to be real and harmful, is of little ultimate importance, because whether one is “going to live [in either heaven or hell for] eternity” should be any reasonable human’s primary concern.

This is a telling detail. While this kind of dismissal of the earth’s importance is not usually stated this bluntly by conservative Christians in their polemics against environmental regulation, this exchange shows that a fatalistic eschatology that envisions a imminent divine intervention in earthly affairs forms part of the foundation of conservative Christian anti-environmentalism.

In May 2007, Beisner renamed his organization one more time, this time to the “Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation,” with the stated reason being to highlight the organization’s connection to “its flagship document.”¹⁷⁴

(www.cornwallalliance.org/about). Cornwall’s next significant project was its launch

¹⁷⁴ E. Calvin Beisner, "Background on the Issue/About the Cornwall Alliance," Web Page, August 15, 2008, URL <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/background-on-the-issue.pdf>, (Accessed May 16, 2018),

in 2010 of its “Resisting the Green Dragon” campaign, the primary tool of which was 12 half-hour lectures distributed through a box set of four DVDs. The promotional two minute video at the campaign’s website is striking for its scary music, flashy graphics, and strident rhetoric. In the introduction to the lecture series, Christian radio host, Janet Parshall states that:

In what has become one of the greatest deceptions of our day, radical environmentalism is striving to put America and the world under its destructive control. This so-called ‘Green Dragon’ is seducing your children in our classrooms and popular culture. Its lust for political power now extends to the highest global levels. And its twisted view of the world elevates nature above the needs of people, of even the poorest and the most helpless. ***With millions falling prey to its spiritual deception***, the time is now to stand and resist. Around the world, environmentalism has become a radical movement, something we call the Green Dragon, and it is deadly. Deadly to human prosperity, deadly to human life, deadly to human freedom and deadly to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Make no mistake about it, ***environmentalism is no longer your friend, it is your enemy***. And the battle is not primarily political or material, it is spiritual. [emphasis supplied]¹⁷⁵

While the promotional video is flashy, the rest of the content is more blandly presented, consisting of video recordings of twelve lectures recorded in an unidentified meeting room before a relatively small audience. Each of the lectures, two of them by Beisner, are preceded with short clips from various speakers, some of them prominent conservative evangelicals like Jack Hibbs of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills; the Christian nationalist and historical revisionist David Barton; Bryan Fischer of the American Family Association (known for promoting the idea that only

¹⁷⁵ Cornwall Alliance et al., “Resisting the Green Dragon’ Promotional Trailer,” (2010), <https://vimeo.com/15849648> [Password: RESIST] Alternate URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGEOFipx70U>.

Christianity is protected by the free exercise provisions of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution¹⁷⁶ (a position he repeated on his May 1, 2018 radio show)¹⁷⁷; Richard Land (president of Southern Evangelical Seminary and former president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention); and Tony Perkins (president of the Family Research Council since 2003). Of the twelve lectures, only one is by a credentialed climate scientist, David Legates, who is well known in climate change denial circles and one of the handful of credentialed climate scientists to dissent from the scientific consensus. The rest of the speakers serve to put into video format the intellectual program Beisner laid out in *Cornwall Declaration* and *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*. It seems clear that the series' intended audience is conservative evangelical congregations, not the general public.¹⁷⁸ No real effort is made to critique mainstream climate science, or explore it in any detail. The goal appears to be maintaining environmental skepticism in general and climate change denialism in particular among a constituency that is already inclined to such skepticism, and to attempt to neutralize the influence of progressive

¹⁷⁶ Jon Greenberg, "Fundamentalist: When Founders Said 'Religion,' They Meant Christianity," *PunditFact* (2013), <http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2013/dec/16/bryan-fischer/fundamentalist-when-founders-said-religion-they-me/>.

¹⁷⁷ Bryan Fischer, "Bryan Fischer Says 'Christianity Has First Amendment Rights ... No Other Religion Does' [May 1, 2018 Radio Show]," San Bruno, CA: RWW Blog, May 2, 2018, URL https://youtu.be/8_p6lMFsIpk, (Accessed May 14, 2018).

¹⁷⁸ Lynn Hempel and colleagues did a valuable discourse analysis on the content of the DVD series. Lynn Hempel, Kelsea MacIlroy, and Keith Smith, "Framing the Environment: The Cornwall Alliance, Laissez-Faire Environmentalism, and the Green Dragon," *Journal of the sociology and theory of religion* 3, no. Dec. 2014 (2014), <https://revistas.uva.es/index.php/socireli/article/view/689>.

evangelicals such as Calvin DeWitt and the EEN. I have monitored the term “resisting the green dragon” on Google since the release of DVD’s in 2010. It was initially slow to spread on the internet, but as of May 2018, it generates 44,600 hits on Google.

When Beisner acknowledged the influence upon him of his belief that what should most matter to any rational actor is where he will spend eternity, not the fate of his or her temporary abode, this planet, he identified a significant metaphysical position that seems to affect the level of concern that an evangelical can muster regarding environmental problems.

It is not new idea, and indeed traces back to the beginning of Christianity itself. A 20th century example was captured in the lyrics of a popular Protestant gospel song, “This world is not my home. I’m just a passing through. If heaven’s not my home, then Lord what will I do.”¹⁷⁹ According to a Pew study in 2006, 20% of Americans believe Jesus will return in their lifetimes.¹⁸⁰ By 2010, 41% were saying Jesus would return by 2050.¹⁸¹ The influence of this apocalyptic strain within

¹⁷⁹ Albert E. Brumley, *Albert E. Brumley's Book of Radio Favorites: A Collection of Sacred, Sentimental, and Folk Songs* (Powell, MO: Stamps-Baxter, 1938); Albert E. Brumley, "This World Is Not My Home [a Cappella Performance by Unknown Choir]," San Bruno, CA: YouTube, 0:01:58, URL <https://youtu.be/bu0GBJLQcsA>.

¹⁸⁰ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Many Americans Uneasy with Mix of Religion and Politics," *www.pewforum.org* (2006), <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Many-Americans-Uneasy-with-Mix-of-Religion-and-Politics.aspx>.

¹⁸¹ Pew Research Center, "Life in 2050: Amazing Science, Familiar Threats. Public See a Future Full of Promise and Peril," Report, June 22, 2010, URL <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/legacy-pdf/625.pdf> Accessed March 30, 2018.

conservative Protestant Christianity are evidenced by a bumper sticker produced by a Baptist church near Boise, Idaho (“Forget ‘Save the Earth’; What About Your Soul? The Earth is Going to Burn; What About You?”) and a bumper sticker and t-shirt formerly available from ChristianBook.com (“Global Warming is Nothing Next to Eternal Burning”¹⁸²). This fatalism is captured in another gospel classic, also written by Brumley, “I’ll Fly Away.” Indeed, this is the most recorded gospel song in American history,¹⁸³ and captures the Neoplatonic world denial characteristic of the vertical eschatology discussed in Chapter 4 that imbues so much of conservative Christianity.¹⁸⁴ This world-denying apocalypticism flies directly in the face of the world embracing theme of the Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical that “everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.”¹⁸⁵ This is one more example of the way American Christianity has been “restructured,” in Wuthnow’s phrase.

¹⁸² Christian artgifts, "Global Warming - Bumper Sticker," Web Page, May 15, 2018, URL <https://www.christianartgifts.com/Global-Warming-Bumper-Sticker>, (Accessed May 15, 2018),

¹⁸³ The first stanza reads as follows: “Some glad morning when this life is o’er, I’ll fly away; to a home on God’s celestial shore, I’ll fly away. I’ll fly away, O glory, I’ll fly away. When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I’ll fly away.” Kevin Donald Kehrberg, “‘I’ll Fly Away’: The Music and Career of Albert E. Brumley” (University of Kentucky, 2010), 10, 166. http://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_diss/49.

¹⁸⁴ W.R. Inge, "The Permanent Influence of Neoplatonism Upon Christianity," *The American Journal of Theology* 4, no. 2 (1900).

¹⁸⁵ Pope Francis I, "Laudato Si': Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home," Vatican City: Roman Catholic Church, Web Page, June 18, 2015, URL http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html, 52.

The role of such apocalyptic thought in anti-environmental ideology, however, is still little researched and the extent such apocalyptic ideas affects environmental concern is debated. Some studies correlate imminent end-times belief with lower levels of environmental concern.¹⁸⁶ Data from 2014 showed that significant percentages of Americans associated severe weather and natural disasters with “biblical end times.”¹⁸⁷ Smith, Hempel and MacIlroy, using data from 2010 General Social Survey and the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey, found that “biblical literalism is the most important predictor of environmental outcomes. Negative religious effects [on environmental concern] are more pronounced when questions concern future environmental outcomes, but not current environmental concerns, and when outcomes are related to collective actions rather than individual ones.”¹⁸⁸ That finding found support in survey data in 2007/2010. Is it still present now?

¹⁸⁶ David C. Barker and David H. Bearce, "End-Times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change," *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2013), <http://prq.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/66/2/267>

¹⁸⁷ “Americans from different religious backgrounds vary in their willingness to attribute the severity of recent natural disasters to the biblical end times. White evangelical Protestants are substantially more likely to attribute the severity of recent natural disasters to biblical end times (77%) than climate change (49%). While nearly three-quarters (74%) of black Protestants also agree that natural disasters are a sign of the apocalypse, they are about as likely to see these natural disasters as evidence of climate change (73%). Substantially fewer Catholics (43%), white mainline Protestants (35%), and religiously unaffiliated Americans (29%) see recent natural disasters as evidence of the biblical end times.” Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera, "Believers, Sympathizers, & Skeptics: Why Americans Are Conflicted About Climate Change, Environmental Policy, and Science ". 23.

¹⁸⁸ E. Keith Smith, Lynn M. Hempel, and Kelsea MacIlroy, "What's 'Evangelical' Got to Do with It? Disentangling the Impact of Evangelical Protestantism on Environmental Outcomes," *Environmental Politics* 27, no. 2 (2018).

Chapter 6 - Evangelicals: This World Is Not Their Home

“This world is winding down. Christ is coming back. This is going to happen. It's biblical. So I'm not going to turn around and get caught up in global warming. If we're worrying about global warming, we're not worried about someone here that needs saving. We have different priorities.” These comments come from a focus group I conducted at a Calvary Chapel in Arizona in 2017. I begin with these few phrases because they encapsulate an attitude that I found permeating all the Calvary Chapels and their members that I have encountered. Indeed, I found nothing in contradiction at any of my Calvary Chapel research sites or any of the digital archives I have reviewed. This type of sentiment, and the metaphysical assumptions that underlie it, are explored and explained in this chapter, first by detailing this focus group.

Focus Group - Saving Grace Mesa - May 14, 2017

I conducted a focus group at a Calvary Chapel in the greater Phoenix area (**Appendix FG-CCSGM**). It was a medium sized Calvary Chapel, comparable in size to the Scotts Valley Calvary Chapel. I attended the midweek service on May 10, 2017, and interviewed the senior pastor on Friday, the 12th. He agreed to recruit some members of his congregation to participate in a focus group with me two days later after church on Sunday, May 14. Five people participated, two men and three women.

All were white and appeared to be in their late 50s or older. We were also observed by two other men, one of who, later identified himself to me as one of the assistant pastors. They seemed to be functioning as minders, probably to report back to the senior pastor. One of the male participants asked me if I was born again or saved. I told him that as a sociologist, I would like to not answer that question and asked him to, as much as possible, set aside his desire to know my salvation status. He asked if I would answer once I was done with my questioning. I said I would.

This focus group was very productive in terms of displaying environmental attitudes. The focus group had Cory & Linda (5-6 years at the church), Tina (10 years (she started attending the fifth week after the church opened)), and Julie & Jim (4-5 years). In response to my question about why each of them had chosen to settle at this church, Cory explained that he had attended Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, the original Calvary Chapel founded by Chuck Smith in 1965. Cory was drawn to Calvary Chapel churches because of the “Chapter by Chapter, Verse by Verse” approach which is prevalent, though not universal, in Calvary Chapels. He and Linda were “looking for a church that would teach the entire Bible.” In his judgment, this approach to Bible teaching leads to “sound doctrine” and forces the preachers to not skip the “hard” parts of the Bible. After my observation that Calvary Chapel pastors give longer sermons than is common at other churches (usually between 50 to 60 minutes, compared to 10 to 20 minutes at other churches), Linda said they liked the long sermons. “How long is a school lecture? Isn’t it about an hour? We want to learn about the Bible. Often we wish he’d keep going longer.”

Cory asked if I had listened to Chuck Smith preach, and I said I had watched some of his sermons on YouTube. “Great guy! But Pastor Chuck spoke in a very monotone way. When my son was going to Calvary Chapel Bible College, one of the things he had to do was listen to ‘the Chuck tapes.’ The teachers would actually speed up the tapes. It’s what he was teaching that was the draw. There was no huge spark in the way he spoke.”

In order to gauge their opinion of evangelical creation care theology, I explained Evangelical Climate Initiative from 2006 and the opposing views of Calvin Beisner and the Cornwall Alliance, both of which I laid out in Chapter 5. It produced a lot of reaction. Cory said when “I look at a lot the stuff [about climate change] you just mentioned as a Christian, I see it as more of a political thing... I’m a Christian first. Everything you mentioned is a liberal point of view. It’s not a Christian point of view. I set my faith on Christ and Christ alone, not on the political views of the world we live in. This [concern about climate change] has become more of a political thing ... and more of a control thing. If you look at climate change, it’s not just a concern about the planet; everything else has to change along with it. You have to talk about population, you have to talk about a lot of different things... It’s to control people... Twenty years ago, climate wasn’t an issue but now it’s become an issue,” implying that environmental concern is not a legitimate issue grounded in the Bible. Cory illustrated his point by saying, “my brother says he’s a Christian but he has some political views that aren’t consistent with the gospel. If I take God out of the equation completely, you can do what you want; but if I put God in the equation,... there’s

accountability; there are boundaries.”

Tina ratified what Cory had said. “He is speaking what we all think,” and the other three nodded in agreement. She said further, in a stern and slightly agitated tone, “It [climate and environmental concern] doesn't belong in the church. It's not in the Bible. It's not to be taught. It shouldn't be here. It doesn't belong here... Our truth is what's in the Bible, and if it's not in the Bible, it shouldn't be taught in the church.”

Cory resumed, “The Lord's the same yesterday, today, and forevermore,” reciting the New Testament passage, Hebrews 13:8, a well-known verse in conservative evangelical circles and usually cited in support of maintaining historical orthodoxy. “You’re speaking of climate change and such. I remember back in the 70s when I was in school, the big hype was we were going into another ice age... If we take our focus off of the Lord and his word and we look at what is surrounding us, then we don’t accept that the Lord is in control of all things... It's all politics.”

Jim added, “We as Christians are obligated by God to help the earth, and the animals and everything else... We are concerned about our earth, our society, especially the poor, but it’s all become political as a way for a lot of people to make a lot of money off of it.” (Anti-environmental rhetoric frequently discredits Al Gore as a hypocrite who feigns climate change concern just to make money; this trope was likely being deployed here).

I asked if any of them had heard of evangelical climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, and none of them had. Cory, who dominated the conversation, said climate concern “is not a focus point. We live in a world that goes through cycles. It's not an

issue that affects my life. I know that God is the creator of the universe. He's in charge, and he's fully aware of what's going on. I also know the days that we are living in are the last days. In the Bible, it talks about the weather, earthquakes. We're living in those days. When asked to focus on global warming, I say, 'Wait a second, I believe the Bible is the word of God.' It says there are going to be earthquakes, there's going to be droughts, there's going to be famines. Which one am I going to believe? Obviously, it's going to be the gospel. This world is winding down. Christ is coming back. This is where we're at. This is going to happen. It's biblical. So I'm not going to turn around and get caught up in global warming. You're not going to stop something that's already happening. If scripture is true, if the gospel is true, then this is what's going to happen. It's going to take place regardless what president is in office."

Linda added, "We live in the world but we are not of the world (a common evangelical precept, grounded in John 15:19, 17:14-16, and 1 John 2:15). We worry about what matters to God, what He wants us to do. If we're worrying about global warming, we're not worried about someone here that needs to have his soul saved. We have different priorities."

I described Calvin Beisner's comments on Bill Moyers' PBS documentary and his argument that even if climate change is real, what really matters is whether a person spends eternity in heaven or hell. Cory agreed. "This world is temporary for you. At some point, you're going to face death. Everyone does. But for me, I became a born again Christian, and now I know that death is not the end, that I do go on

beyond that. This planet, it will pass. It has a beginning and an end. I'm very secure in what I believe, because it's been confirmed in the word and by the holy spirit. I'm not concerned about this planet, about whether it is going to last another 500 years. I'm concerned about that person across the street that's going to be condemned for eternity if he doesn't have that relationship with Christ, because that's real. This planet will pass. God is the creator, he created all this. At some point this is going to be gone and renewed [probably alluding to 2 Peter 3:10-13]. I have got to believe that as a Christian, not as a person who goes to a Calvary Chapel, but as a Christian, as a Bible believing Christian. All the prophecies of in the Old Testament were 100% accurate. Everything that it said was going to take place, has taken place. The evidence is overwhelming that God is in control. The Jewish people are a nation again, just as the Bible predicted. It wasn't until our generation that they became a nation again. But Scripture says those who bless his chosen people will be blessed. Those who do not will be cursed. As a Christian, we should stand by everything that helps Israel. Everything in prophecy points toward Israel in the last days."

In a final wrap up, Jim ended with a statement that there are many people who call themselves Christians. "Catholics call themselves Christians, Mormons call themselves Christians, some Jehovah Witness sects call themselves Christians. But they're not."

In summary, the group expressed these views: 1) environmental and climate change issues are not legitimate Christian or biblical concerns and have no place in church; 2) people who promote these issues are liberal (and therefore illegitimate),

and are probably insincere and just out to make money; 3) the world is filled with people who claim to be Christians, but are not; and 4) because this world is about to end, saving souls must remain the primary concern. Given the beliefs expressed, it follows naturally the environmental concern is low to non-existent. How are these beliefs instilled?

Calvary Chapel, A Brief History

Calvary Chapel as it is known today began with a small church of about 25 members in the Southern California beach town of Costa Mesa. The church had been in existence for about a year and called itself Calvary Chapel when they hired Chuck Smith to be their pastor in December 1965.¹⁸⁹ Smith, then 38 years old, had been raised in Ventura and then Santa Ana within the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, a Pentecostal denomination that had been founded in 1923 by Aimee Semple McPherson, one of America's most famous revivalist preachers in the first half of the 20th century. Smith attended and graduated from LIFE Bible College in Los Angeles in 1946, a bible college owned and operated by the Foursquare Church. After two pastorships in Arizona during the first three years of his ministry, he returned to Southern California, and served several different churches within the Foursquare denomination for another 16 years. He started developing what he called an "expository" chapter by chapter, verse by verse method of preaching, delivered in

¹⁸⁹ Smith and Smith Jr., *A Memoir of Grace [Chuck Smith Autobiography as Told to Chuck Smith Jr.]*, 160.

a “conversational” style. One of his churches liked this method, but his last congregation within the Foursquare Church was very opposed to it. In Smith’s words, they “wanted a preacher who ‘Got excited about God,’ paced a platform in mock battles with the devil, and shouted down the power of God.” What this Costa Mesa Foursquare church wanted was “to see supernatural evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence and activity in their services— miracles, divine healing, people speaking in tongues and delivering inspired prophecies.”¹⁹⁰ Smith had concluded that the “Foursquare” name scared people away and was ready to abandon “the limitations, expectations, and stipulations set by people in a [denominational] headquarters conference room.”¹⁹¹ The time was apparently ripe for such an approach, because his new church began growing steadily. A few years later, Smith reached out to the “hippies” and, through a partnership with “hippie” evangelist Lonnie Frisbee,¹⁹² began active outreach to countercultural individuals. He was able to tap into the Jesus People movement that had started earlier in San Francisco.

This outreach continued to fuel the growth of his church, and Smith declared that “one of the truly wonderful innovations of the Jesus Movement was the music. When hippies streamed into our church to worship God, they brought their own music with them.” Many of them played guitar and “began writing songs about their new life in Christ.” We would spend “the first thirty to forty minutes singing choruses and

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 139-40.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 134.

¹⁹² Ibid., 174.

listening to various people introduce their songs.”¹⁹³ This pattern has held. At every Calvary Chapel I have visited, the first half hour is soft Christian rock songs performed by a 5 to 7 person band, followed by a 50 minute sermon, and one or two songs at the end of the service. This innovation of using modern soft rock music for the musical parts of evangelical services spread throughout much, perhaps most, of evangelical Christianity. I have found this style of music at every evangelical church I have visited over the last two decades, Calvary Chapel or otherwise. And it accelerated Smith’s ability to attract significant numbers of countercultural spiritual seekers back into the Christian fold. Smith details that effort and its success in the last two chapters of his autobiography¹⁹⁴ and it is further detailed in a 1992 documentary film about the Calvary Chapel Movement up to that point. Religion professor Don Miller, one of the few academics to study the Calvary Chapel Movement, argues that Chuck Smith will be remembered at a minimum for his ability to attract young people into evangelical Christianity, whatever else might become of the Calvary Chapel Movement once he departs from the scene.¹⁹⁵

At the time the documentary was being produced, Miller was one of the lead researchers in a study of Calvary Chapels, The Vineyard (an offshoot of Calvary Chapel), and Harvest Chapels seeking to learn where each of these confederations of

¹⁹³ Ibid., 184.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 165-207.

¹⁹⁵ Miller is the one outside academic interviewed extensively in this insider documentary that otherwise serves a hagiography of Smith. John Frattarola, "A Venture in Faith: A History of Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa," 2:01:10, URL <https://vimeo.com/38234025>, URL2 <https://youtu.be/lrxsFErLcHY> (Accessed May 18, 2018), **1h50m45s**.

growing evangelical churches were obtaining their new members. They found that Calvary Chapels and Hope Chapels were especially adept at attracting people who had grown up in some form of Christianity but had dropped out of active. Thus, “the majority of the recruits to our New Evangelical Movements have come from other churches.” In their study, only 16% of Calvary respondents and 12% of Hope respondents said that they had no affiliation with a Christian Church while growing up. However, Miller *et al* found that 38% of Calvary respondents and 34% of Hope respondents had no affiliation in the year immediately before to their involvement in Calvary Chapel or Harvel Chapel.¹⁹⁶

Miller’s findings are consistent with my experience during the two years of my research. Every person now connected with Calvary Chapel that I interacted with had some sort of Christian church connection before coming to Calvary Chapel. Some were drawn to the “Chapter and Verse” sermon method, because it “taught the Bible.” One member at ReGen had left a larger evangelical church because she felt anonymous there. A few had spent a lifetime in Calvary Chapel. All I talked had other experiences in the many varieties of American Christianity. Most, however, came from other evangelical or Pentecostal settings.

One last detail in this brief summary of the foundational history of the Calvary

¹⁹⁶ Donald E. Miller, Robin D. Perrin, and Paul Kennedy, "Examining the Sources of Conservative Church Growth: Where Are the New Evangelical Movements Getting Their Numbers?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36, no. 1: 75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1387883>; See also Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press).

Chapel Movement merits mentioning. During the first two years of Smith's tenure at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, there was steady but not otherwise noteworthy growth. Then the Six-Day War happened from June 5 to June 10, 1967. As Smith explained it, "The Bible – and especially the dispensational interpretation¹⁹⁷ of the Scriptures – immediately took on new relevance. God had again worked miracles for the people of Israel – miracles that were as remarkable as when He parted the Red Sea and led the Israelites into freedom. This ancient nation that everyone naturally associates with the Bible was propelled into headlines and the nightly news. When current events take a sudden turn that bring them parallel to Scriptures, people are ready to listen again to what the Bible has to say... Within a few weeks our little church became too small for the crowds that wanted to join us... I discovered there was significant spiritual value in teaching on the end times... When the end of all things and the return of Jesus are right at the door, the obvious question is, 'What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' (2 Peter 3:11)... When it is obvious that this world is passing away, it is much easier to obey the command that tells us, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world' (1 John 2:15)... When we see that 'the end of all things is at hand,' (1 Peter 4:7), [we experience] the realization that end-time prophecies are being fulfilled... Unfolding world events in the late '60s revealed that we were certainly in an apocalyptic era and our whole nation was aware of it... The theme of my preaching was exactly the sort of message for which a lost

¹⁹⁷ Wikipedia contributors, "Dispensationalism," Encyclopedia, URL <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispensationalism> Accessed May 20, 2018.

generation was seeking... The Jesus Movement was upon us.”¹⁹⁸

Smith would go on to predict that before the end of 1981, the hoped for apocalypse would occur. He and many of his members gathered in his church on New Years Eve expecting to be raptured before midnight. Like the Millerites on October 22, 1844, and Mrs. Keech’s Minneapolis-based flying saucer cult on December 21, 1954, midnight passed without the expected event.¹⁹⁹ After this, Smith explained, “Every year I believe this could be the year. We’re one year closer than we were,”²⁰⁰ a view that was repeated to me by Pastor Matt on May 16, 2018 during a brief interview, without attributing it to Smith. Smith would live another 32 years, and never gave up on the hope that the world’s end was just around the corner. The appetite for such belief remains strong among some segments of American society, and this apocalyptic sentiment remains absolutely central to the global confederation of independent churches that Smith bequeathed to Christianity and to the world. This continuing failure of the world to end, though, keeps adherents in this constant state of “cognitive dissonance,” the psychological dynamic first theorized by Leon Festinger in his book “When Prophecy Fails,” to explain the reactions of a flying saucer cult to the failure of its end-of-world predictions in 1954.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Smith and Smith Jr., *A Memoir of Grace [Chuck Smith Autobiography as Told to Chuck Smith Jr.]*, 162.

¹⁹⁹ Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis,: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

²⁰⁰ Newspaper staff, "Chuck Smith [Obituary]," *The Telegraph* (2014), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/10386468/Chuck-Smith.html>.

²⁰¹ Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails*.

Visiting Calvary Chapels

The ReGeneration Church, Scotts Valley, California

I laid out at the beginning of this chapter my focus group with the Calvary Chapel in Arizona. I also paid three visits to Joshua Springs Calvary Chapel in Yucca Valley, California, one visit to Calvary Chapel Yuma, in southwest Arizona, and three visits to Jack Hibb's Calvary Chapel Chino Hills 35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. In Santa Cruz County, I visited the Calvary Chapel in Capitola twice, first meeting Bill Bjorkman there while substituting for the regular pastor, and then visited The ReGeneration Church (which I will refer to as "ReGen") in Scotts Valley (five miles north of Santa Cruz). The senior pastor Matt Valencia was in Chapter 3 of "Revelation," that Sunday, May 22, 2016, and it was announced that the midweek services would be a 12 week expository study of the Hebrew Bible book of "Daniel." Because of the centrality of both these books to Christian apocalypticism, this was a very fortuitous happenstance. And furthering my good luck, ReGen decided to cover "Genesis" for its midweek services after the "Daniel" series was concluded. The midweek services were preceded by a common dinner during the hour before the main lesson, giving me a opportunity to talk informally to church members in a meal setting, valuable for my "deep hanging out" ethnographic method.

As I mentioned in the history of Chuck Smith's founding of the movement, a Calvary Chapel Sunday service is begun by a half hour of Christian rock music, or what the CCM calls "worship" music, performed by a 5 to 7 person band, with the

words displayed on screen as the songs progress. This music or “worship” period may be divided in two by church announcements about half way through. In some churches, the announcements come after the music, and before the sermon. The pastor then explicates a portion of the bible (usually a chapter in a Bible book, though often it is just a few verses, and sometimes multiple chapters). After the sermon, the band comes back on stage and play 1 to 3 songs, after which the service is concluded with a prayer. This typically takes about an hour and forty-five minutes, plus or minus 10 minutes.

During the music period, the songs are not identified by name. The band, which include one to three vocalists, sing the song and congregation sings along. Many members of the congregation, which at ReGen typically number about 100 on Sunday, hang their heads, close their eyes, raise their arms and hands overhead and sway back and forth, singing the songs from memory. I catalogued the songs used in the services between May 22, 2016 and June 26, 2016 for both Sunday and Wednesday services. There was very little repetition of the songs performed, so many congregants know a significant number of these songs by heart. I would identify the songs while they were being sung, searching the lyrics on my phone. A list of these songs are listed in Appendix WS-ReGen, with links to the lyrics and to video performances available on the internet (a handful of songs were not available online). If the song had been used in a previous service, I note this in the listing.

It is clear that most of the congregants enjoy these songs. The content is often based on various bible verses. Some of the links that I have included have both the

lyrics of the songs, and the Bible verses the song is based upon. I found the themes very repetitive. The message of most songs was some version of “Jesus loves us. Isn’t Jesus wonderful? Aren’t we lucky that Jesus suffered and died for our sins? Isn’t it wonderful that we get go to heaven and be with Jesus?” This description of the music and its enjoyment was true across all my Calvary Chapel sites.

Calvary Chapel Chino Hills

This is a megachurch in Chino, California, founded in 1990 by Jack Hibbs in a residential living room. It soon overflowed the house, and then he rented industrial warehouse space. Beginning in 2000, he built his present large facility²⁰² that hosts about 6,000 attendees each Sunday, spread over three services. I conducted a 40-minute telephone interview with Hibbs on September 16, 2016, having arranged it with him in person two days earlier after his Wednesday night service. Interestingly, he had one of his assistant pastors investigate whether I was actually a graduate student at U.C. Santa Cruz before he followed through with the interview. My online UCSC profile apparently satisfied him.

Hibbs said there are 2,989 seats of capacity in his main church auditorium, that his first service at 7:15am is least attended, the second has the highest attendance, and that the third is usually about 85% full. There are typically another 200 people in overflow rooms who watch on big screens. There are about 1400 children in Sunday

²⁰² Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, "History of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills," Web Page, URL <https://www.calvarycch.org/history.php>, (Accessed May 21, 2018),

School. 250 of those are high school students, 400 are Junior High, and the rest are younger children.

Hibbs explained his history as follows. In the 1970s, when he was saved and grew interested in the Bible, there was no Calvary Chapel Bible College. Instead, he attended Chuck Smith's Costa Mesa church. At that time, Smith led a "School of Ministry" that met Tuesday and Thursday nights 6-9pm at Smith's Costa Mesa church. Hibbs and his wife attended this School of Ministry out of "curiosity for the Bible," not because of any plan to become a minister. According to Hibbs, they attended this twice weekly study for 8 years, which provided more than the equivalent training of what now occurs at the Calvary Chapel Bible College in Murrieta, California. Hibbs explained that the Murrieta college is owned and operated by the Costa Mesa church. Hibbs referred to it as the Harvard of Calvary Chapel, but that there are "hundreds" of Calvary Chapel bible colleges around the country and world, including in Germany, Hungary & Austria (I had already seen that the Yucca Valley Calvary Chapel runs its own bible college).

I had found an online video of Hibbs giving the invocation prayer before the U.S. House of Representatives on October 29, 2013.²⁰³ I asked Hibbs how that came to be. He said his congregation included a former Republican congressman, Gary Miller²⁰⁴ (who had just retired), two county supervisors, several school board

²⁰³ C-SPAN, "Pastor Jack's Prayer Prayer to Commence Congress - Oct. 29, 2013," Web Page, URL <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4470881/pastor-jacks-prayer>, (Accessed May 23, 2018),

²⁰⁴ Wikipedia contributors, "Gary Miller," Encyclopedia, URL

members, and several state assemblymen. Congressman Miller arranged the invite. He speculated that his political influence “is what it is because of the personality of this ministry.” When I told him about a Calvary Chapel senior pastor who felt politically marginal in his liberal community (I did not identify the pastor), Hibbs speculated that it’s not in the personality of this pastor “to be politically influential,” and asserted that if this pastor boldly led on public issues, people would “flock to follow him,” regardless of his location. “Pastors should give voice to the people.” Hibbs is known as an active participant in Pulpit Freedom Sunday, where a number of evangelical pastors, usually on the same Sunday, intentionally violate the I.R.S. prohibition on churches endorsing candidates, in effect daring the I.R.S. to revoke their 501(c)(3) charitable tax status.²⁰⁵

I asked about the flyers concerning California Senate Bill 277 that I had seen being handed during one of my visits. That bill was moving through the California State Senate, and would have removed the religious exemption for mandatory vaccination of children. His church does not hand out any church program information for that day’s service, because everything is online. So about six times a year, Hibbs said his church will hand out flyers on matters “that are urgent” and require a “call to civic engagement.” On the day I saw the flyers being handed out, Hibbs complained from the pulpit that the bill would infringe on parents’ rights to not

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Miller Accessed May 21, 2018.

²⁰⁵ Rachael Bade, "Rogue Pastors Defy Irs," (2014), <https://www.politico.com/story/2014/11/2014-elections-pastors-endorsing-candidates-irs-112434>.

vaccinate based on religious objections.²⁰⁶

I asked him about his connection to Calvin Beisner. He did not recall Beisner's name and wasn't sure if he had ever met him. He did recall the "Resisting the Green Dragon campaign" and the "Cornwall Alliance." He did not recall doing a promotion video, but thought it was possible that he had, since he has a studio on site, and could have produced it at his facility.

I interviewed Hibbs before finding his three sermons on "What is Environmentalism?" in his online digital archive,²⁰⁷ which is extensive, and before finding his two installment interview of Warren Duffy for Hibbs' weekday daily radio show. I asked if he had ever given a sermon on climate change, and he said he had not. "I believe that climate changes. It always has and it always will. But I'm old enough to have lived through the ExxonValdez crash up in Alaska. That bay is literally one of the most prolific fishing grounds in Alaska."²⁰⁸ You and I lived through the Mount St. Helens explosion and we were told how it was going to ruin the world.²⁰⁹ God made the earth much more resilient than we give him credit for."

"I am probably much more concerned about the environment than most people. I have a monarch butterfly planting area in my backyard. I raise monarch butterflies. They are endangered. I feed birds. I take care of it because my God made

²⁰⁶ On May 22, 2018, Hibbs' political action website alert concerns a bill that might infringe on the ability to engage in gay conversion therapy.
<http://www.watchmenministry.com/page.php?id=134>

²⁰⁷ Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, "Ccch Media Center," Chino, CA, Web Page, URL https://www.calvarycch.org/media_center.php, (Accessed May 21, 2018),

²⁰⁸ I later found this is not factually accurate. <https://bit.ly/2wnQ8cU>

²⁰⁹ I also could find no evidence that anyone claimed this.

it. I don't take care of it because it's my God. I love what God has made. The Christian should be the best steward over creation."

I explained the Evangelical Climate Initiative to him, and he said he had not heard of it, but said he wouldn't support it. "I believe that technology used properly can actually alleviate much of those hurting in poverty." And he shared his opinion that environmentalists were almost universally anti-technology. I told him that most contemporary environmentalists actually embrace technology, and the neo-Luddite wing of American environmentalism is actually quite small. He professed surprise at this. His secretary then told him he had to get to his next meeting. In parting, I asked if he had ever heard of Katharine Hayhoe, and he had not. He urged me to find an article that mentioned him that had been in the Atlantic. I found it, and it also mentioned Matthew Sleeth, and quoted hopeful speculation by the Drew University sociologist, Laurel Kearns, about the potential of faith-based environmentalism.²¹⁰

Calvary Chapel: Sermons explaining what the Bible means

Both Calvary Chapel Chino Hills and ReGen have extensive online digital archives of either an audio recording or a video file of sermons, often both, of their

²¹⁰ David R. Wheeler, "Greening for God: Evangelicals Learn to Love Earth Day," *The Atlantic*, April 18, 2012 <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/04/greening-for-god-evangelicals-learn-to-love-earth-day/256065/>; Kearns, "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism."

Sunday²¹¹ and Wednesday²¹² services. At ReGen, these online archives date back to July 29, 2001. At Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, the online archive²¹³ extends back to June 20, 1990 when Hibbs was still preaching in a living room.

For both Hibbs, and the two pastors at ReGen (senior pastor Matt Valencia, and assistant pastor Bill Bjorkman), I have transcribed key parts of their sermons and provided these transcripts in the Appendices. Bjorkman's sermons are Appendices B1 through B6, Valencia's sermons are Appendices V1 through V8, and Hibbs sermons, and his two interviews with Warren Duffy, are provided in Appendices H1 through H10. I have also transcribed portions of a sermon on end time prophecies that was given at Chino Hills by Charlie Campbell at Appendix C. Most of these sermons also contain a link to an online site (for Hibbs it is YouTube or Vimeo; at ReGen, it is a third-party cloud storage site) where the reader can watch or listen to the sermon or interview itself. I will cite to these Appendices with inline parentheses (B1, V1, H1, etc.).

Because I spent the most time at ReGen, I had multiple opportunities to ask them questions, usually in person, sometimes by email. Valencia grew up in Baldwin Park, 18 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. He attended Azuza Pacific University,

²¹¹ The ReGeneration Church, "The Regeneration Church, Sunday Morning Sermons [Archive]," Web Page, URL <http://theregenerationchurch.com/teachings/sunday-mornings>, (Accessed May 21, 2018),

²¹² The ReGeneration Church, "The Regeneration Church, Wednesday Evening Sermons [Archive]," Web Page, URL <http://theregenerationchurch.com/teachings/wednesday-nights>, (Accessed May 21, 2018),

²¹³ Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, "Ccch Media Center".

a private evangelical university in Azusa, California, majoring in Biblical Studies and English. He was the principal of the private parochial school attached to Calvary Chapel San Jose before “planting” a Calvary Chapel in Gilroy. He came to Scotts Valley in 2012. Bjorkman is self-taught, reading by his account 400 evangelical books about the Bible over the course of an 18 month period. These books were chosen for him by the assistant pastors at Calvary Chapel San Jose and by his wife.

As an initial matter, the scholarship about the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament laid out in Chapter 3 is mostly unknown to Bjorkman and Valencia. As an English major, Valencia was aware of the Epic of Gilgamesh as a work of world literature, but was not taught about its significance for biblical literary analysis. Bjorkman, as was set out in Chapter 3, understands the creation account in Genesis literally, and that this account was transmitted through unknown but reliable supernatural means to Moses. He knows that this account was written by Moses, even though the Torah nowhere says it was written by Moses, because Jesus is depicted as assuming that Moses wrote it (for example Matt 8:4).

Argument by assertion is the dominant rhetorical method employed by Bjorkman, Hibbs and Valencia. There is popular fundamentalist meme that has circulated for decades. I first saw it as a bumper sticker in the 1970s: “The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it,” and it was turned into a 1975 song by a Seventh-day Adventist pop music group.²¹⁴ This is a consistent argument in all the Calvary Chapel

²¹⁴ Tim Stewart, "God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It," *Dictionary of Christianese: the casual slang of the Christian church... authoritatively defined*,

sermons I have heard in person or viewed or listened to online. Some version of “It’s in the Bible, and forms our biblical worldview,” is invoked to dismiss any contrary opinion or evidence.

Calvary Chapel themes in Hibbs’, Bjorkman’s, and Valencia’s sermons

David Guzik and the Calvary Chapel Meme Factory

I had been attending ReGen for five and a half months, when I was flabbergasted by Bjorkman’s sermon on Genesis 6 (Appendix B6). I wondered where he got that interpretation of the strange tale of “The Nephilim” in the first 4 verses. He didn’t get it from Chuck Smith. Smith’s take was quite different.²¹⁵ By doing an internet search of several key phrases from that sermon, I found my way to the online bible commentary²¹⁶ of Pastor David Guzik, a longtime pastor at Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara and high-level leader within the Calvary Chapel Movement. A short time before Chuck Smith’s death, he was appointed to the leadership council of the newly formed Calvary Chapel Association, along with Hibbs and Don McClure (Valencia’s and Bjorkman’s mentor at CC San Jose), to which Smith had passed off

<https://www.dictionaryofchristianese.com/god-said-it-i-believe-it-that-settles-it/>; Heritage Singers, "God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It (Album: "God's Wonderful People," 1975)," URL <https://youtu.be/924MCB12MfA>, URL2 <https://www.discogs.com/The-Heritage-Singers-USA-Gods-Wonderful-People/release/1523593> (Accessed May 22, 2018).

²¹⁵ Chuck Smith, "Sermon on Genesis 6," Web Page, URL https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/c2000_Gen/Gen_006.cfm, (Accessed May 22, 2018),

²¹⁶ David Guzik, "The Enduring Word Bible Commentary," Web Page, URL <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>, (Accessed May 22, 2018),

control of the movement during his final terminal illness and which Smith understood would direct the movement after he died. On the website “Enduring Word,” Guzik has over the last 20 years been publishing his own sermon notes, and in 2017 he completed his commentary on the entire Bible. He is now in the process of translating it into multiple languages.²¹⁷ There in Guzik’s commentary on Genesis 6 I found the outline of Bjorkman’s entire sermon. I promptly emailed Bjorkman to inquire if he used Enduring Word in his sermon preparation, and he readily acknowledged that he did. Upon re-listening to some of Bjorkman’s sermons, I found that his sermons are often, though not always, based entirely on Guzik’s commentary and will often contain phrases that are lifted word for word from Enduring Word.

It’s no small task to prepare a 50 to 55 minute sermon and most pastors and ministers use commentaries. The insight here is the way Guzik, who has a B.A. in history from UC Santa Barbara but no formal seminary or bible college training, has been able to spread his particular interpretations of what the Bible means across the globe utilizing internet technology. And in getting the Guzik interpretation, via Bjorkman and any other pastor who utilizes Enduring Word, one is often getting the interpretation of Guzik’s favorite Bible interpreter, Charles Spurgeon, the 19th century Baptist preacher and commentator in London who led what we would now call a megachurch, the largest church building in London with seating for 5,000 and

²¹⁷ David Guzik, "The Story of Enduring Word," URL <https://youtu.be/3xtg9vTeoyY>, (Accessed May 22, 2018).

standing room for another 1,000.²¹⁸ As the philosopher of mind and proponent of meme theory,²¹⁹ Daniel Dennett, explains, “Every time you read it or say it, you make another copy in your brain.”²²⁰ Spurgeon’s ideas have had considerable success replicating themselves, long after Spurgeon’s death in 1892. The same can be said of the founding ideas of any widespread movement or ideology. And the strategy works. As one Episcopal priest put it, that is the function of reciting creeds in church. If the creed doesn’t make sense, “repeat it until you believe it.”²²¹

This is worth bearing in mind as I note some of the ideas that permeate Calvary Chapels.

The centrality of hell as a driving concern

One of the congregants at ReGen, a Santa Cruz surfer in his 60s told me he was saved at a Billy Graham crusade at the Los Angeles Colosseum in the late 60s and that the first book of the Bible that he read was “Revelation.” He wanted to see

²¹⁸ David Guzik and Brian Brodersen, "Things That Matter: David Guzik on Bible Study, Enduring Word Commentary & Teaching the Scriptures," 0:27:41, July 27, 2017, URL <https://youtu.be/GEbKemrRHyo>, (Accessed May 22, 2018).

²¹⁹ Daniel Dennett, "The New Replicators," ed. Mark Pagel, *Encyclopedia of Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), <https://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/dennett/papers/newreplicators.pdf>.

²²⁰ Daniel Dennett, "Let's Teach Religion -- All Religion -- in School," TED.com, February 2006, URL https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_dennett_s_response_to_rick_warren/transcript, URL2 https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_dennett_s_response_to_rick_warren, 16m50s-17m00s.

²²¹ Bernard Daley Zaleha, "James Nash as Christian Deep Ecologist: Forging a New Eco-Theology for the Third Millennium," *Journal for the study of religion, nature and culture* 3, no. 2 (2009): 286.

the end of the story first, and it scared him. In his words, “My central concern has been not ending up in hell ever since.”

Evangelical belief in hell drives a lot of their other beliefs. Here are some representative passages from Hibbs:

“Remember hell's going to filled with a lot of good people, because the Bible says it's not by being good that you make it in there [heaven].” (H1).

“The wicked are simply those who refuse to have a personal relationship with Christ. You don't have to be a bank robber or some pervert to be wicked. All you have to be is a Christ rejecter.” (H1)

“Satan doesn't care how he gets someone into hell.” (H1)

Bjorkman has told me his primary drive and why he is a pastor is to save people from hell. He didn't say explicitly but implied that this was why he had no concern about environmental matters. To another congregant in my presence he said, with emotion in his voice, “People are dying unsaved everyday and ending up in hell for eternity,” thereby explaining his urgency to spread the gospel.

It would seem that sending someone to eternal torment just because a person found the evidence for the truth of fundamentalist Christianity unpersuasive to be harsh, even monstrous. But Hibbs had an answer, relying on Romans 1:20. “The Bible says every human being has an internal witness that God exists” (H5), so there is literally no such thing as an atheist or agnostic, because every human is already “convinced by observation that God exists” (H5). “The person that would say to you tonight ‘I don't believe in any of this; I don't believe in God,’ they are lying.” People fear “that God exists and that they will answer to Him someday. What people are

really saying is that my worldview makes no allowance for god because if this god or gods exist then it would quench my lifestyle,... so there must not be a god.” We know this “from the position of absolute truth” (H2). Valencia makes the same argument. People “have to push the truth down and have to cover their ears and cover their eyes and say ‘I won’t believe’” (V1). Seeing everyone already knows that the Christian God is real, Hibbs argues, God is justified when He sends them to hell for being a “Christ rejecter” and willfully “refusing” to “have a personal relationship with Christ.”

World denial/discounting the importance of environmental concern

That this world is not important is stressed in the Calvary Chapel context. Valencia, in a prayer concluding his sermon on Revelation 4, said this explicitly: “Lord, I’d pray that you’d remind us that this world is not our home” (V3). Hibbs declared “I don’t live here anyway. I mean I live here, I hang out here. My house is just down the street, but I’m waiting to go to heaven [from the audience ‘Amen!']. I’m waiting to go home. I haven’t been home yet, but I’m waiting to go home [with a smile, pointing to the sky]” (H2). He told his congregants, “You need to pray every morning ‘Lord Jesus come back today please and prepare my heart for it’” (H1). And when he does come back, citing 2 Peter 3:10, Hibbs notes that “everything’s going to come apart. It’s all going to end. It’s all going to burn up. It’s all going to burn, melt. Gone! Look at the clothes you’re wearing right now. It’s going to go, melt with

fervent heat” (H1).

"God is in control": The absolute dominion of God

As I noted in my account of the Arizona focus group, one of my focus group members declared “The evidence is overwhelming that God is in control.” This perspective permeates sermons and conversations among members. Representative of this is Valencia's sermon on Revelation 4: “God is still in control, no matter what happens in this world... He's in control and that he hasn't left us behind.” (V3). After church on May 27, 2018, one of the members that I have talked to regularly stated as a simple matter of fact that God had caused the 2018 volcanic eruptions at Hawaii’s Kilauea Volcano, because he wants to destroy that part of Hawaii. “We don’t know why but it’s in his plan.” He said this to explain why evangelicals who promote “creation care” are unbiblical and misguided. “God is already destroying this planet. It’s on an unalterable path down because God is already preparing for the new heaven and new earth,” referencing both Second Peter and Revelation’s “new heaven, new earth language.” Warren Duffy adamantly declared much the same thing in his interview with Jack Hibbs: “I brought my Bible here, and I looking back here at ‘The Revelation’ and I don't see where God is going to delay the ending of his creation because I change my light bulbs. Or because I drive a plug-in car. He's going to end this whole thing and create the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem in his good time.” (H8). This thinking permeates the discourse within Calvary

Chapels.

And it leads to many of evangelicals to what appears to an outsider as an amazingly passivity. They take the cues from their pastors, and see everything that happens to them as somehow part of the plan set for them by the creator of the universe, namely God, who they see as guiding every aspect of their lives, from whom they marry, where they live and for how long, what job they will have and for how long, etc. They are at times perplexed, saying things like, “Why did God call their family to live in Hawaii while I’m stuck in Santa Cruz?” But at the same time, this same person acknowledged that it is all a part of the deity’s mysterious plan that cannot be comprehended by mere humans. Listening to evangelicals talk among themselves about their lives in this manner helps explain their lack of environmental concern. Their God directs everything, including environmental despoliation. Being a good steward of God’s creation requires nothing more than not littering. Both Hibbs and Valenica explained to me that they do not litter, and were angry at those who do. The idea that it might entail something more than that simply doesn’t fit in their worldview.

Belief in Jesus is what saves

Hibbs started his year-long World View sermon series with one entitled “What you believe defines you” (H2). Valencia, preaching on Revelation 4, said “I hope that when we read the book of Revelation that we're looking for Jesus's return. I

hope that it brings comfort and hope knowing that he's in control and that he hasn't left us behind, and he's not just going to leave us in this world without this blessed hope and expectation” Stressing the importance of belief, Valencia said “Tolerance doesn't mean your beliefs are equal to my beliefs. It means we love people even with different beliefs. But when it comes to tolerance, we are to hold fast to the truth.” (V3).

Literal belief in the Bible is the most important

“But the reality is that the young generation today is seeing a great disconnect from the biblical worldview understanding and what they are being taught in the public arena. But the Christian of any age, any background, any color, should be taught to think biblically about everything and take the Bible as the standard, the governing authority for your life, in every bit of your world and all that you do. That’s called being an authentic Christian” (H5)

“The account here in Genesis, chapter 3, I hope that it goes without saying, this is not a myth. This is both history as well as rich, rich theology, because if the fall of man didn’t actually occur then the whole Christian faith is just built on fables, not fact. Therefore Jesus Christ suffered needlessly, didn’t he, on the cross. From Genesis chapter 3 where we are tonight all the way through Revelation chapter 21 where were just a few Sundays ago the Bible records this conflict between God and Satan, between sin and righteousness, and records pleading with sinners to repent and to trust God. There is so much for us to consider together that form the foundation, not only of our study through the rest of this tremendous book [Genesis], but also, needless to say, for our lives.”(B5)

Evolution is of the devil

In 1968, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Epperson v. Arkansas*, struck down a law prohibiting the teaching of evolution. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state legislatures could not force the pseudoscience of “creation science” into the classroom alongside evolutionary science. The last major battle over evolution was an attempt in Dover, Pennsylvania to force “intelligent design,” a repackaging of “creation science,” into the classroom. (See Appendix EV for a list of key evolution court cases).

These cases have made evolutionary science a flash point in American society, with consequences for environmental concern. A key factor that suppressing overall environmental concern in American Christianity is the rejection of evolutionary science among major segments of American religion. Josh Rosenau, using data from Pew's 2007 survey of religious belief, showed the correlation between religious denominations' acceptance of evolutionary science and their support of government regulation to protect the environment. The higher the acceptance of evolutionary science, the higher was the support for environmentally protective government regulation. The lower the acceptance of evolutionary science, the lower was the support for environmentally protective government regulation.²²² (See chart at the end of this chapter).

Within the Calvary Chapel milieu, all that currently ails humanity flows from

²²² Josh Rosenau, "Evolution, the Environment, and Religion," *NCSE Blog* (2015), <http://ncse.com/blog/2015/05/evolution-environment-religion-0016359>.

belief in Darwin/Evolution. Belief in evolution, in their view, is merely a tool people desperate not to believe in God use to try and convince themselves that God does not exist. As noted above, however, this does not work, because everyone already knows evolution is false. Here are examples (with emphasis supplied):

The bible tells us that angels were not made in God's image, [dubious assertion] only we are. It's this right understanding of who man is, it begins with this knowledge that we are made in the image of God, that we are different from every other order of created beings. We are not the products of galactic accident, nor are we just at the top rung of some sort of an evolutionary ladder. God made us! And what that means, the Bible says, we're wholly dependent on Him. In the Book of Acts it says that 'In Him we live and we move and we have our being' [Acts 17.28], because unlike the animals, even unlike the angels, we as humans are the only created beings that can have this very special relationship with God. Not only did he give us personality, we have minds to think with, we have emotions to feel with, we have wills don't we to make decisions with, but he also gave us this inner spiritual nature that enables us to know Him, and to worship him. And that's what causes this unbridgeable gap between human life and animal life. Absolutely, we were created by this same designer, so there's some biological similarities that we share with some animals but we are distinct in this sense of spirituality and morality. We're able to make moral judgments. We have a conscience. We're made to be in communion with God. Very simply, animals possess a mind and a body, but only humans possess a mind, and a body, and a spirit, and it's on that spirit level that we communicate with the Lord. (B4)

"And this, honestly, is the main reason why the theory and the thought of evolution is so spiritually damaging, because what it does is it strips us of our uniqueness of being created in the image of God and it reduces us to the level of an animal, no matter how advanced a level that may be. And it's when we strip people of this uniqueness, that human dignity, and we tell them that they evolved from animals, how surprised should we be when they start to act like animals? We are the pinnacle aren't we, we are the pinnacle of God's masterpiece of creation. And it says in these next verses that we've been given this special place in it and over it. Verse 28 says that "[reads Gen 1.28-31]" (B4)

"Adam and Eve were the first rulers, the regents if you will, over God's creation." (emphasis supplied) (B4)

In Bjorkman's passages above, the dominionist ideology embedded in Genesis 1 and Psalms 8 are on clear display. And Hibbs specifically quoted Psalm 8:6-8 in support of his view that humanity has dominion over all creation (H5), and said, "God said, 'Adam, preside over the earth, everything I've made, use it to the betterment of humans'" (H4), showing his strong anthropocentric ideology.

Anti-LGBT equality

Calvary Chapel's anti-LGBT equality ideology did not come up often. With Hibbs it comes up when he is endorsing Republican candidates under his rubric of the "Trinity of Truth" where the pious faithful Christian must always vote for the anti-abortion, anti-LGBT equality, pro-Israel candidate. (H9 and H10). It also comes up any time Romans 1 is preached on, because that is the primary New Testament text that contains arguably anti-LGBT content. I have included in the Appendix two occasions where Valencia preached on Romans 1. (V1 & V8) On both occasions, he made this argument:

When it comes to homosexuality, I think there are two mistakes that people can make... One of the mistakes is not calling it sin... Charles Spurgeon [English evangelical pastor] wouldn't even read this part of Romans publicly in church. Now, homosexuality is not only not unthinkable, but it is so socially acceptable that to not accept that is to be thought of as bigoted, narrow-minded, and hateful. The second mistake is to categorize it as a greater sin than other sins. There is a list of 21 further sins in this chapter that God lists that break down a society." (V1)

In V8, Valencia adds that in his view "The sin of pornography and the sin of adultery

would probably be much greater than the sin of homosexuality in the church today.”

Worry about one world government

Early in my visits to ReGen, I asked Bjorkman what he thought of the “Left Behind” movies. He said that while they are kinda hokey in their production values, they nevertheless got the narrative of how the rapture and the end of the world is going to unfold. With this quasi-endorsement, I decided to watch at least one of them to see how rapture memes circulate in popular culture. I watched the original 2000 movie, starring Kirk Cameron (not the more recent 2014 Nicholas Cage version). Interestingly, in this narrative, the antichrist is the secretary-general of the United Nations. The 16 novels that the movies are based on have sold 80 million copies and been translated into multiple languages. Portraying the United Nations and its secretary-general as the demonic force behind the seven-year tribulation that many evangelicals expect at the end-time may serve suppress concern or even belief in human caused, carbon produced, climate change. The IPCC has been a U.N. project since 1988. The authors of the “Left Behind” series might have had just this result in mind. Tim LaHaye, with a new co-author, produced four more novels in which climate scientists are the villains, along with a U.N.-led campaign to create the World Church Coalition. Global warming is acknowledged as happening, but the hero of the novels is a volcanologist who knows the cause is volcanos, not burning fossil fuels.²²³

²²³ Marisa Ronan, "Religion and the Environment: Twenty-First Century American

So, Satan himself, through his Antichrist, is trying to distract humans with false concerns about planetary calamity.

Anti-Environmentalism and/or Indifference Toward the Environment

In the case of ReGen Church, attitudes about the environment were mostly implied by their absence. Toward the end of my time with them, I laid out the ECI and Cornwall declaration to both pastors and some church members and asked them about their opinions. One of the band members told me, “of course we should take care of the environment, but if we worry about it too much, we run the risk of worshipping it.” I’ve already noted that Bjorkman simply sees it as a distraction from saving souls from hell. Valencia told me that of course he doesn’t litter, but expressed the opinion that evangelicals were squeamish interacting with environmentalists, because they seem too much like earth worshipers.

Hibbs does not talk directly about the environment much either, but in his archive, he did devote three sermons in 2012 and two interview episodes in 2014 to articulating an evangelical anti-environmentalist ideology. For him, he is not anti-environment. He’s anti-environmentalism and anti-environmentalist. His exhortation was that the proper object of worship is not “mother nature, it’s father God.” (H6).

Hibbs declared the standard caveat: “I want to say again loud and clear that as Christians our God made everything that we enjoy in our environment. We are not to

Evangelicalism and the Anthropocene," *humanities* 6, no. 4 (2017), <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/6/4/92>.

abuse things. The Christian should be the best steward over what God has made, but God says He has given us these things to use them, to manage them, to protect them, but put them into use to better human life. Nature is not to be exalted above human life. The Bible makes this clear” (H5).

He then equates environmentalism with radical environmentalism: “Look at the doctrine of environmental groups such as Earth First! Boy, I tell you if you read their website. They say we should not reproduce, because it’s going to harm the planet, and if somebody gets pregnant, we’ll just abort it, because we are going to hurt the planet if we produce any more kids. Is that true? God gave us the environment to use. He says so. That’s what the Bible says!” (H4).

He also attacks environmentalism as just a ruse for U.N control (H8) and to steal souls away from Christ with new forms of ancient paganism: “The term mother nature goes all the way back to Babylonianism. It’s over 4,000 years old, that term. Mother Nature was the ancient goddess in Greek mythology called ‘Gaia’... Al Gore mentions Gaia.” (H5). Environmentalism, according to Hibbs, “is a combination of all the gods of the Babylonian worship system. It’s a very ancient worship system with a vast array of gods and goddesses that control the heavens, the earth, the world, the underworld. This ‘environmentalism’ is successfully infiltrating our culture, so that the earth is dependent upon us to save it. Environmentalism personifies the earth as though it has feelings, and as though it somehow can’t survive without us. Environmentalism is a declaration we’ve got to take care of the earth or it will die and then we’ll die. They don’t believe in a God that will take care of the stuff that he’s

made, so humans have to do it.” (H6)

Hibbs also expressed alarm at churches’ involvement in environment-related issues: “Boy did I get an eyeful today researching churches in America [incredulous tone]. They are having conferences and symposiums, they’re giving sermons on saving the earth [continues in an incredulous tone]. Yet my bible tells me that my God made it, he knows all about it, he has sustained it, and he even gave us the authority to manage it. Environmentalism always lessens the value of humanity and exalts nature” (H6).

Evangelical Creation Care Thought Leaders: Peter Illyn, Matthew Sleeth, and Anna Jane Joyner

I was able to conduct three interviews with leaders in the evangelical Creation Care movement, Peter Illyn, Matthew Sleeth, and Anna Jane Joyner.

Peter Illyn: “Evangelicals are quasi-Bible believing Christians; they believe what is convenient”

I conducted an in-person, taped, on the record interview with Peter Illyn (pronounced “Illian”) in his home in La Center, Washington, October 19-21, 2016.

In 1989, Illyn, a Foursquare Pentecostal pastor, did a llama trek through Oregon and Washington.²²⁴ As Illyn describes it, “he went into the mountains a minister, but four months later came out as an environmentalist, committed to

²²⁴ <https://amzn.to/2KVJT3o>

preaching the biblical call to love, serve and protect God's creation."²²⁵ To further that commitment, in 1996, he founded Christians for Environmental Stewardship, to identify and network a church-based grassroots movement. Illyn was especially adept at coining memorable catch phrases, often captured in a bumper sticker. "If you love the creator, take care of creation." "God's original plan was the hang out with some naked vegetarians." "Extinction isn't stewardship." "If you're pro-life, be anti-coal. Ask me why." (See Appendix RE). In 2001, the organization's name was changed to Restoring Eden.²²⁶ With this background, he has been an activist and creation care missionary within the evangelical environmental movement since its emergence in the early 1990s.

Outside Magazine began a 2001 story about Christian environmentalism with this vignette about Illyn:

Yea, my brothers and sisters, let us wander into the den of unbelievers and lay the righteous word down like wall-to-wall shag. Let us take the Good Book as our weapon and smash the skeptics and smite the Wise Users and quiet their chainsaws and backhoes and pavers for ever and ever, amen. Let us gather the clear-cutters and dam builders in their place of worship and take the truth of God's green message straight at them. Let us follow Brother Peter, the world's foremost Bible-thumping, chapter- and-versifying, Jesus-praising tree-hugger into battle to save God's glorious domain.²²⁷

Illyn has been grappling with terminal cancer (In May 2018, however, it appeared to be controlled and he was active with several Restoring Eden Projects), and wanted to

²²⁵ Peter Illyn and Bron Taylor, "Restoring Eden," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London: Continuum, 2005), 1382.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Bruce Barcott, "For God So Loved the World," *Outside Online* (2001), <https://www.outsideonline.com/1888006/god-so-loved-world>.

share his perspective on this movement over the last quarter century. He was exceptionally blunt in his assessment, perhaps because of his terminal diagnosis.

His most significant observation is that evangelical theology creates a very substantial barrier to environmental concern, in a way that surprised him and that he did not expect at the outset. As Illyn put it, evangelicals “said ‘we’re Bible believing Christians,’ and we took them at their fucking word. But guess what? Evangelicals are quasi-Bible believing Christians; they believe what is convenient. And being outraged about abortion and gay people is easier. It requires absolutely no sacrifice.” “A duty of creation care, if actually internalized, comes at a cost.” “And that’s also why there is little emphasis on social justice in evangelical churches. It’s what I call ‘the narcissism of personal piety’ and it has become more and more dominant.” “Good works aren’t a requirement; works don’t matter; it’s what I believe that matters.” Further, “the earth is going to be destroyed by God. This is a uniquely religious perspective. It’s a religious construct. But if you believe it, it will affect how you behave.” And “people have a hard time seeing beyond 5 years into the future anyway.” “My friend Rusty Pritchard [the former head of EEN] calls this the Illyn clarity. ‘The problem, Peter, is no one wants to hear what you have to say.’” Illyn notes that when people get a viewpoint they dislike, they “just disengage, because it’s a buyer’s market. They just say ‘no, I’ll ignore you.’ That’s because human nature is fundamentally selfish and short-sighted and compartmentalized.”

In addition to the ways Illyn sees evangelical theology, metaphysics, and basic human nature discouraging effective environmental concern, Illyn is also of the view

that the basic circumstances of contemporary evangelical churches discourages a pastor from getting involved in creation care, even if he or she were inclined to do so. According to data collected by the Leadership Network (leadnet.org), “pastors already work 55 hours a week just trying to maintain their existing programs. They have no time to take on new issues unless their congregations demand it.” And people increasingly self-select where they go to church. The ability of a pastor to impose an agenda that his or her congregation does not want is limited to nonexistent. “If someone does not like the moral demands placed on them by a pastor,” they’ll just head to the next church. “It’s a marketplace.”²²⁸

Illyn has a masters degree in marketing and he uses a term from marketing called “evoked set.”²²⁹ In a market place, your evoked set is the range of products that you will already consider when making a purchasing choice. The creation care theology is not already within most people’s evoked set, and getting it into their evoked set is hard, and requires a cognitive shift. “For ninety percent of my evangelical friends, they just ‘believe.’ They don’t know why they believe it and they can’t defend why they believe it. They just believe it, because they were taught it. If we want to get people to believe different things, that’s the curse of a cognitive shift. They have to quit believing in one thing, and start believing in another. Sometimes that happens, but rarely.” “At the beginning, we thought the change would happen more regularly, because creation care is in the Bible.” “Turns out, that doesn’t matter

²²⁸ Taylor, Van Wieren, and Zaleha, "The Greening of Religion Hypothesis (Part Two): Assessing the Data from Lynn White, Jr, to Pope Francis," 350-51.

²²⁹ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/evoked-set.html>

to most evangelicals.”

“What changes a person’s current behavior? There’s that saying ‘we protect what we love, and we love what we know,’ and people increasingly don’t know nature. That’s also a barrier.”

What Illyn describes has ample verification in the rest of my data concerning evangelicals. The fact that someone who has been so deeply embedded in this movement since its inception lays out this assessment serves as validation of my other data and the conclusions I draw from it.

Matthew Sleeth - Evangelicals are “functional polytheists”

In interview Matthew Sleeth by telephone on October 5, 2016. I had first met Matthew Sleeth in February 2007 at a Sierra Club gathering. He had become nationally known as a creation care evangelical with publication of his book, “Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action.”²³⁰ When I spoke to him then, I asked him what evangelical creation care had brought to the environmental agenda. He said that before evangelical creation care, environmentalists were the last group that one could mock openly in evangelical churches, knowing that all your fellow church members would, if not join in, at least not think less of you for making fun of environmentalists. Being racist was no longer acceptable, and one even had to use measured words concerning LGBT people. But evangelicals could mock

²³⁰ J. Matthew Sleeth, *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action* (White River Junction, Vt.: Chelsea Green Pub. Co., 2006), <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip068/2006004988.html>.

environmentalists with abandon. In Sleeth's view, that was no longer the case, because a given church member could no longer be sure that there were not creation care Christians sitting next to them. The former mockers might not have been converted to the creation care cause, but they certainly had to suppress their animosity in the church setting. That in turn, in Sleeth's view, freed up space for people to hear the message and adopt it.

A year and a half after meeting Sleeth, "The Green Bible" was published. Inspired by red letter bibles that have all of the words' attributed to Jesus in red, this Bible has verses relevant to environmental themes printed in green.²³¹ (I first saw a Green Bible on my research visits to the Redlands United Church of Christ, where all of the Bibles in the backs of the pews are Green Bibles). Sleeth was selected by the editors to write the introductory essay, "The Power of a Green God."²³² He is also on the Green Bible's Advisory Board along with other luminaries of Christian environmentalism like Sally Bingham (interviewed herein), Calvin DeWitt and Loren Wilkinson (both mentioned in my chapter on evangelicals), Rosemary Radford Ruether, Fred Krueger, Rusty Pritchard and Tri Robinson (both mentioned in my interview with Peter Illyn).

A year after meeting Sleeth, he and his wife founded "Blessed Earth," and it was not until 2012 that he launched as a project of Blessed Earth, the Seminary

²³¹ Wikipedia contributors, "The Green Bible," Encyclopedia, URL https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Green_Bible Accessed May 23, 2018.

²³² Michael G. Maudlin et al., eds., *The Green Bible (Nrsv)* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), I-17.

Stewardship Alliance, whose goal is “for member seminaries to teach, preach, live, inspire, and hold each other accountable for good stewardship practices.”²³³ This is to be accomplished by catalyzing sustainable practices in seminaries, advancing scholarship on Christian models of environmental care and facilitating communication within and among these Seminaries. This organization, now spun off as its own non-profit entity, is, according to Sleeth, the most well funded evangelical creation care organization, with its annual budget of more than \$1 million eclipsing the better known and still active Evangelical Environmental Network. I was only vaguely aware of the green seminary initiative prior to this interview. This is because, in Sleeth’s opinion, the alliance works behind the scenes and does not produce specific newsworthy events in the way that EEN still does. In Sleeth’s characterization, he is playing a long game. The overwhelming majority of current evangelical pastors have never heard of “creation care” or “eco-theology” and are not interested in either when they do hear of it, an observation amply supported by my own findings.

In response to my question about the state of creation care evangelicalism in the decade since I had last spoken to him, he said “It’s a mixed bag.” The Seminary Alliance started with 12 seminaries, and now includes 50. It is now run by an actual evangelical theologian, professor and pastor, A.J. Swoboda, instead of Sleeth, a lay activist and emergency room physician. As noted above, it has attracted major

²³³ Seminary Stewardship Alliance, "Seminary Stewardship Alliance," Web Page, URL <https://seminaryalliance.org/>, (Accessed May 23, 2018),

funding. That said, he believes that over the last decade the general public has formed a perception—with good reason—that churches simply are not involved in creation care/environmental issues. He sees the financial crisis of 2008 as partly responsible, because it “showed that whether you were an environmentalist or not, what really mattered was your job; that was your first concern.” He further opined that “in general we're becoming less compassionate, and our ability to imagine others' suffering is not as good as it used to be, and therefore we are not able to do the abstract thinking about how what I'm doing now is going to affect my children and grandchildren.” Sleeth's own Damascus road moment came about because he was able to contemplate how his deeds would affect the future for human and the rest of creation. If you are unwilling to consider your effects, you are unlikely to accept a Christian duty of creation care.

This interview occurred before the presidential election and its surprise outcome. Evangelical support for Donald Trump was nevertheless already a major topic of public discussion. Responding to my question about it, Sleeth said “I don't personally know a single church leader that is quote ‘behind’ Donald Trump. The way I heard it put last week was ‘you gotta decide which dirty toilet bowl are you going to drink out of.’ They are appalled by Hillary Clinton, and they are equally appalled by Donald Trump.” He further speculated that prominent evangelical leaders leaning toward Trump are doing so because they are “imagining the horror of the ongoing dismantling of Christian institutions by government” that had started under Obama and would continue under Hillary Clinton. “When I talk to presidents of

seminaries, that's a reality for them. They literally have political correctness officers that are mandated now by government.” These government functionaries want to know “Are you discriminating against students? Are you discriminating against bisexual professors? Churches are better protected [by the free exercise clause of the first amendment] than are religious educational institutions.” Because of this, some Christian colleges and universities “are trying to buy churches” in order to get themselves under that stronger protection. “To them, it is just a matter of survival.” Sleeth was very sympathetic to this perceived plight of Christian educational institutions.

Sleeth’s organization, however, “made a conscious decision to not be involved in politics. We are just an advocate of what we understand the Bible to mean and how that applies to the future of the planet. We have stayed out of politics, and if you are not involved in politics, you are quickly out of the limelight. You're not going to make it [into] the newspaper.” In terms of political influence, he could not think of any example when evangelicals tipped the balance in a policy matter since the 1996 Endangered Species Act battle. But, behind the scenes, “we were able to influence a major meat producer and processor to build the most environmentally sustainable food system as far as meat goes in Kentucky; grass fed, never-in-a-confined-pen meat.”

I asked Sleeth what he knew about Calvin Beisner. He shared that he had been

involved with a two day event in 2015 at the New Orleans Baptist Seminary.²³⁴ He, Bill McKibben, and EEN's Rusty Pritchard had represented the Green Christian perspective and Beisner and John R. Christy (the famed climate change denialist)²³⁵ represented the anti-environmental faction. He found Beisner a very disturbing individual. He asked me whether I thought Beisner actually believes the things he says out loud, and I said yes, I think he probably does. Sleeth reacted, "I think I'd feel more comfortable if he had just sold out [to ExxonMobile and the Koch Brothers]. If he actually believes what he says, that's even more disturbing. There's tremendous gaps in Beisner's logic, but he has the same effect as Donald Trump by being able to stumble, and stumble and stumble and just keep plowing ahead and winning people's hearts, while I sit there scratching my head." That said, "Most people don't know who Beisner is. They don't know who I am either, and I doubt if I took a poll in Kentucky if 98% of people would know who Bill McKibben is. People have a lot of other concerns and usually there is something bigger like the Kardashians at the top of it."

Sleeth had an interesting observation about anti-government regulation within the conservative Christian community. "We don't know if there will be Democrats or Republicans 100 years from now, but there will be libertarians. We are born libertarian. I have a 3 month old granddaughter and she is a libertarian. However, the first climate change that's handled in scripture is a 14-year climate cycle in Egypt. They are going to have, according to Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, 7

²³⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/greerheardforum/posts/882441285127396>

²³⁵ <https://www.skepticalscience.com/examining-christys-skepticism.html>

good years and 7 bad years. The response is more government, and a twenty percent conservation tax [Gen. 41:54]. So libertarianism should have the least bearing on Christianity of any political movement. However,” Sleeth notes, “most people, including most Christians, are in fact polytheists; they're *functional polytheists*, whether it's their football team, or their church, or their party, there really isn't a lot of Christianity actually coming out on top in that mix.” And this shows up, Sleeth says, in the poor understanding of what the traditional doctrines of Christianity are, citing an article in Christianity Today that he had seen a few days earlier.²³⁶

In concluding our interview, Sleeth shared his view that “there is such bias in news reporting against Christianity that is pure Christianity, that you can do the goofiest thing and get yourself in the paper, but you can do a wonderful thing that’s acting out your faith and it doesn't make any news. We worked with Houghton College [an evangelical college in upstate New York]. They have the largest solar array of any educational institution in the U.S. It's about 20 acres. You know that doesn't make the paper because they're Christian. If it were in Ithaca [the location of Cornell University], in that town, it would be a feature in the paper. I gave the graduation speech at Hood [Theological] Seminary in North Carolina. The entire campus is built green. It’s African American in the A.M.E. Zion [African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church] tradition, but that doesn't make the paper about what they are

²³⁶ Caleb Lindgren, "Evangelicals' Favorite Heresies Revisited by Researchers: Second Study Examines What Americans Believe About 47 Theological Statements," *Christianity Today* (2016), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/september/evangelicals-favorite-heresies-state-of-theology-ligonier.html>.

doing.”²³⁷

Several takeaways emerge from my interview with Sleeth. He is not overselling what evangelical creation care can deliver. He’s hoping that his seminary initiative can start increasing the number of creation care pastors in the pulpits 10 to 20 years from now, and he hopes that can make some difference down the line. He admits, however, that is only a hope. There is no guarantee that this will happen. And he is quite aware of the barriers to environmental and/or climate change concern emerging within evangelical Christianity in a significant way anytime soon.

Anna Jane Joyner: Evangelicals say they’re people of the book, “and they’re not”

I interviewed Anna Jane Joyner in Santa Cruz on January 16, 2017. Anna Jane Joyner is a former evangelical who spent much of the last decade as an activist in the evangelical creation care movement, including working for a time with Illyn’s Restoring Eden. She gained national exposure in 2014, both for getting arrested at the White House with Bill McKibben and other prominent environmental leaders, and then being featured in Episode 4 of Season One of Showtime climate change documentary, “Years of Living Dangerously.”²³⁸ Frustrated with the dysfunctions

²³⁷ For an exploration of the evangelical perception they are unfairly treated by the larger society, see Veldman, "An Inconvenient Faith? Conservative Christianity, Climate Change and the End of the World."

²³⁸ Anna Jane Joyner et al., "Years of Living Dangerously, Season 1 Episode 4: Ice & Brimstone," YouTube, 57:44, 4 May 2014, URL <https://youtu.be/GSUQZj0xOUs>, (Accessed Mar. 14, 2018).

with evangelicalism (in part narrated in this dissertation), Joyner is now affiliated with an Episcopal Parish. She is currently Vice-President of The Micah Challenge, a non-profit working on issues of global poverty.

Because of our joint connection with Peter Illyn, I was sharing information about my interviews with Illyn, and Illyn's conclusion that the reason why creation care activism hasn't accomplished more was that "we [creation care evangelicals like Illyn] thought they [evangelicals generally], were people of the book..," and before I could finish that sentence, Joyner said: "Oh, and they're not." I confirmed, "And they're not." The accuracy of Illyn's assessment was immediately apparent to her.

Conclusions regarding Evangelicals and Environmental Concern

In the mid-1990s, when an evangelical environmental movement was becoming more generally visible, there was optimism both within this emerging movement and within the secular environmental movement that this could be a significant and positive development. Thought leaders like Calvin DeWitt and Loren Wilkinson had developed a robust theological biblical foundation demonstrating that the Bible, which evangelicals claim to revere, can be read and arguably must be read to have strong divine mandates concerning the care of creation. And significant if minority strands are active today that show that some American evangelicals can and do respond to such biblically grounded calls. So far, however, the overwhelming majority have not. Why?

Peter Illyn suggests that in the main, American evangelicals are not the devotees to the Bible that they claim. Matthew Sleeth observed that Americans generally, but evangelicals also, are, in his insightful phrase, “functional polytheists.” People have multiple passions that jockey for attention and priority, and that their formally stated religious commitments often weigh in pretty far down their personal hierarchy of interests. Both Illyn’s and Sleeth’s conclusion complement and reinforce each other.

In 1998, Lee Strobel wrote what is currently one of the leading books of Christian apologetics called “The Case for Christ.”²³⁹ It is the book an evangelical friend might give you to try and persuade you that a conservative form of evangelical Protestantism is the almighty God’s true religion. The conceit of the book is that a hardened and experienced legal journalist who is an atheist goes on a quest to discover whether Jesus rose from the dead and if Christianity is therefore true. The quest involves a lot of interviews with scholars of various types, and at the end, he concludes Jesus rose and Christianity is true. The problem is, his interviewees are mostly evangelical scholars, often at evangelical colleges or universities where they have had to sign faith statements allowing them to remain employed. Strobel does not interview any scholars that doubt the supernatural claims of traditional Christianity. Surely he knew such scholars exist, so his project was not actually a quest for truth, however effective that narrative may have been as a marketing ploy.

²³⁹ Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998).

“The Case for Christ” was a bestseller in the religion category. Indeed, it was sufficiently popular to attract a book-length rebuttal by the biblical scholar, Robert M. Price, in 2010. He noted this absence of disconfirming scholarly views and evidence. Christian apologists today simply recycle and repeat arguments in defense of Christianity that have been around for centuries. And why not? Many people still find them persuasive. A case in point is David Guzik, briefly profiled in this chapter. By his own admission, his first source in developing his own interpretation of a given text is Charles Spurgeon’s thoughts from the 19th century. He died fourteen years before Schweitzer’s “The Quest for the Historical Jesus” was published, and was necessarily unaware of all the developments in biblical archeology, or the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi library. Left unanswered is, if Guzik is recycling Spurgeon, who was Surgeon recycling? Price’s point in noting this dynamic is that the present day evangelical creed is not actually grounded in the Bible. It’s grounded in the corpus of apologetic tomes written since Luther and the printing press allowed a proliferation of Bibles and, perhaps even more significantly, books about the Bible. As Price puts it, “traditional apologetics have now become as fully a part of the evangelical creed as the doctrines they are meant to defend. The apologetics themselves become doctrines. The official belief, then, is so-and-so, and the official defense is this-and-that. This is why their books all sound the same and the new ones sound just like the old ones.”²⁴⁰ Evangelicals are not, as they imagine,

²⁴⁰ Price, *The Case against the Case for Christ: A New Testament Scholar Refutes the Reverend Lee Strobel*, 17.

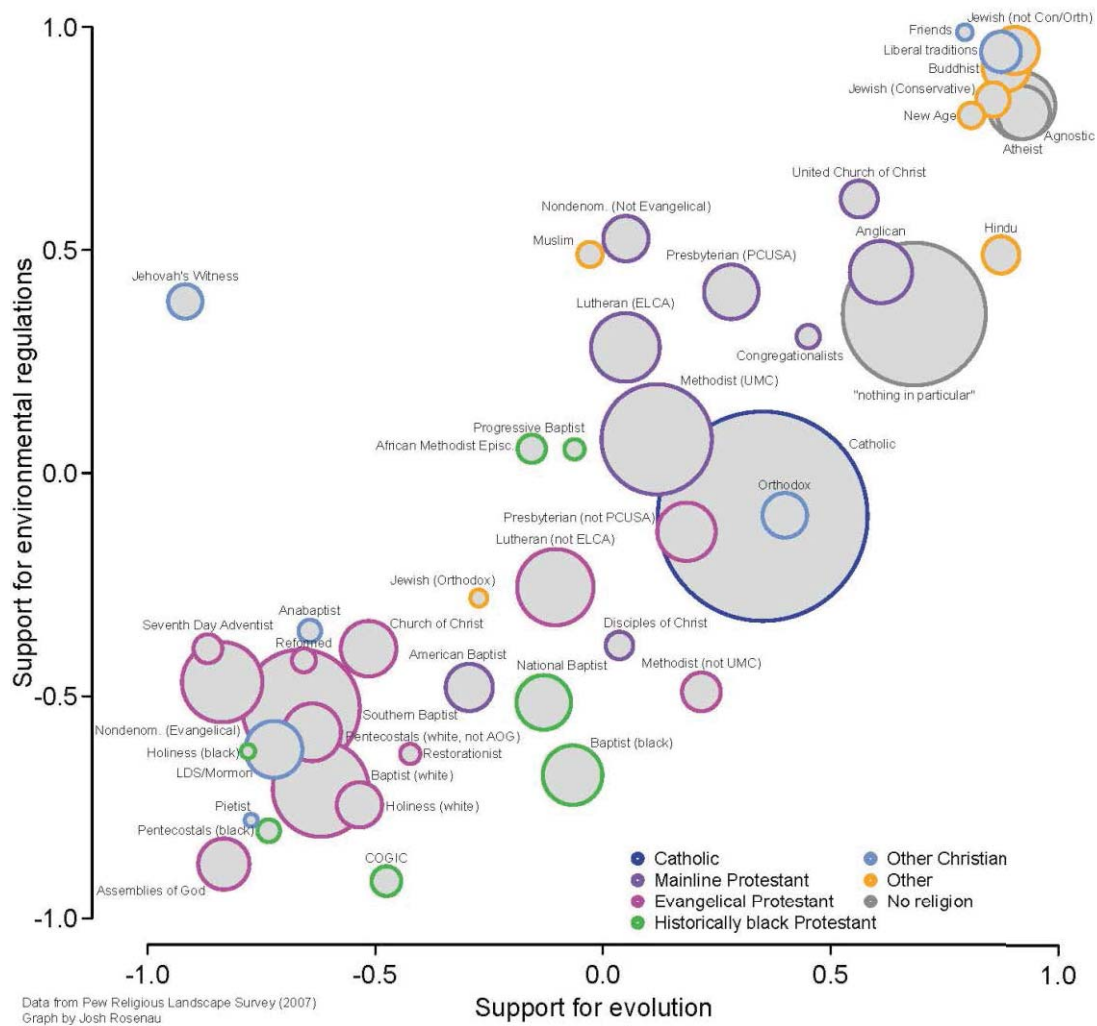
people of “the” Book, their Bible.

They are, however, people of books, many books. Reading verses or chapters out of the Bible during a Calvary Chapel service serves as an occasion for the parishioners to hear restatements for their benefit of the traditional ideas, pulled from which ever commentator the pastor is using that week (and whoever that commentator draws or drew from), about what the particular texts mean. Creation care theology is relatively new. It attempts to draw new, pro-environment meanings from texts that have centuries of accrued inertia in much older interpretations. And these new, pro-environment, pro-climate action theological interpretations often come at a high, or at least significant, personal cost. Calls for personal sacrifice are, as Illyn noted, usually unpopular. For a population of people primarily interested in being raptured away to paradise, it is not surprising that this has been a tough sell. People already inclined to environmental concern likely were the only church members who would be receptive to this new view of their tradition. Creation care theology gave them, as stated by Pastor Tri Robinson in Bill Moyers documentary, “license to be environmentally friendly and conscious and love the creation.”²⁴¹ Among those without this pre-existing desire for permission, it has fallen flat.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Bill Moyers, Tom Casciato, and Betsy Rate, "Is God Green? [Transcript of Full Program]," New York: PBS, Web Page, Oct. 11, 2006, **URL** http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/print/isgodgreen_transcript_print.html, (Accessed May 23, 2018),

²⁴² Ellingson comes to a similar conclusion based on interviews from 2006 and 2007 of a variety leaders engaged in a various religiously motivated forms of environmental advocacy. Stephen Ellingson, *To Care for Creation : The Emergence of the Religious Environmental Movement* (Chicago ; London: The University of

Chicago Press, 2016).



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Chapter 7: Progressive Christianity and Its Environmental Discourse - 1950s to Present

As Freud noted, Copernicus and Galileo dislodged humanity from the center of the universe; Darwin, Wallace and their precursors disclosed that humans were not a special and especially beloved creation of an omnipotent deity, but instead a fairly recent, accidental “descent from the animal kingdom” with an “ineradicable animal nature”; and, hurling a third “most irritating insult” at humanity’s “mania of greatness,” psychoanalysis showed “it is not even master in its own home, but is dependent upon the most scanty information concerning all that goes on unconsciously in its psychic life.”²⁴³ In light of these modern insights, in the decades before Lynn White articulated his controversial thesis, Paul Tillich, Charles Hartshorne, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin²⁴⁴ and others were engaged in a radical reconceptualization of Christian metaphysics consistent with enlightenment science. And since White, theorists like Sallie McFague, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox have carried the project of reimagining Christianity forward.

Other Christian apologists contend such a project is unnecessary, that contrary

²⁴³ Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis [the Vienna Lectures: 1916-1917]* (PDFBooksWorld, 1917), 250-51, <https://bit.ly/2q6qZOb>.

²⁴⁴ At the time of this writing, Teilhard de Chardin was lifted into the public eye by the wedding sermon on May 19, 2018 by Bishop Michael Curry, the first African American Presiding Bishop of the The Episcopal Church, the United States-based member church of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Michael Curry, "Bishop Michael Curry's Royal Wedding Sermon: Full Text of 'the Power of Love'," Windsor, UK: House of Windsor, May 19, 2018, URL <https://n.pr/2LmsnFk>. Accessed May 25, 2018.

to White's thesis, Christian and Jewish scriptures can be and, indeed, are most accurately construed as having strong pro-environment themes and moral mandates for ecosystem protection. These theorists note that in the Genesis account of creation, the created order is declared by God to be "very good" and that human dominion cannot be construed as a license to destroy God's creation. Instead, God's ultimate ownership of all creation is emphasized and therefore humans are to exercise wise and judicious stewardship of God's property, to whom humans are ultimately accountable. This so called "stewardship model" is the most common eco-theology among Christians, from conservative to liberal branches. Stewardship Christians tend to embrace ecological science, looking to it for instruction on how proper stewardship can be exercised while still meeting legitimate human needs.

Other Christian theorists, however, note that the stewardship model conflicts with evolutionary science, because this model assumes that the rest of non-human creation needs humanity as God's appointed steward. If humanity is a very late arrival in evolutionary history, from 100,000 to 1 million years ago, depending on how "human" is defined, these theorists ask how can a creation that managed without humans for most of its 3.5 billion year history be said to require God-appointed humans as its steward? These theorists instead tend to prefer a model that sees the presence of the divine in the creation itself and in its natural laws and processes.

Process Theology and Creation Spirituality

There are two types of Christian theorizing about divine immanence: *process*

theology (as being derived from the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead) and *creation spirituality* associated with Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox (discussed below). These new theologies are, of course, usually regarded as heretical or at least suspect by conservative Christians as being against Paul's prohibition of pantheistic understandings of the divine. To refute this critique, proponents of these immanent theologies often rely on the relatively new metaphysical label popularized in America by Charles Hartshorne in the 1950s of *panentheism*, which they carefully distinguish from the related but traditionally heretical concept of *pantheism*.²⁴⁵ The Oxford English Dictionary defines pantheism as "a belief or philosophical theory that God is immanent in or identical with the universe," while defining panentheism as the "theory or belief that God encompasses and interpenetrates the universe but at the same time is greater than and independent of it." Conservative branches of Christianity still hold to a completely dualistic understanding of God and maintain that the divine realm is entirely separate from the mundane universe in which humanity resides, even if that God is aware of events in the physical realm and may miraculously intervene on occasion.

In mainline to liberal streams of Christianity, panentheistic interpretations of divinity are frequently advanced, often citing to the Apostle Paul's sermon to the Athenians (Acts 17:28). These branches of Christianity usually embrace ecological

²⁴⁵ Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Charles Hartshorne, "Pantheism and Panentheism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987).

science as demonstrating the interdependence of things, and frequently draw on ecology as an exhortation to return humanity to an Arcadian garden of harmony with nature.

These theorists usually also claim to accept evolutionary science. Lisa Sideris has noted, however, liberal Christian theorists often de-emphasize the aspects of evolution that suggest that natural selection operates in a manner that is blind, random and purposeless.²⁴⁶ Most branches of Christianity still affirm belief in some form of conscious, supernatural deity that controls or at least influences events within earthly existence, including the manner in which evolution occurs, even if this deity interpenetrates the whole cosmos. However, there are small movements within Christianity that understand the processes of evolution and their physical manifestations as the primary divine reality, and accept its random nature. Such Christians, in fully embracing evolutionary science and the model of nature provided by it, often reject all elements of supernaturalism and reject or are at least agnostic about claims about an afterlife. Individuals in such movements see themselves as still Christian in that they still believe in God, even though their God is merely physical reality and its attendant natural laws, they still revere Jesus as an important teacher of ethics while rejecting that his execution had any particular cosmic significance, and still appreciate the Christian Bible as their common inspirational text while rejecting

²⁴⁶ Lisa H. Sideris, *Environmental Ethics, Ecological Theology, and Natural Selection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

it as in any sense magically inspired by some external deity.²⁴⁷ Fully accepting reality as revealed by contemporary science is central to these Christians, and thus is a Christian manifestation of the new religious movement of religious naturalism.

Finally, there is a small but detectable group within American and European Christianity that fully embraces a post-theistic form of religion, a Christianity without god.²⁴⁸ There is a church in the suburbs of Toronto with a self-professed Christian atheist pastor. She is controversial, but her congregation supports and sticks by her.²⁴⁹

Thomas Berry - reinventing what it mean to be human in the contemporary Christian context

Thomas Berry, mentioned above, was a Passionist Catholic priest (1914-2009) whose work reimagined Christian understandings of biophysical reality in a way that more closely aligned Christianity with contemporary findings from the natural sciences and served to encourage environmental concern. The ecological economist Richard Norgaard described Berry's work as "among the most important modern treatments of the connections between religion and nature."²⁵⁰ Famed biologist Edward O. Wilson has noted Berry's ideas as noteworthy contribution to a renewed

²⁴⁷ Michael Dowd, *Thank God for Evolution! : How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our World*, 1st ed. (Tulsa, Okla.: Council Oak Books, 2007).

²⁴⁸ Maguire, *Christianity without God : Moving Beyond the Dogmas and Retrieving the Epic Moral Narrative*.

²⁴⁹ <http://www.grettavosper.ca/>

²⁵⁰ Richard B. Norgaard, "Can Science and Religion Better Save Nature Together?," *BioScience* 52, no. 9 (2002): 844.

understanding of environmental ethics.²⁵¹ The social psychologists Gardner and Stern are a further example of Berry's influence. In their chapter on "Religious and Moral Approaches" in their social psychology textbook, they exclusively rely on Berry and *The Dream of the Earth*²⁵² to describe new developments in eco-theology and describe his ideas as "Berry's new religion."²⁵³ Professor Bron Taylor heads the syllabus for his course, *Religion and Nature in North America*, with this epigraph: "Without a fascination with the grandeur of the North American continent, the energy needed for its preservation will never be developed."²⁵⁴ Berry died in 2009 at the age of 94. Even in his final years, Berry continued to write, publishing in 2006 *Evening Thoughts - Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*.

Because of Berry's ongoing influence²⁵⁵ upon progressive Christian understandings of their responsibility, including upon two of my key interviews in the next chapter, I will here review and compare three of his major works, see how his ideas has evolved over time, and consider whether Berry's analysis has stood the test

²⁵¹ Edward O. Wilson, *The Future of Life* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2002), 205.

²⁵² Thomas Mary Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988).

²⁵³ Gerald T. Gardner and Paul C. Stern, *Environmental Problems and Human Behavior* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996), 51..

²⁵⁴ Bron Taylor, "Syllabus - Religion and Nature in North America, Fall 2010, the University of Florida," Gainesville, FL, Web Page, [URL http://www.brontaylor.com/courses/fall2010-RNNA.html](http://www.brontaylor.com/courses/fall2010-RNNA.html), (Accessed May 28, 2018), From Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 33.

²⁵⁵ Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Berry, Thomas," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London & New York: Continuum International, 2005).

of time. I will consider individually and then together, *Dream*,²⁵⁶ *Befriending the Earth* - *A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*,²⁵⁷ and *The Great Work - Our Way Into the Future*.²⁵⁸

Matthew Fox, as detailed in the next chapter, is one of the writers picking up the torch passed by John Shelby Spong at ProgressiveChristianity.org, and his writings and ideas have influenced all the progressive Christian pastors I have interviewed for this dissertation, illustrating his ongoing influence within progressive Christianity. I will also outline his key works.

The Dream of the Earth

The Dream of the Earth was published by Sierra Club Books in 1988 as the first of its “Sierra Club Nature and Natural Philosophy Library.” An example of the book’s influence is that Gardner and Stern, in their chapter on “Religious and Moral Approaches” in their social psychology text book, exclusively rely on Berry and *Dream* to describe new developments in eco-theology and describe his ideas as “Berry’s new religion.”²⁵⁹

For those still uninformed about humanity’s environmental crisis, Berry spends some time in *Dream* laying out the basic facts of our planetary crisis; increased

²⁵⁶ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*.

²⁵⁷ Thomas Mary Berry et al., *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation between Humans and the Earth* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991).

²⁵⁸ Thomas Mary Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, 1st pbk. ed. (New York: Bell Tower, 1999).

²⁵⁹ Gardner and Stern, *Environmental Problems and Human Behavior*, 51.

extinction rates, increased air and water pollution, increased accumulation of toxic waste, dying oceans, the normal litany for those of us immersed in this issue. He notes that “[i]t is a supreme irony of history that the consequences of [humanity’s] millennial expectations have been the devastation of the planet—wasteworld rather than wonderworld... [W]e need to alter our commitment from an industrial wonderworld achieved by plundering processes to an integral earth community based on a mutually enhancing human earth relationship.”²⁶⁰ Berry acknowledges our collective guilt:

We all bear a certain amount of guilt for our present situation... We have been entranced with the progress myth, unlimited progress, progress that would lead beyond the existing human condition to something infinitely better, to wonderworld. Such is the seductive theme in almost all our advertising.²⁶¹

Berry declares his prescription as “reinventing the human.”²⁶² (See also “Our challenge is to create ... a new sense of what it is to be human.”²⁶³ He spends much of the book in diagnosis of this wasteworld problem by critiquing what he sees as the four human institutions responsible for our plight: government, corporations, religious institutions, and the modern university.

Berry spoke with a strong prophetic voice, that did not mince words. In stark contrast to evangelical Christian talk about humanity as the pinnacle of God’s creation, Berry saw humanity at present as a toxic planetary presence. For example:

²⁶⁰ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 29-30.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 57.

²⁶² Ibid., 21, 82.

²⁶³ Ibid., 42.

In this disintegrating phase of our industrial society, we now see ourselves not as the splendor of creation, but as the most pernicious mode of earthly being. We are the termination, not the fulfillment of the earth process. If there were a parliament of creatures, its first decision might well be to vote the humans out of the community, too deadly a presence to tolerate any further. We are the affliction of the world, its demonic presence. We are the violation of the earth's most sacred aspects.

In relation to the earth, we have been autistic for centuries. Only now have we begun to listen with some attention and with a willingness to respond to the earth's demands that we cease our industrial assault, that we abandon our inner rage against the conditions of our earthly existence, that we renew our human participation in the grand liturgy of the universe.²⁶⁴

Berry set forth principles that must guide us in developing technologies that will mutually enhance both the human community and the earth process. "Creation must now be experienced as the emergence of the universe as a psychic-spiritual as well as material-physical reality from the beginning. We need to see ourselves as integral with this emergent process."²⁶⁵ "All human professions, institutions, and activities must be integral with the earth as the primary self-nourishing, self-governing, and self-fulfilling community.... This is our way into the future."²⁶⁶

One of the principal characteristics of this emerging Ecological Age is the move from a human-centered norm of reality and value to a nature-centered norm. Berry says, "We cannot expect life, the earth, and the universe to fit our rational human designs of how life, the earth, and the universe should function. We must fit our thinking and our actions within the larger process. We must move from

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 209, 15.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 81.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 88.

democracy to biocracy. We need a constitution for the North American continent, not simply a constitution for the humans occupying this continent. We need a United Species, not simply a United Nations."²⁶⁷

Berry also prescribed a new direction for seeking the divine. "The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human... [T]his sense of the sacred character of the natural world *as our primary revelation of the divine* is our first need."²⁶⁸

I heard Berry in a public lecture in Boise, Idaho in October 1993, say it even more succinctly: "The earth is the primary scripture. All written scriptures are secondary at best." (Notice echoes of Romans 1:20).

Is there any hope that the needed changes will occur? In his chapter "Patriarchy," Berry gave this ominous assessment:

If mitigations [to industrial processes] have appeared, they have served only to make industrial processes more endurable. Thus the question of meliorism appears, the tendency to constantly modify an existing system without changing the basic pattern of its functioning. What is needed is a profound alteration of the pattern itself, not some modification of the pattern. To achieve this, the basic principle of every significant revolution needs to be asserted: rejection of partial solutions. The tension of the existing situation must even be deliberately intensified so that the root cause of the destructive situation may become evident, for only when the cause becomes painfully clear will decisive change take place. The pain to be endured from the change must be experienced as a lesser pain to that of continuing the present course.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 161.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 81. (emphasis supplied)

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 158-59.

But, in the last two pages of *Dream*, Berry ended with this explanation of why hope is justified, an explanation that explains the books title and justifies this extended quote:

...Evidence for this hopefulness is found in the sequence of crisis moments through which the universe and, especially, the planet Earth have passed from the beginning until now. At each state of its development, when it seems that an impasse has been reached, most improbable solutions have emerged that enabled the Earth to continue its development. At the very beginning of the universe, the rate of expansion had to be at an infinitesimally precise rate so that the universe would neither explode nor collapse. So it was at the moment of passage out of the radiation stage: only a fragment of matter escaped antimatter annihilation, but out of that fragment has come the galactic systems and the universe entire. So at the shaping of the solar system: if the Earth were a little closer to the sun, it would be too hot; if slightly more distant, it would be too cold. If closer to the moon, the tides would overwhelm the continents; if more distant, the seas would be stagnant and life development could not have taken place. So with the radius of the Earth: if it were a little greater, the Earth would be more gaseous, like Jupiter; if a little less, the Earth would be more solid, like Mars. In neither case could life have evolved in its present form.

After the appearance of cellular life, when the original nutrients were consumed, the impasse was averted by invention of photosynthesis, upon which all future life development has depended. So it has been with the great story of life in its groping toward unlimited variety of expression; the mysteries of life multiply, but the overall success of the planet became increasingly evident, until the Neolithic phase of the human.

This story of the past provides our most secure basis of hope that the earth will so guide us through the peril of the present that we may provide a fitting context for the next phase of the emergent mystery of earthly existence. That the guidance is available we cannot doubt. The difficulty is in the order of magnitude of change that is required of us. We have become so acclimated to an industrial world that we can hardly imagine any other context of survival, even when we recognize that the industrial bubble is dissolving and will soon leave us in the chill of a plundered landscape.

None of our former revelatory experiences, none of our

renewal or rebirth rituals, none of our apocalyptic descriptions are quite adequate for this moment. Their mythic power remains in a context far removed from the power that is abroad in our world. But even as we glance over the grimy world before us, the sun shines radiantly over the earth, the aspen leaves shimmer in the evening breeze, the coo of the mourning dove and the swelling chorus of the insects fill the land, while down in the hollows the mist deepens the fragrance of the honeysuckle. Soon the late summer moon will give a light sheen to the landscape. Something of a dream experience. Perhaps on occasion we participate in the original dream of the earth. Perhaps there are times when this primordial design becomes visible, as in a palimpsest, when we remove the later imposition. The dream of the earth. Where else can we go for the guidance needed for the task that is before us.²⁷⁰

Befriending the Earth

Befriending the Earth had its genesis as a television series consisting of 13 half-hour episodes produced by Canada's *Vision TV*. The series, which I have watched, records a colloquium between Berry, a Passionist priest, and Thomas Clarke, a Jesuit priest, that occurred in 1990 at the Holy Cross Centre of Ecology and Spirituality in Port Burwell, Ontario. In 1997, I had the chance to ask Berry about some of the seemingly radical things he said in those videos, and how he managed to avoid getting in trouble with Catholic superiors. He told me he was indeed being quite spontaneous, just speaking off the cuff, and simply was not thinking that video cameras were recording the proceedings.

Much of the spontaneity of the videos is preserved in the book. In a limited sense, the book is a transcript of the videos, though the book has clearly been

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 221-23.

rearranged, edited, and somewhat toned-down. Missing is Berry's declaration in the video version that the First Commandment in Exodus should really be understood as the Sky Father decreeing that "Thou shalt not have an Earth Mother."

In *Dream*, if you had no knowledge of its author, you might have assumed it was written by an environmentalist critical of Christianity, not a Catholic priest. He critiques Christianity negatively, but it is a critique that could have come from any outsider. In *Befriending*, you have much more of a sense that one is hearing a disappointed insider, disappointed that this institution to which he has dedicated his life is failing so miserably in its duties to the Earth. After extolling the wisdom of Black Elk, he declares "the salvation of Christians lies in the unassimilated elements of paganism."²⁷¹ Seemingly realizing that he was saying something radical, he goes on to justify this statement: "We have assimilated the Greek wisdom. We are assimilating the Oriental mystique, as well as the meditation techniques of different parts of the world. We have assimilated much of what China has to offer. Why, then, do we exclude the assimilation of the culture of 'pagan people'?" Christians need pagan wisdom for their salvation. Coming from a Catholic priest, this seems especially remarkable.

After extolling pagan wisdom, he goes after that most sacred of icons, *The Holy Bible*: "I suggest we might give up the Bible for awhile, put it on the shelf for perhaps twenty years. Then we might have a more adequate approach to it. We need

²⁷¹ Berry et al., *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation between Humans and the Earth*, 21.

to experience the divine revelation presented to us in the natural world.” “Why are we not getting our religious insight from our experience of the trees, our experience of the mountains, our experience of the rivers, of the sea and the winds? Why are we not responding religiously to these realities?”²⁷² “Here we are with a planet that is being devastated... and we are still reading the book instead of reading the world about us. We will drown reading the book.”²⁷³

In a manner reminiscent of William Ophuls’ *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity*,²⁷⁴ Berry has harsh words for one of our most cherished, indeed sacred, of secular institutions, democracy. “I consider democracy a conspiracy of humans against the natural world. The United States Constitution is a constitution of humans guaranteeing human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness at the expense of the continent. We need a North American constitution that would include all the components of the North American continent... In my view, the human community and the natural world will go into the future as a single sacred community or we will both perish in the desert.”²⁷⁵ “If democracy is such a great thing, why is U.S. democracy destroying the planet? Why does democracy not guide us?”²⁷⁶

Berry also chastises those who say “Trust in God.” “God is not going to take care of our present crisis. The deity is not going to pick up the pieces and remedy the

²⁷² Ibid., 75.

²⁷³ Ibid., 76.

²⁷⁴ William Ophuls, *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity: Prologue to a Political Theory of the Steady State* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1977).

²⁷⁵ Berry et al., *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation between Humans and the Earth*, 42-43.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 76.

disasters we bring about. God gives us the capacity to deal with these things. One of the most disappointing aspects of Christian spirituality comes from ... counsels [of] total abandonment and total trust in the divine... Look what God is permitting us to do. God is letting us kill off the most beautiful things around and evidently God is not bringing an end to it. God is functioning through ourselves. God is telling us what to do. The natural world is telling us what to do. God speaks to us through the natural world... How the human functions, will determine the destiny of' the Earth.²⁷⁷

And perhaps most amazing, given the strident opposition to contraception and abortion in many precincts of Catholicism, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Berry addresses "population."

... The bishops of the Philippines put out a document called *What Is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?* It was written by a missionary in cooperation with tribal peoples. A local bishop presented it to the national meeting of the bishops. They approved it. But what did they do before they approved it? They took out one of the important statements on population. They diminished an important aspect of the document by their unwillingness to deal with population, even though overpopulation is one of the most disastrous realities facing the Philippines and the planet.

While we are trying to be good to people, we are often being cruel. The Philippines, at the beginning of this century, had six million people. That figure has doubled every twenty years, from six to twelve, twelve to twenty-four, twenty-four to fifty. The number is 70 million now, and that is in the process of doubling. There will be over 100 million people shortly after the year 2010. Meanwhile, the mangrove swamps are destroyed, and 80 percent of the coral reefs, which are among the richest ecosystems on the planet, are severely damaged. A third of the soil is severely damaged, two-thirds is partly damaged, and the rain forest that once covered over 90 percent of the area will, it seems, soon be totally gone. Only 10 percent survives now.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 52.

So we can list disaster after disaster to the natural environment, all occurring, ostensibly, in order to better care for people's needs. Why do they blast the fisheries? To take care of people. Why do they destroy the mangrove swamps? To take care of people. And where is it all going to end up? In the impoverishment and death of millions of people.

This points to a number of other things. We have to live on the planet, on the planet's terms and not on our terms. Living in the natural world on its terms is hard for us. We want the planet to exist on our terms. At last we are realizing that we had better find out right away what the planet's terms are. We must accept life, the human mode of being, within the conditions of the natural world that brings us into being. We were brought into being by the natural world, and we must survive on its conditions.²⁷⁸

This last paragraph is reminiscent of the radical environmentalist Paul Watson's essay *On the Precedence of Natural Law*.²⁷⁹

In summary, while the themes contained in *Befriending the Earth* are consistent with those laid out in *The Dream of the Earth*, they have an edge and passion here that give the work a distinctive feel, and indeed break new ground. This is perhaps owing to the unique genesis of the book.

The Great Work: Our Way into the Future

Berry begins *Great Work* in his introduction as follows:

Human presence on the Planet Earth in the opening years of the twenty-first century is the subject of this book. We need to understand where we are and how we got here. Once we are clear on these issues we can move forward with our historical destiny, to create a mutually enhancing mode of human dwelling on the planet Earth.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 45-46.

²⁷⁹ Paul Watson, "On the Precedence of Natural Law," *Environmental Law & Litigation* 3 (1988): 79-90..

Just now we seem to be expecting some wonderworld to be attained... In the process, however, we are causing immense ruin in the world around us.²⁸⁰

Beginning thus, Berry maintains the wonderworld/wasteworld theme that he first presented us in *Dream*. The book was clearly intended to stand on its own without reference to prior works, so much of the ground covered in the previously discussed works is presented as well. Here, however, Berry arranges his material around the theme of "The Great Work." By this, Berry means that the Great Work of the present and foreseeable future human generations is that "of moving the human project from its devastating exploitation to a benign presence" on planet Earth,²⁸¹ or as I would phrase it, from malignancy to benignity. And indeed, as noted in the opening sentences, Berry imagines something a bit more positive for humanity than mere benignity, but imagines a future in which we are "a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever-renewing organic-based Earth community."²⁸²

Berry, echoing a famed observation by Marx,²⁸³ explains our human situation as follows:

The Great Work before us ... is not a role that we have chosen.
It is a role given to us, beyond any consultation with ourselves... We

²⁸⁰ Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, ix.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 7.

²⁸² Ibid., 201.

²⁸³ "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living." Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 595. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>.

do not choose the moment of our birth, who our parents will be, our particular culture or the historical moment when we will be born. We do not choose the status of spiritual insight or political or economic conditions that will be the context of our lives. We are, as it were, thrown into existence with a challenge and a role that is beyond any personal choice. The nobility of our lives, however, depends upon the manner in which we come to understand and fulfill our assigned role.²⁸⁴

Noting Al Gore's maxim that "we must make the rescue of the environment the central organizing principle for civilization,"²⁸⁵ Berry exhorted us to step up to the plate, and laid out the reasons we must do so.²⁸⁶

In an effort to be hopeful, in his final chapter entitled "Moments of Grace,"

Berry concluded as follows:

We are now experiencing a moment of significance far beyond what any of us can imagine... The mythic vision has been set into place. The distorted dream of an industrial technological paradise is being replaced by the more viable dream of a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever-renewing organic-based Earth community... In the larger cultural context the dream becomes the myth that both guides and drives the action.

But even as we make our transition into this new century we must note that moments of grace are transient moments. The transformation must take place within a brief period. Otherwise it is gone forever. In the immense story of the universe, that so many of these dangerous moments have been navigated successfully is some indication that the universe is for us rather than against us. We need only summon these forces to our support in order to succeed. Although the human challenge to these purposes must never be underestimated, it is difficult to believe that the larger purposes of the universe or of the planet Earth will ultimately be thwarted.²⁸⁷

In addition to this conclusion, elsewhere in the book a certain yearning

²⁸⁴ Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, 7.

²⁸⁵ Albert Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 269.

²⁸⁶ Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, 200.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 201.

desperation can be seen. “[W]e must believe that those powers that assign our [Great Work] must in that same act bestow upon us the ability to fulfill this role. We must believe that we are cared for and guided by these same powers that bring us into being.”²⁸⁸ We, the human, is what the universe has been building toward. (See “The Anthropic Principle”, cited by Berry in *Dream*²⁸⁹). Surely, acting through some higher intelligence and guiding knowledge, this undefined power will not let humanity drive itself to extinction. Yet, in his concluding paragraph, Berry admits that “moments of grace are transient,” that our window of opportunity is closing. And in passages I noted in the foregoing section on *Befriending the Earth*, Berry there acknowledges that “God is not bringing an end” to our self-destructive impulses, that we are on our own. So Berry was not always internally consistent.

For Berry, what’s it all mean?

Humanity’s task is daunting, and Berry attempted to be a poet of hope, hope that it is not already too late and that continuing the struggle is not just a pointless exercise in futility. But did Berry lay an effective foundation to inspire effective activism within Christian communities? “Must [we] believe that we are cared for and guided,” in spite of much evidence to the contrary, in order to move forward with effective action?

The famous and controversial biologist Richard Dawkins provides an

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 7.

²⁸⁹ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 16.

alternative path forward in contrast to Berry's at times New Agey metaphysics: "Be warned that if you wish, as I do, to build a society in which individuals cooperate generously and unselfishly towards a common good, you can expect little help from biological nature. Let us try to *teach* generosity and altruism, because we are born selfish. Let us understand what our own selfish genes are up to, because we may then at least have the chance to upset their designs, something no other species has ever aspired to do."²⁹⁰

Here then, Berry and Dawkins come together. "Reinventing the Human" (the title of chapter 14 of *The Great Work*) is indeed our central task and mission. But we must do it with eyes wide open. To save *nature* requires humans to behave in a way that *unnatural*. The moment is now two decades removed from *The Great Work* and three decades removed from *The Dream of the Earth*. In the next chapter, I show some of the ways that Berry's ideas did inspire positive action. But here, we can conclude that Berry's ideas did not set off the reshaping of human behavior that he or his disciples hoped.

The Creation Spirituality of Matthew Fox

Matthew Fox, born in 1940, was ordained as a Catholic priest in the

²⁹⁰ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 30th Anniversary ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3. (Dawkins' emphasis)

Dominican order in 1967.²⁹¹ He was silenced by Pope Benedict XVI in 1989-90 (who was then Cardinal Ratzinger, the head of the Roman Catholic Church's Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith) and was expelled from his order in 1993. According to Andrea Kresge, the Vatican "objected specifically to Fox's refusal to deny his belief in pantheism, his denial of original sin, for referring to God as 'mother' and for promoting a feminist theology."²⁹² He is currently a Episcopal priest.²⁹³ He is noted for his radical rethinking of Christian theology toward a more earth-centered orientation. In one of his early works, Fox dramatically illustrated the extent of this rethinking as follows: "Is Mother Earth herself not the ultimate [victim], the most neglected of the suffering, voiceless ones today? And along with her, the soil, forests, species, birds, and waters are not being heard where legislators gather, where judges preside, and where believers gather to worship. Is the human race involved in a matricide that is also ecocide, geocide, suicide and even deicide? ...[Are we our] mother's keeper? This is the moral and spiritual question of our time. Evidence is slim that Westerners have taken that responsibility at all seriously... Patriarchal agendas and cultural presuppositions, patriarchal educational and religious institutions have

²⁹¹ Andrea A. Kresge, "Fox, Matthew," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London & New York: Continuum International, 2005), 669.

²⁹² Ibid., 670.

²⁹³ Matthew Fox, *A New Reformation: Creation Spirituality and the Transformation of Christianity* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2006), 132; Kresge, "Fox, Matthew," 669.

left us all with maternal blood on our hands. The blood of Mother Earth crucified.”²⁹⁴

During Pentacost week 2005, Fox, reenacting Luther’s act in 1517, posted 95 new theses penned by Fox to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.²⁹⁵ In his Thesis No. 15, he states “Christians must distinguish between Jesus (a historical figure) and Christ (the experience of God-in-all things).”²⁹⁶ In Thesis No. 10, Fox says “God loves all of creation, and science can help us more deeply penetrate and appreciate the mysteries and wisdom of God in creation. Science is no enemy of true religion.”²⁹⁷ And in Thesis No. 6, he says “*Theism* (the idea that God is ‘out there’ or above and beyond the universe) is false. All things are in God and God is in all things (panentheism).”²⁹⁸ Thus, Fox explicitly claims panentheism as his metaphysical stance.

While the Vatican may have accused him of being a pantheist, he denies this, and goes into detail in one of his early and still influential books, *Original Blessing*.

There, among other sources for his metaphysical claims, he cites “Paul in Acts 17:28

²⁹⁴ Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 17, 33.

²⁹⁵ Fox, *A New Reformation: Creation Spirituality and the Transformation of Christianity*, Back Cover.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 67; Here, Fox states in thumbnail the argument developed in his still widely cited book, Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance*.

²⁹⁷ Fox, *A New Reformation: Creation Spirituality and the Transformation of Christianity*, 65.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 63.

– It is in God that we live and move, and have our being” and the medieval Christian mystic “Mechtild of Magdeburg – The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw—and knew I saw—all things in God and God in all things.”²⁹⁹ He then goes into some detail as to why he is properly understood to be a panentheist. Here is Fox’s own argument for his position:

. . . The idea that God is "out there" is probably the ultimate dualism, divorcing as it does God and humanity and reducing religion to a childish state of pleasing or pleading with a God "out there." All theism sets up a model or paradigm of people here and God out there. All theisms are about subject/object relationships to God. . . [R]eligious theism itself . . kills God and the soul alike by preaching a God "out there."

What is the solution to the killing of God and the loss of human soul? It is our moving from theism to panentheism. Now panentheism is not pantheism. Pantheism, which is a declared heresy because it robs God of transcendence, states that "everything is God and God is everything." Panentheism, on the other hand, is altogether orthodox . . . for it slips in the little Greek word *en* and thus means, "God is in everything and everything is in God." This experience of the presence of God in our depth . . . in all the blessings and the sufferings of life is a mystical understanding of God. Panentheism is desperately needed by individuals and religious institutions today. It is the way the creation centered tradition of spirituality experiences God. It is not theistic because it does not relate to God as subject or object, but neither is it pantheistic. Panentheism is a way of seeing the world sacramentally. Indeed, as we have seen previously, in the creation centered tradition, the primary sacrament is creation itself—which includes every person and being who lives. Other sacraments derive their fruitful and creative power from this primary sacrament. This is one thing that distinguishes pantheism from panentheism—pantheism has no need of sacraments, but panentheism does. For while everything is truly in God and God is truly in everything, this is not always evident to our experience.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing* (Sante Fe: Bear and Co. Publishing, 1983), 88.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

Why does pantheism have no need for sacrament? Fox doesn't say. And the momentous import that Fox attaches to the difference between "is" and "in" is likewise not explained.

Another radically new aspect of Fox's theology is the seeming disappearance of the traditional Christian doctrine of the trinity. The traditional Nicene formulation of the trinity, where God the Father is the Creator that resides somewhere outside the universe, where God the Christ ("Jesus") was a special, one-time incarnation of part of God into human form, who's now back with God the Father somewhere outside the universe, and God the Holy Spirit, which is that part of God that exists inside the universe and through whom God now, since Jesus' departure, communicates with humanity. By emphasizing the Christ as the "God in all things" and denying the theistic God that "is 'out there' or above and beyond the universe," all three parts of the traditional formulation seem to disappear. If God, the Cosmic Christ exists in all things and in that sense communicates with all things, the Holy Spirit becomes extraneous. The Cosmic Christ now serves the purpose previously imagined for the Holy Spirit. Fox does not explain if he intends this outcome.

When Fox visited the University of Florida on November 1, 2006, I asked him whether the idea of a "holy spirit" was retained in his understanding of the universe. His response was an emphatic "Yes," and went on to explain that "just as photons display qualities as both particles and waves," he imagines "the Cosmic Christ as the particle aspect within all matter in universe, while the Holy Spirit is the 'wave' or

‘energy’ aspect in all matter in universe, which intermix with each other constantly.” In response to my question “What if any continuing role is there for God the Father?” He immediately corrected me by saying “God the Father/Mother,” consistent with his known feminist theology, and then said that “God the Father/Mother is the Creator who continues the ongoing process of creation; creation isn’t done; God is still creating, and thus, God the Father/Mother is that ongoing creative part of God.” He concluded the interview with a smile and said, “Of course, this is all just metaphor.” Fox acknowledged these are his creative efforts to come up new ways of imagining the divine mystery in useful and meaningful ways that do not stray too far outside traditional Christian notions of orthodoxy, which includes the 3-in-1 idea of the Trinity. Fox does not conceive of them as “The Truth” with a capital “T.”

In playing with metaphor, Fox did conceptualize an earth-embracing form of Christianity that did, as set out in the next chapter, inspire some progressive Christian pastors, and help those that were and are thus inclined to steer their congregations accept this planet as their home, not just a temporary abode until escape to the “new heaven and new earth.” He has contributed to such efforts, as is illustrated in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8 - Progressive Christian Congregations: “This World is Our Home”

Progressive Christian Forum of Santa Cruz County

I was first alerted to the existence of the Progressive Christian Forum of Santa Cruz County (they abbreviate it simply as “PCF”) by Professor Szasz. He had been contacted by them to participate in a public forum regarding the significance of Pope Francis’ encyclical on climate change, a forum that occurred on October 1, 2015 at the Catholic Church in Aptos, California.³⁰¹ At that event, I signed up to be on their email list and learned of their monthly, noon-time meetings. Because I had selected congregations affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity (“TCPC”) for my investigation into progressive Christianity, I saw such a group as a potentially valuable source of information.

I first visited one of their monthly meetings on September 7, 2016. I learned that the group is composed of retired clergy and long-time lay members from the mainline Protestant churches in the Santa Cruz area, all still active in their congregations, representing the following denominations: United Church of Christ (UCC), United Methodist, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Presbyterian Church USA. They were discussing a book, *God’s Human Future*,³⁰² by

³⁰¹ Roseann Hernandez, "For Heaven Sake: Can the Pope’s Encyclical on the Environment Change Hearts and Minds?," *Good Times*, Sept. 30, 2015, <http://goodtimes.sc/santa-cruz-news/for-heavens-sake/>.

³⁰² David Galston, *God’s Human Future: The Struggle to Define Theology Today*,

David Galston, a Canadian theologian, professor, and chaplain, who is also the executive director of the Westar Institute. In the context of discussing Galston's book, one of the members made this comment:

I see our mission--The Progressive Christian Forum--as very much a matter of helping all of us open to new perspectives and possibilities, so the question is, Can we do that? And if so, how? ... That is the question for discussion. Let me add just a little addendum to it. As I was reading this book, it occurred to me that most of us are probably atheists in the sense that we do not resonate very much with the notion of a personal god, an ontological being somewhere or other, and if we do use that language, we use it metaphorically, rather than in fact. So the question that I have is, if that is true, and I think Galston would fall into that category of 'Christian Awe-theist,' a non-theistic Christian, if that is true, how do we relate to people who are still Christian with a much more theistic understanding of the faith?

As he talked about everyone in the group being atheists in terms of their denial of a supernatural deity, he looked around the table to the other participants as they gently nodded their heads in agreement. It reminded me of Pastor Valencia's exclamation on my first visit to ReGen, when he said, "You know what really, really blows me away is that there are churches today that don't believe in the deity of Christ. They don't believe that Jesus is God. They don't believe that he is the Son of God who came in the form of man, a 100% man, a 100% God. They don't believe that, they don't think that!" (V2). Here were some of those Christians, calmly

God and the Human Future (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2016).. Galston has also written about the impact of Foucault on theology, and his given brief illustrations of his own atheistic Christianity in two short blog posts on the Westar Institute's webpage. David Galston to Biblical and Theological Reflections Blog, Nov. 13, 2017, (Salem, OR: Westar Institute), <https://www.westarinstitute.org/blog/god-is-dead/>; David Galston to Biblical and Theological Reflections Blog, July 28, 2017, (Salem, OR: Westar Institute), <https://www.westarinstitute.org/blog/mysteria-poetica-reflection-god-question/>.

acknowledging their atheistic metaphysics, and talking amongst themselves about it without apology. One of the retired pastors, acknowledging his own atheism, said his wife was still a “fundamentalist,” noting “there’s no other way to describe her. She’s no different than a Southern Baptist.” They went on to discuss, as they were discussing Galston’s book, that however much members of their Progressive Christian Forum were interested in such contemporary reimaginings of Christianity, most people in their churches were not interested at all.

Over the course of multiple visits to this group, I learned that the PCF had originally been formed to facilitate and sponsor a Westar Institute “Jesus Seminar on the Road” event in Santa Cruz. One of PCF’s retired clergy and a longtime lay leader member of one of the local congregations had traveled down to Solvang, California for one of those events in 2010, and had been so inspired by it, they wanted to bring one to Santa Cruz for the benefit of their local congregations. They accomplished this task in 2011, and sponsored another visit in 2017. In the intervening years, the PCF sponsored annual events that in one way or another did public education on issues of concern to progressive Christians, bringing prominent progressive Christian thought leaders to Santa Cruz, all hosted at Peace United Church of Christ:

- 2012 A two-day event with Ched Myers and Elaine Enns from the progressive Christian social justice organization, Bartimaeus³⁰³ Cooperative Ministries, hosted by Peace United, entitled “Jesus and Empire,” that focused on Jesus’ teachings around economic justice and community life;
- 2013: Robin Meyers, on “Subversive Faith”;
- 2014: Diana Butler Bass, on “Christianity After Religion”;
- 2015: Kathleen Dean Moore, the Oregon State University moral philosopher on “Ethical Dimensions of Climate Change,”;
- 2016: Bruce Reyes Chow and Karen Oliveto, on “The Greatest Show on Earth.”

In January 2018, PCF sponsored UCC minister Ron Buford’s workshop, “Racists Anonymous” at Resurrection Catholic Church in Aptos.

The Jesus Seminar and the Westar Institute

In Chapter 3, I detailed some of the findings of the Jesus Seminar, a collaborative project of biblical scholars to assess the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus contained in the four canonical gospels and the now available Gospel of Thomas (a collection of sayings of Jesus that was discovered in Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945). The Westar Institute was founded as the non-profit corporation to support this project.

Jesus Seminar co-chair, John Dominic Crossan, said about “historical Jesus research” that “there were always historians who said it could not be done because of historical problems. There were always theologians who said it should not be done because of theological objections. And there were always scholars who said the

³⁰³ From the story of Jesus’ healing the blind man, Bartimaeus, in Mark 10:46-52.

former when they meant the latter.” Further, there was “the suspicion that historical Jesus research is a very safe place to do theology and call it history, to do autobiography and call it biography.”³⁰⁴ Notwithstanding such challenges and suspicions, they pushed forward.

After seven years of work, the Seminar issued its report in the form of a book, *The five gospels: the search for the authentic words of Jesus*.³⁰⁵ They concluded “Eighty-two percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him,”³⁰⁶ and gave detailed summaries of rationales of scholars votes on the sayings. The Jesus Seminar then spent the next 5 years evaluating the reported deeds and events of Jesus’ life to evaluate their historicity, again issuing a report of their findings in a book, *The Acts of Jesus: what did Jesus really do?* “The fellows” of the Jesus Seminar concluded that 16% of the 176 discreet events evaluated were either highly likely or likely to have actually taken place, which “is slightly lower than the 18% of the sayings – primarily parables and aphorisms – assigned to the red and pink categories in *The Five Gospels*.”³⁰⁷ And most provocatively, the Jesus Seminar scholars came to the following five conclusions by unanimous vote:

³⁰⁴ Crossan, *The Historical Jesus : The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, xxvii-xxviii.

³⁰⁵ Jesus Seminar, Funk, and Hoover, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus: New Translation and Commentary*.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.

³⁰⁷ Jesus Seminar and Robert Walter Funk, *The Acts of Jesus : The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 1.

1. The resurrection of Jesus did not involve the resuscitation of a corpse;
2. Belief in Jesus' resurrection did not depend on what happened to his body;
3. The body of Jesus decayed as do other corpses;
4. The resurrection was not an event that happened on the first Easter Sunday; it was not an event that could have been recorded by a video camera;
5. Since the earlier strata of the New Testament contain no appearance stories, it does not seem necessary for Christian faith to believe the literal veracity of any of the later narratives.³⁰⁸

Predictably, such conclusions challenging cherished beliefs about the words, deeds and events in the life of Jesus, the central character in the world's largest religion, generated controversy.³⁰⁹

Even before completing its investigation of Jesus, the Westar Institute launched its Paul Seminar to investigate the life and thought of Christianity's founding missionary in 1993. After the Jesus Seminar was concluded in 1998, Westar launched two additional Seminar investigations into Christian Origins and The Acts of the Apostles. These Seminars concluded their work, respectively, in 2010, 2009, and 2011. Westar has two current Seminars underway: the Christianity Seminar, investigating how a small movement centered on Jesus eventually became the official

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 462.

³⁰⁹ The following are examples of the media coverage of the work of the Jesus Seminar: John Dart, "Scholars Puzzle over Jesus the Prophet and Jesus the Sage : A Claremont Graduate School Professor Says That Jesus Was Originally Viewed as a Teacher, Not as the Messiah," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 18, 1989 1989, <https://lat.ms/2xbvb5h>; Bill Broadway, "What Really Happened to Jesus?," *Washington Post*, April 8, 1996 1996, <https://wapo.st/2s6uVPX>; David Van Biema, "The Gospel Truth? The Iconoclastic and Provocative Jesus Seminar Argues That Not Much of the New Testament Can Be Trusted. If So, What Are Christians to Believe?," *Time*, April 8, 1996 1996 <https://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,984367,00.html>.

religion of the Roman Empire; and a Seminar on “God and the Human Future,” an investigation of how ideas of God have evolved and affected human history and how they are likely to evolve in the future.³¹⁰ Because their work has moved on from the life and events of Jesus’ life, Westar has generated less general media coverage. But there is an interested public that has continued to follow the Institute’s work and attend its public seminars. Westar has produced a video that explains and narrates its history since 1985, and its ongoing Westar on the Road projects, where, inspired by the story of Jesus sending his disciples out in pairs to spread the Good News of God’s arriving kingdom, the institute sends pairs of scholars out on the road to spread the good news of scholarly critical scholarship to any community that invites them and organizes and event.³¹¹

I first attended such an event in 1997, that was sponsored by the United Methodist Students, a student club at Boise State University. The two Jesus Seminar scholars were Roy Hoover from Whitman College and Lane McGaughy of Willamette University.³¹² My next encounter with a Jesus Seminar on the Road (JSOR) was here in Santa Cruz in 2011, at what would become later one of my research sites, Peace United Church of Christ, not knowing the local history of the event mentioned above. During the two-year period of my research, I attended three

³¹⁰ Westar Institute, "About Westar Seminars," Web Page, [URL https://www.westarinstitute.org/projects/](https://www.westarinstitute.org/projects/), (Accessed May 26, 2018),

³¹¹ Westar Institute, "Westar on the Road," 18:16, Sept. 25, 2017, [URL https://youtube/AbkvQcf6kJg](https://youtube/AbkvQcf6kJg), (Accessed May 24, 2018).

³¹² Arbiter staff, "Jesus Seminar to Make Stop at Student Union," *The Arbiter*, April 16, 1997, <https://bit.ly/2LwhZLD>.

more Jesus Seminar on the Road events: first at my Southern California research site at the Redlands United Church of Christ on September 16, 2016.³¹³ The preceding weekend, I had made my first visit to Redlands UCC and saw that a JSOR event was scheduled for the following weekend. I extended my trip in order to attend. About half of the 70 attendees were from Redlands UCC, and the other half were from all over Southern California.

The next JSOR event I attended was on February 24-25, 2017, again at Peace United, and again sponsored by the Progressive Christian Forum.³¹⁴ One of the presenters was David Galston, the Executive Director of Westar and the author the book the PCF was discussing when I first visited them. I managed to sit with Galston for lunch. I noted that when the Jesus Seminar reports were first published back in 1993 and 1998 and the JSOR programs were starting around the country, that there seemed to be an excitement that this new way of understanding Jesus might lead to at least some change in the way mainline Protestantism imagine Christianity and its resultant Christian worship. I asked to what extent the Jesus Seminar findings had “penetrated” American Protestantism. He responded, “not at all.” While the Institute continued to do pathbreaking research, had developed a large email list, and were

³¹³ Joanna Dewey and Celene Lillie, "Jesus Seminar on the Road: The Secular Gospel of Jesus," Redlands, CA: Redlands UCC, Web Page, Sept. 16 & 17, 2016, [URL http://uccredlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/JESUS-SEMINAR.pdf](http://uccredlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/JESUS-SEMINAR.pdf), (Accessed May 26, 2018),

³¹⁴ David Galston and Deborah Niederer Saxon, "Jesus Seminar on the Road: Humane Religion, Human Spirituality ": Westar Institute, Web Page, Feb. 24–25, 2017, [URL https://www.westarinstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/santacruz-2017/](https://www.westarinstitute.org/upcoming-events-calendar/santacruz-2017/), (Accessed May 26, 2018),

able to generate good turnouts at JSOR events like this one, he admitted that he saw no sign the it had really affected Protestant churches in any discernible way.

The next JSOR event I attended was on February 2-3, 2018 at an Episcopal Church in Cupertino, California, again featuring David Galston, this time accompanied by New Testament scholar Bernard Brandon Scott (who I had first met at the 2011 JSOR in Santa Cruz), the latter of whom I cited in Chapter 3 about his explanation of the “Mush Gospel.” Galston and Scott concluded the event with an hour-long Q&A, giving me a chance to ask a key question. I shared that I had been to three JSOR events in the last year and half, and I had witnessed that almost all attendees were in their 50s or older, in some cases much older (I attended with two PCF members in their mid 80s), and asked if Westar had any indication that the scholarship was of any interest to millennials and if they had any plans to reach out to them. He acknowledged that they had been unsuccessful in this regard, and realized that they needed to develop a social media presence and perhaps start posting some of their events to YouTube, but also expressed the view that continuing live in-person events was important for their loyal constituents who still enjoyed and turned out for live events.

Someone then asked Galston where he thought God existed, and he pointed at his head, removing any doubt that at least for him, “God” was a mental construct created by the human mind. Subsequent to this, I found one of Galston’s online essays, where Galston comments that “God’s brief history... corresponds to humanity’s brief history,” that God arrived when humanity evolved into existence,

further confirming his naturalistic, even atheistic, metaphysics.³¹⁵

Along these lines, after the program, I asked him if he had been involved with Greta Vosper. Vosper is Toronto area atheist minister in a United Church of Canada congregation where her denomination (the largest and most liberal Protestant denomination in Canada) was trying to defrock and strip her of ministerial ordination.³¹⁶ He answered that he was involved, and had written a brief to the church committee considering the issue in his capacity as a theologian in support of Vosper and against defrocking her. Given his own atheism, he saw no conflict between being a Christian minister and an atheist. In at least Vosper, for now, the former Jesuit priest and Marquette University theology professor Daniel Maguire's vision of a Christianity without God³¹⁷ is already expressly present in an active clergyperson. And Vosper is advocating for her brand of Christian atheism as one of a group of rotating authors, which also includes Matthew Fox, in TCPC's new online newsletter that carries on the project begun by Bishop Spong with an initial list of Spong-endorsed authors.

³¹⁵ Galston Title of Weblog.

³¹⁶ Alan Freeman, "Can an Atheist Lead a Protestant Church? A Battle over Religion in Canada," *Washington Post*, September 29, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/09/29/can-an-atheist-lead-a-protestant-church-a-battle-over-religion-in-canada/>.

³¹⁷ Maguire, *Christianity without God : Moving Beyond the Dogmas and Retrieving the Epic Moral Narrative*.

The Center for Progressive Christianity

The Center for Progressive Christianity (“TCPC”), whose affiliated congregations I have used for my research into progressive Christianity, was founded in 1994 by James Adams, an Episcopal priest in Washington, D.C. TCPC remains the name of the formal legal entity, but now operates under the assumed name of its website URL, **ProgressiveChristianity.org**. Adams coined the term “Progressive Christianity,” and explained its purpose as follows: “Christians who can’t cope with metaphors have done their best, perhaps unintentionally, to spoil the faith for the rest of us. Part of progressive Christianity’s task is to reclaim the classic metaphors for what they are: figures of speech that inspired beautiful narratives. To name a few: Son of God, Resurrection of the Dead, Body of Christ, and Kingdom of Heaven. Over the years, many people have abandoned Christianity because their teachers and preachers were metaphorically disabled. Once they discover that religious language is primarily figurative by nature, the experience of faith can open up for them. You can be a follower of Jesus without thinking that ‘heaven’ is a place, that a ‘son’ has to be a biological relative or that ‘dead’ necessarily refers to the condition you’re in when the undertaker comes for you.”³¹⁸

Adams believed that if progressive churches would boldly proclaim their progressive tenets, they would thrive, instead of continuing to shrink, as had been the

³¹⁸ Washington Post staff, "A Local Life: James R. Adams, 77, Episcopal Priest with an Innovative Touch," *Washington Post*, Sept. 24, 2011, <https://wapo.st/2J5bzo3>.

case over the previous three decades.³¹⁹ In order to help churches self-identify as “progressive,” Adams and a small group of colleagues, including the current president of the TCPC since 2006, Fred Plummer,³²⁰ composed the first version of “The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity.” The 1994 version of The Eight Points were revised in 2003, and again in 2011. A color coded comparison of all three versions is included as Appendix PC8. The trend is away from explicitly Christian language and toward a more universal embrace of many different beliefs. The word “God” has been dropped in favor of references to “Sacredness and Oneness.” The original 1994 version did not have an environmentalist plank. Both the 2003 and 2011 version do, with the 2003 statement referring to protecting and restoring “the integrity of all God’s creation,” while the 2011 statement seeks “to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth.” The 2011 statement also drops references to the Christian bread and wine ritual variously referred to as communion or the Eucharist. The invocation of Matt 25:40’s duty to “the least of these” has been dropped, in favor of a more generic call “strive for peace and justice among all people.” While the earlier versions both declared with slightly different language that “being followers of Jesus is costly, and entails selfless love, conscientious resistance to evil, and renunciation of privilege.” The current version simply declares a commitment “to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.”

The most recent 2011 version reads as follows:

³¹⁹ ProgressiveChristianity.org, "Progressive Christianity: Our History," Web Page, URL <https://progressivechristianity.org/our-history/>, (Accessed May 24, 2018),

³²⁰ Fred Plummer, Oct. 18, 2017.

By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who...

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
 - Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
 - Believers and agnostics,
 - Women and men,
 - Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
 - Those of all classes and abilities;
4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.³²¹

Churches become part of the network of progressive Christian churches by affirming their agreement with the 8 Points, and paying a registration fee of \$75.00.³²² Fred Plummer indicated that the TCPC is about to undertake another update to the 8 Points, moving it even further in a universalistic direction.

Between 2011 and 2016, TCPC also became formally affiliated with John

³²¹ James Adams, Fred Plummer, and Various, "The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity," Web Page, URL <https://progressivechristianity.org/the-8-points/>, (Accessed May 24, 2011),

³²² ProgressiveChristianity.org, "Join Us / Global Network Directory Search," Web Page, URL <https://progressivechristianity.org/global-network/>, (Accessed May 24, 2018),

Shelby Spong, by sponsoring and publishing his newsletter.³²³ Spong has been a high profile proponent of a post-theistic Christianity and bold proponent of inclusion of LGBTQ people within the church. He has written many books, all of which in some way aggressively rebut and attack literalistic forms of Christianity, both evangelical and Catholic.³²⁴ It is one thing for the so-called Four Horsemen of the New Atheism (Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, the late Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett) to make such direct attacks, but it has a different effect coming from an Episcopal bishop.

California has 112 TCPC affiliated churches listed as of May 2018 in the TCPC directory.³²⁵ Their denominational breakdown is as follows: 55 UCC; 14 Episcopal; 10 United Methodist; 8 Presbyterian USA; 4 ELCA; 4 Disciples of Christ; and a scattering from a few other denominations. Arizona has 23 TCPC affiliated churches: 10 UCC; 5 United Methodist; 2 Episcopal and a few more churches. The

³²³ ProgressiveChristianity.org, "Bishop Spong Newsletter – Progressing Spirit," Web Page, URL <https://progressivechristianity.org/bishop-spong-newsletter/>, (Accessed May 25, 2018),

³²⁴ John Shelby Spong, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism : A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); John Shelby Spong, *Resurrection : Myth or Reality? : A Bishop's Search for the Origins of Christianity*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994); John Shelby Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die : A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile : A New Reformation of the Church's Faith and Practice*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSan Francisco, 1998); John Shelby Spong, *A New Christianity for a New World : Why Traditional Faith Is Dying and How a New Faith Is Being Born*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001); John Shelby Spong, *Unbelievable : Why Neither Ancient Creeds nor the Reformation Can Produce a Living Faith Today*, FIRST EDITION. ed. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2018).

³²⁵ ProgressiveChristianity.org, "Join Us / Global Network Directory Search".

Asbury United Methodist Church is still listed but no longer in existence, showing that the TCPC database is not completely up to date. I have created spreadsheets of the California and Arizona TCPC churches that can be viewed in the links below.³²⁶

Peace United Church of Christ, Santa Cruz

The first TCPC affiliated congregation that I visited was Peace United Church of Christ, Santa Cruz. A typical service is much more complex than a typical Calvary Chapel service. There are opening words, a call to worship, responsive readings, unison affirmations, public readings of scripture (usually from the Gospels, but sometimes from other parts of the Bible, and “Sharing the Peace” where members circulate around ritualistically greeting each other with statements of “peace” or “peace be with you.” Most Sundays, a large choir with choir robes files into the church at the beginning of the service, sits in a special designated area, and performs two songs during two different parts of the service. Often, early in the service, there is a short sermonette of about 5 minutes, usually delivered by lay member or the pastor that is not delivering the main sermon. And there is a main sermon, based on some scripture, about 15 to 20 minutes in length, which always seems to be an occasion to urge the congregation to care for each other and for vulnerable people in the larger community. Unlike Calvary Chapels, the sermons are not posted online in either written, video, or audio form. The scripture for the sermon is selected by the pastor

³²⁶ California: <https://bit.ly/2kv1DXh>; Arizona: <https://bit.ly/2skpRa3>

based on the text designated in the Revised Common Lectionary, a cycle of texts used across a number of the mainline protestant denominations for a given Sunday. The UCC national website links to The Revised Common Lectionary site maintained by Vanderbilt Divinity Library at the Vanderbilt University.³²⁷ Each Sunday over a cycle of three years has four designated readings: a gospel reading; another New Testament reading; a Psalm, and another Hebrew Bible reading. The major ritual of the service is Communion, where bread and grape juice (a stand-in for wine (at an Episcopal service, it would be wine)) are shared in a re-enactment of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, one of the two sacraments within Protestantism (the other being baptism). The service concludes with a final verbal "Blessing" for the pastor, followed by an organ music postlude. This description of the typical service at Peace United, also serves as a description of services at Redlands UCC and at Phoenix First UCC. There is no discernible difference in the style, or even the content of the services at the other two sites.

David Grishaw-Jones shared with me following "Covenant" that new members are asked to affirm:

We covenant with God and with each other:

- to walk together in all God's ways as the Holy is revealed to us;
- to give ourselves freely and without reserve to Jesus' ministry in this church;
- to celebrate through worship God's amazing gifts of unity and diversity;
- to take up Christ's mission around the world, striving for justice and peace;

³²⁷ Consultation on Church Union, "The Revised Common Lectionary," (1983), <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>.

- to care for earth and all her creatures, reconciling ourselves to them in love;
- for God gives immeasurable grace into all life and every life.

There is no monitoring of what each person might mean by God, no affirmations of Jesus' divinity, but express affirmations of commitment to diversity, social justice, and environmental concern. And social justice and diversity is expressly emphasized in the life of this church in the struggle for LGBTQ equality. As an example of Peace United's leadership in this area, it was at Peace that the Santa Cruz areas progressive faith communities gathered to mourn the evening of May 26, 2009 when the California Supreme Court earlier that day upheld the voter passed prohibition on same-sex marriages. The motto of the church, displayed on High St., is "Pray for Peace. Live for Justice. Cherish the Earth."

In two interviews, Grishaw-Jones shared his own educational background, undergraduate work at Dartmouth College, and his Master of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He has served this church since 2002. After saying I had met a retired woman that self-identified as atheist at one of the church potlucks, he said the congregation includes atheist and agnostic members, and that is welcomed by other members, regardless of their own theological opinions.

He emphasized repeatedly that he is not so much a leader of the church as a facilitator that nurtures the lay leaders within to church. Unlike pastors at evangelical churches, he is not attempting to lead his members to some predetermined theological truth, nor to extract commitments to a belief in the divinity of Jesus. As Grishaw-Jones put it: "If you were to interview 300 people here, you are going to find that 290

of them are going to say ‘I believe that Jesus was ‘a’ son of God, and a particularly inspired prophet, but people have different feelings and beliefs about him, and that’s fine.’” To the extent he leads, it is to lead the congregation in the direction of social justice activism, and environmental activism as such initiative arises within the church. He mentioned the example of members who conceived and implemented an initiative to get solar panels on some of the churches ancillary buildings, and just got it done without much involvement from Grishaw-Jones.

I conducted a focus group with five congregation members (3 men and 2 women) at their regular weekday bible study. Grishaw-Jones was one of the participants, seeing this was occurring at a regularly scheduled study group period that he leads. All participants were in their late 50s or older. A husband-wife pair had been attending Peace for 31 years. One of the women had been attending 41 years. One was an elderly gay man that after a fundamentalist upbringing and spending most of his adult life unchurched had found his way to Peace about 5 years ago. All expressed appreciation of both the openness to differences in theological belief, and the sense that all members were treated like members of close knit family community. The United Church of Christ in its present form resulted from the merger in 1957 of a majority of the Congregationalist congregations and a group of Reformed Protestant congregations (until 2013, Peace United’s name was First Congregationalist Church of Santa Cruz) Grishaw-Jones explained “God shows up in the congregation, not the priest, not the minister, but the congregation. And for us, the congregation includes the earth, the environment, the ecology, the cosmos. That’s where the Christian

theology from Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox and thinkers like them that I like to read is taking us. Our congregation includes the mountains, the rivers, the waters, and the health of the whole. If you are a fundamentalist and you are only reading the Bible, and the Bible is the only thing that matters, it is maybe a harder leap, all of this is where God reveals God's self." "I would cut revelation out of the Bible if I could! [laughing]" All of the lay participants professed a vague hope of some sort of an afterlife. One of the women said, "If I die and find out God would have preferred that we had all been Buddhists, that's alright with me. I like a lot in Buddhism anyway. And God won't care that I ended up being a Christian. That's not what God cares about. He cares about how we treat each other" (evoking Matthew 25 without mention).

Redlands United Church of Christ

I visited the Redlands United Church of Christ two weekends in a row in September 2016. The City of Redlands is 60 miles east of Los Angeles on Interstate 10, about half way between Los Angeles and Palm Springs. I attended both services on September 11. The first is their "Contemplative" service at 8:00 a.m., and is a guided meditation using the "Centering Prayer" method developed by the Catholic Trappist monk and priest Thomas Keating. The service leader was connected to the "Contemplative Outreach" network.³²⁸ Having participated in a centering prayer

³²⁸ <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/>

retreat, I was familiar with the method. Before the 20 minutes of centering prayer meditation, someone read from the “Day 20” entry of the small booklet, “Centering Prayer, Prayer of Consent, a CLP Praxis”³²⁹ produced by Contemplative Outreach. The senior pastor, Jill Kirchner-Rose, was in attendance as a participant.

While waiting for the contemplative service to begin, I noticed that all the Bibles in the backs of the pews were Green Bibles,³³⁰ as I had mentioned in Chapter 6 in my interview with Matthew Sleeth. While I had heard that the Green Bible had been released, I had never seen one. At that moment, I was surrounded by multiple copies. Between the contemplative service and the main service, I walked the church grounds and came upon a sign that said “National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat – This property provides the four basic habitat elements needed for wildlife to thrive: food, water, cover, and place to raise young. nwf.org.” A plaque was inside the church with same wording, with an additional smaller plaque reading “RUCC: To RUCC in honor of Earth Day 2013.” In their multi-purpose room (which I later learned had been the first church meeting room on the site), was a bulletin board with a church motto: “BE THE CHURCH. *Protect the environment. Care for the poor.* Forgive often. REJECT RACISM. Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources.” Next to this motto was a flier about congressional efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, with a call to oppose such efforts. On the other side was

³²⁹ <https://bit.ly/2LAXuNT>

³³⁰ Jane Lampman, "New Tool for 'Green' Christians: Ecofriendly Bible," *Christian Science Monitor*, Oct. 19, 2008 2008, <https://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2008/1019/ascripture>.

a flier for the upcoming Jesus Seminar on the Road event.

The main service followed the format that I described for Peace United. The guest speaker that Sunday was Matthew Young, from the Inland Empire Chapter of Black Lives Matter.³³¹ After church, I arranged with Kirchner-Rose to interview her on Wednesday. At my interview, I learned that she had grown up in the Redlands UCC church, had gone to U.C. Riverside, majoring in liberal studies with psychology and business management emphases. She already knew she was called to the ministry and had assumed she would major in religious studies, but her pastor told her she would get all the training in religion she needed in seminary, but that she would be counseling people and managing the finances of a church, so that psychology and business training would be better use of her college time. She went to Yale Divinity School for her Master in Divinity, graduating in 1994. In 2004, she received her Doctor of Ministry from University of Chicago affiliated Chicago Theological Seminary. She did her dissertation entitled “Preaching original blessing in the homiletical world of original sin,”³³² inspired by Matthew Fox’s concept and book about “Original Blessing.”³³³ Having grown up in the Redlands UCC church, she had never heard of Augustine of Hippo’s idea of Adam and Eve’s original sin being passed on the all subsequent humanity, such that God would have to send his son to

³³¹ The September 11, 2016 service is online, including Matthew Young’s presentation. <https://vimeo.com/182496827>

³³² Chicago Theological Seminary, "Doctor of Ministry in Preaching: 1996-Current," Web Page, URL <https://commons.ctschicago.edu/doctor-of-ministry-in-preaching-dmin-in-preaching-1996-current/>, (Accessed May 28, 2018),

³³³ Fox, *Original Blessing*.

earth, orchestrate his “murder” (Kirchner-Rose’s word), in order to redeem humanity. It was not until her adulthood, as she began interacting with a wider array of Christians, that she realized that this doctrine was widespread. She was horrified by the monstrosity of it, and immediately resonated when she encountered Matthew Fox denouncing the idea. She has taken inspiration from Fox, Thomas Berry, and Diana Butler Bass, a writer and thinker widely popular among progressive Christians. Kirchner-Rose says Bass teaches that “God’s first language is the language of the earth, and God is incarnate in the earth. That’s how we are learning about God; God is the ground.”

I told her that her congregation seemed the most vibrant of the TCPC churches I had visited, especially in terms of its multi-generational character, with couples with small children, people in their 20s, 30s and 40s, not just people in 50s, 60s, and older as is common at most mainline Protestant churches. Kirchner-Rose attributed this to the fact that it was University town in an otherwise politically conservative area, such that the Redlands UCC served as a refuge and gathering place for progressives. She indicated that they had many university professors in the church, and that one professor teaches a world religions class that requires attendance at the progressive Christian church. The next closest TCPC church is 35 miles away in La Verne back toward Los Angeles. There are no TCPC churches east of Redlands. It is the easternmost TCPC church in California. Sometimes his whole class is there on a given Sunday, and some of them return and start attending on their own. Kirchner-Rose expressed the view that the future of American Christianity was in the

direction of progressive Christianity, and that “there would be a connection between science and religion and that people would see that they were not in conflict with one another.” She saw a future where “American Christianity cared much more about the earth.” It is perhaps worth stating that this was two months before the 2016 election.

Kirchner-Rose also informed me that there was a book discussion group who met weekly during the hour and a half period prior to the main service that call themselves “The Truth-Seekers.” They agree on a religion-related book to read, and then discuss it during that time. I asked if I could attend that coming Sunday, and Kirchner-Rose thought that I would be welcomed. I did attend that Sunday, and learned that it was a group of about 12 people in their 50s or older who had been meeting for a number of years. That particular morning was just after the two-day Jesus Seminar on the Road event, and at least half of the group had attended, so they mostly used the time to discuss what they thought of the various presentations. I did learn that they had read a number of books by Jesus Seminar affiliated scholars about Jesus and some of their other projects. They also had read several of Bart Ehrman’s books, who takes the Jesus the failed apocalyptic prophet approach. That morning was also a bit of a show-and-tell. Westar always sets up traveling bookstore selling Westar featured or published books at any event, and several members had bought new books which they were showing to the other members as possible books for the group in the future. My one-hour exposure to the Truth-Seekers did serve to illustrate the way that new scholarship about Christianity does circulate at the parish level within progressive Christian churches, and is embraced by some hard to quantify

segment of liberal Christianity.

Since my interview I have read or watched a number Kirchner-Rose's sermons, and environmentally themed sermons by Rev. John Walsh, a member of Redlands UCC and the chaplain at University of Redlands. His 2016 Earth Day sermon discussed Lynn White, and appealed to Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold as inspirations to planetary care.³³⁴ Kirchner-Rose's Earth Day April 22, 2018 sermon contrasted sharply with the creation theology of Bjorkman, Valencia and Hibbs set out in Chapter 6:

Today's sermon title is "Where Does the Temple Begin, Where Does It End?" It comes from Mary Oliver's poem with the same title. What are the boundaries of "the temple"? Does the sacred ground end at the sanctuary door? Or does it include the trees, the birds, the fish, the mountains, the sky? Is not the entire world the House of God?

In the Bible, we read that people encounter God under shady oak trees, on the top of mountains, in the middle of rivers, and in long stretches of barren wilderness. God shows up in whirlwinds, starry skies, and burning bushes. When people want to know more about God, the son of God tells them to pay attention to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. We can learn as much about God from a wildflower or a hummingbird as we can from knowing the Ten Commandments by heart. The House of God stretches from one corner of the universe to the other.

According to the Psalms, the people of God are not the only creatures capable of praising God. There are growling bears, humpback whales, and flying ducks. Even trees clap their hands. St. Francis of Assisi loved singing hymns with his brothers and sisters, that is, Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wolf and Sister Whale, Brother Eagle and Sister Loon. Francis could not have told you the difference between the sacred and the secular, the holy and the mundane [riffing off of Mircea Eliade's Sacred/Profane dichotomy] if you twisted his arm behind his back. He read the world as reverently

³³⁴ John Walsh, "Saving the Cosmos," Redlands UCC: Redlands UCC, Unused 1, April 10, 2016, URL <http://uccredlands.org/sermons/saving-the-cosmos/>. Accessed May 28, 2013.

as he read the Bible. For him, a single bird was as much a messenger of God as any priest preaching in a Cathedral. Francis had no discretion. He did not know where to draw the line between the church and the world. For this reason, we call Frances a saint, I believe.

Yes, the House of God stretches from one corner of the universe to the other. So, how shall we fiercely love and defend “the temple” today?³³⁵

In summary, I have not personally seen any other church put environmental concerns forward in a way that matches Redlands UCC.

First Church Phoenix UCC

On May 7, 2017, I visited First Church UCC, the UCC church in downtown Phoenix led by Rev. James Pennington. The service was comparable to what I laid out for Peace United. I had arranged in advance to conduct a focus group with five congregation members. It did have one young woman in her 20s, and two members that openly identified as agnostic. The older agnostic woman said she had not gone to church most of her life, but had been persuaded by a neighbor to try out First Church, assuring her that it would not matter that she was an agnostic, and that she would really enjoy the people. She did try it out, and did enjoy it, and has been coming about three years, even as she remains agnostic. They all commented on Pastor James’ environmental passion, that he weaves an environmental theme into his sermons at least every other Sunday, and that he sometimes expresses his frustration that his

³³⁵ Jill Kirchner-Rose, "Where Does the Temple Begin, Where Does It End," Unused 1, April 22, 2018, URL <http://uccredlands.org/sermons/temple-begin-end/>. Accessed May 28, 2018.

congregation seems uninterested in environmental issues. Like the focus group at Peace United, this group expressed their appreciation of the non-judgmental, inclusive community that existed in the church. And they appreciated their commitment to social justice, that manifests in feeding about 300 homeless people every Sunday afternoon several hours after the church service.

The following Sunday, Pastor Pennington met me in a coffee shop for an on-the-record interview. He has a fascinating history, which I will not reproduce in detail here as it is laid out on the church website.³³⁶ The key details are that he was born into a fundamentalist church in Mississippi, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Even though he knew he was gay from as early as one could know and think about sexual orientation, he felt the call to ministry. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in psychology, childhood education, and philosophy, and attended Eden Seminary, a Missouri Synod seminary for his M.Div. Because he was gay, he was deemed unsuitable for church posting, but was deemed suitable for campus ministry, so long as he remained celibate. After spending a year in Novosibirsk, Siberia, and seeing the brutal repression of the gay community there, he felt he could no longer tolerate what he saw as a double life, being a Christian minister in a fundamentalist church pretending to be celibate. He resigned in a high-profile manner in a speech he delivered at a church conference. He spent the next chunk of his life engaged in HIV/AIDS activism, primarily in Wisconsin. He was working closely with UCC

³³⁶ First Church UCC Phoenix, "Clergy - First Church Ucc Phoenix," Phoenix, AZ: First Church UCC Phoenix, Web Page, URL <http://phoenixucc.org/clergy>, (Accessed May 28, 2018).

ministers and activists, and they asked him to come back into the ministry, this time as UCC clergy where there would be no issues around his sexual orientation.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the most interesting information was his confirmation of what had been relayed in the focus group, namely, that he is frustrated and disappointed by his congregation's lack of environmental concern. He attributes part of this to his status as a gay male pastor who naturally attracts gay male Christians who are refugees from other Protestant denominations who are not open and affirming and do not accept their same-sex attraction. Pennington estimates that about two-thirds of his congregation are gay males just looking for a safe religious space to come to church, hear LGBTQ accepting sermons, and sing the old Protestant hymns. They bring, however, their lack of environmental concern from the congregations of origin, and aren't interested in expanding their circle of concerns to include the environment.

Pennington described his own metaphysical stance as going between atheism and naturalistic pantheism, with an occasional nod toward panentheism, and that among these three, it was naturalistic pantheism what was on top. In a telling anecdote, he shared that when he is at church conferences that are all or mostly all liberal clergy, they often share with each other that, but for the fact that they are clergy, they would never go to church, because little of lasting value transpires there. This is not a ringing endorsement of the power of progressive Christianity to finally rise up and intervene in society's problems in a way that will be decisive.

Sally Bingham and Interfaith Power and Light

I conducted a live, on the record, interview of the Reverend Sally Bingham in her office in San Francisco on March 28, 2017. She is President Emeritus of “Interfaith Power & Light,”³³⁷ a campaign of “The Regeneration Project,” which she founded in 1998. IPL’s 2016 annual report, the most recent publicly available as of this writing, is available here.³³⁸ She is Canon for the Environment in the Episcopal Diocese of California. In what has been proven to be a rather dismal research project, Bingham’s program is a positive example of environmental progress arising in a Christian American context.

I first came into contact with Rev. Bingham when a video producer sought permission to quote a sermon I delivered at the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in 1996 in a video he was producing for Bingham called “Lighten Up,” a short 20 minute video for the work of the Regeneration Project.³³⁹ But I first met Bingham in person in September 2005. At that time, she shared information about the project, and how it was active in about 12 states. Now, she reports that “We do have congregations in all 50 states; we have 100,000 persons in our database...” and have active Interfaith Power and Light steering committees in 40 states. She reported that,

³³⁷ Interfaith Power & Light, "Interfaith Power & Light: Board of Directors," Web Page, URL <http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/our-board-of-directors/>, (Accessed May 28, 2018),

³³⁸ Interfaith Power & Light, "2016 Annual Report of Interfaith Power & Light: A Religious Response to Global Warming," San Francisco, Report, URL <https://bit.ly/2Iehm72> Accessed May 24, 2018.

³³⁹ The Regeneration Project, "Lighten Up," San Francisco, 20:22, URL <https://vimeo.com/87714663>, (Accessed May 24, 2018).

where a decade ago she might talk to 10 to 20 people when visiting a church, over the last five years 300 people will now show up to one of her presentations. And there has been a great surge in interest in IPL's work since Donald Trump's election as president. "The phone was ringing, the emails were coming in, 'What can we do?' People really want to be involved in doing something." "Prior to that, our work was growing, [but] the assumption was that the federal government, and particularly Obama over the last 8 years, was going to solve all our problems and we got complacent."

Bingham reports that she sees "a lot of enthusiasm to get involved with this issue" of combating climate change. "If you are a person of faith and you are accepting of the science of climate, you want to do something. And they're interested in the fact that it is a matter of faith. [tone of emphasis]." Bingham adds, "If God put humans on the earth to be the gardeners, we've done a terrible job and it's time to do something about it."

I asked how many Republican voters she thought were involved in her programs, and she did not know. "Because we try not to work in the political arena, it's really hard for me to answer that question. However, I know my home parish, Grace Cathedral, has as many Republicans in there as they do Democrats. I didn't know that until recently..." "I always say that our work is not based on environmentalism. The work we are doing is to protect the environment but we don't do it because we're another Sierra Club. We do it because it's based in [a] theology that we are caretakers of this planet. It doesn't matter if you are Republican or

Democrat and you don't even have to be an called an environmentalist. Instead, you are a caretaker of creation. Bingham also explained that IPL “is a religious response to global warming. We work on energy and climate change, not other environmental issues, not toxics, not wilderness.” The purpose of this narrow focus in her view is that even a political conservative, if they accept the science of climate change, can support efforts to increase the use of alternative energy. ”

The term “creation care” came with its own baggage. Bingham reports that for the first few years she was constantly telling people that “creation care” did not mean they were young earth “creationists” that thought the world was created 6,000 years ago. People initially heard “creation,” and thought “creationist.

Bingham shared a valuable story that further illustrates the divide between mainline Protestants and evangelicals. “I was on a panel in Washington DC entitled ‘targeting the evangelical community’ and someone raised their hand and asked me about the rapture. I quoted another evangelical who said rapture believing evangelicals are very loud but very small minority within evangelicalism. When the whole thing was over this guy came up to me and said I'm an evangelical from Colorado and let me tell you what you are up against. I've been teaching Sunday School at this big mega church in Colorado for a long time. They will tell the children in Sunday School that they'll hear about about evolution out in ‘the world,’ that there's a theory about how humans came about through a big bang. They tell the kids ‘those are theories; know that you’ve got to believe what's in the Bible; even though you hear this outside theory, don’t pay any attention to it. Don't fight about it, but

know that the Word of God says we've 7,000 years, this is what they teach. Sally, if they tried to change, and said, start accepting the science of evolution, their entire theology would unravel. If they teach these people that climate change is a fact of science, that CO2 is a greenhouse gas that blocks heat from leaving the earth's surface, they would then have to start accepting the science of climate change and then their theology unravels. So this is really what you are up against.' This was 8 or 10 years ago and I have been very aware of it ever since. It is troubling. These are smart intelligent people and how they can deny science and feel morally responsible."

Tellingly, she gave an illustration of this divide between mainline Protestants and evangelicals. Bingham recalled being on a conference call with a group of interfaith environmental advocates, and the call was briefly joined by Mitch Hescox, the current President/C.E.O. of the Evangelical Environmental Network, who she described as an old school evangelical. His brief appearance was to say "I cannot be considered part of this group or I will lose my constituency because evangelicals work with evangelicals. They don't speak the interfaith language, or work interfaith." Then another person on that call said "Well, I can't be on a call with some who thinks like that" and Mitch left the call. This was yet another example of the deep antipathy that both evangelicals and non-evangelical Christians feel toward one another.

She contrasted the Colorado evangelical's story with her own experience in seminary. "I went to seminary fairly late in life. I went to college when I was 45 at the University of San Francisco, then to the Episcopal seminary in Berkeley. We were taught that the Bible is a metaphor, that there's nothing in there to be taken literally

[with emphatic emphasis]. Anything you want to find in the Bible, you can find there. It was written out of people's heads, oral history, interpreted by whoever was writing it, the way they wanted to write it. And there are huge contradictions. We were never to take it literally. Yet, the one line I always use in my sermons or public talks is 'God put Adam in the Garden to till it and to keep it,' and I use it, and I use it, and I use it, I guess the same way they evangelicals use what St. Paul said about men sleeping with men. So were both guilty of that. I don't say, 'oh, by the way,' this is just metaphor.'"

I asked to what degree she thought people become environmentally concerned because of their religion, or are they already inclined to be environmentally concerned and then are welcoming of the opportunity to frame that concern in the language of the faith tradition that they are already in. She admitted she didn't know and would like to know. She hoped that Anthony Leiserowitz the Yale Project would do a survey asking, 'When did you make the shift from not caring anything about the environment or climates change, to recycling, composting or driving an electric car? And what influenced you to do that?' I would like to know how many people were influenced by hearing about it from the pulpit."

Bingham is optimistic. "I think we have contributed a great amount to the advancement of solar energy. This has become such a big movement. I'm hoping that someday I'll be able to say we brought people back to church. Maybe some of this work, rather than someone getting in the pulpit and talking about 2,000-year old theology, will lead clergy to get in the pulpit and talk about what is life like today, what are the issues that affect our lives, and how can we be helpful in protecting our

neighbors and answering God's call to be the stewards of creation.”

Bingham’s work over the last two decades is indeed a hopeful example. It would be difficult to quantify, but it seems highly likely that her efforts to engage faith communities in the battle against climate change have led to real improvements on the ground. Alternative energy installations in faith communities are probably significantly higher than would have been the case in the absence of IPL, and its predecessor entity, Episcopal Power and Light. That said, by her own admission, she expressly avoids political policy engagement for IPL, and it is difficult if not impossible to imagine a path to solutions that will not necessarily require politically enacted new government policies. That being so, IPL’s contribution may be significant within its scope, but is limited and insufficient.

Chapter 09 - Analysis and Conclusion

Analysis

By the 1990s, secular environmental organizations, who were constantly fighting against a roll back of the environmental protections that had been achieved in the 1970s after the first Earth Day, knew that there were not enough environmentalists (people who prioritized concern about threats posed by pollution to humans or about wildland and biodiversity protection) to prevent the protective laws from being repealed or to make further political progress in attaining additional needed protections. When religious forms of environmental advocacy started emerging in the 1990s, seemingly within all branches of American Christianity, there was hope, both among those emerging movements within Christianity and among secular environmental advocacy groups, that this would bring new constituencies to bear, constituencies with the moral authority to make ethical demands for environmental protection. In my interviews with Peter Illyn, Matthew Sleeth, and Sally Bingham, all recounted this history and spoke about this hope. Writing at a time more than two decades later, it is apparent that these hopes have not materialized. Why is this case? This has been my research question.

Two Christianities

To some, the prospect of an emerging evangelical environmentalism was

perhaps the more exciting prospect, and generated the most media attention.

Conservative evangelical Christians have widely been perceived, not without reason, as more zealous in their religiosity. If a significant number of them were to bring that famed zeal to environmental protection and climate change action, it was plausible that they could make a significant impact. Indeed, in his interview with me, Illyn said he had thought it would be relatively easy to bring that zeal to bear. Evangelicals revered the Bible, and shaped their whole lives upon it. And the Bible, in his view, was an intensely environmentalist manifesto.³⁴⁰ Evangelicals simply had not paid attention to those parts of the Bible that sets out these rigorous duties of creation care. But that could be remedied. Evangelicals are inherently interested in what the Bible has to teach, and indeed would want to learn about these biblically mandated commands from God. And, at least in certain places in some communities, this seemed like it might be true.

Tri Robison's creation care efforts at his evangelical Vineyard Church in Boise, Idaho showed enough promise to both draw a Bill Moyers film crew to his church and to merit an invitation in November 2009 from the UK's Prince Philip to a world conference at Windsor Castle on Religion and the Environment.³⁴¹ But his project did not prove durable. Robinson retired in 2012, and a visit to that church's

³⁴⁰ Some theologians have argued against this perspective, including the late James Nash. James A. Nash, "The Bible Vs. Biodiversity: The Case against Moral Argument from Scripture," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2009).

³⁴¹ Lucas F. Johnston, *Religion and Sustainability: Social Movements and the Politics of the Environment* (Sheffield; Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2013), 123-24.

website in 2018 shows no sign of any continuing creation care ministry. The project did not survive the retirement of its founding pastor. Illyn shared with me that he now realized he was overly optimistic, primarily because evangelicals do not actually cherish the Bible in the way he had imagined.

At about the time Illyn was getting started in creation care, evangelicals were becoming ever more focused on the battle to outlaw abortion and stand against the increasing societal acceptance of equality for gays and lesbians. For most evangelicals, if forced to choose, they would choose the culture war issues, over tending to the health of the planet as God's garden. With the hindsight of two decades, we can see that for most evangelicals it was not a choice at all. Being anti-choice and anti-gay are the commands they see in the Bible. The restructuring of Christianity that Wuthnow started documenting in the 1980s was accelerating. That moderate middle was shrinking and choosing sides, and a lot chose the conservative wing of Christianity. If "winning" is defined simply as maintaining your religious team's demographic share of the society, it has worked. They have held their own as the liberal to progressive wings of Christianity shrank. Christianity was morphing into two religions with fundamentally different metaphysics and wholly different ideas about what was important, not merely one religion with conservative and liberal wings.

There has been a market, albeit a small one, for a radically reimagined Christianity. These people are the ones, although getting increasingly older, that attend Westar Seminars on the Road, exploring totally new ways of understanding

Jesus and being Christian, that include being an atheist, a panentheist, a pantheist, a religious humanistic Christian, and more. I have documented some of these new forms in this dissertation. What these new forms, however, share in common are relatively small numbers. That Christianity is cleaving in two is interesting in its own right, but so far, there is no indication that either of these is supplying significant numbers of newly-motivated environmental and climate change advocates.

Calvary Chapels as exemplars of evangelicals generally

On my first visit to ReGen Church, Valencia preached about the importance of being intolerant toward wrong belief, and staying on the side of, in his words, “Team Jesus.” People in Calvary Chapels long ago embraced the Two Christianities thesis comprised of the True Church and the false church. During the first phase of my investigation, I watched, observed, listened and said nothing controversial, to see if environmental concern was demonstrated. That phase, which I followed for about a year, showed no obvious space for environmental concern. Mostly, they just did not talk about it. Once I did bring it up, in the most neutral of ways possible, it was like pulling the lid off an anti-environmental geyser. Several models help explain what I saw.

I confirmed among the parishioners in the Calvary Chapel seats what Ellingson had documented in his interviews with their religiously motivated environmental leaders over a decade ago. Ellingson conducted interviews with leaders of what he called religious environmental movement organizations (REMOs)

in 2006-2007.³⁴² What he documented was that most REMOs were intensely concerned to “draw boundaries between themselves and the secular [environmental] movement” in order to define their work “as distinctly religious and hence more legitimate.” Rusty Prichard, a major leader in EEN and mentioned by Illyn in his interview recorded in Chapter 6, noted in his interview with Ellingson, that “evangelicals have a much harder time cooperating with groups like the [National Council of Churches] where the feeling among evangelicals is that theology just doesn’t matter to those folks. They deny that Jesus was born of a virgin and deny that he was bodily resurrected, yet would still claim the name Christian.”³⁴³ I have listened to Valencia make exactly this argument, and huff in disgust that anyone without the proper beliefs would have the gall to call themselves a Christian.

Even within the community of Christianity, Ellingson found that cooperation is limited. Many evangelicals, including everyone I have encountered in Calvary Chapels, consider mainline Protestants as not legitimately Christian. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing, presenting a mortal danger to their souls.³⁴⁴ At their most generous, Calvary Chapels calls mainline Protestantism “the dead denominations.”³⁴⁵ I laid out in Chapter 6 that Prichard’s view from 2007 continued into the 2016-2018 period and was expressly mentioned by Bingham in her story of

³⁴² Ellingson, *To Care for Creation : The Emergence of the Religious Environmental Movement*.

³⁴³ Ibid., 82, 127.

³⁴⁴ From Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” Matt. 7:15.

³⁴⁵ Jarel Hagerman, senior pastor of Joshua Springs Calvary Chapel.

the conference call with EEN's Mitch Hescoc. Pastor Valencia's response to me that evangelicals have a hard time even being around environmentalists, because their lack of proper evangelical beliefs produces a revulsion, shows that this discomfort toward outsiders continues, and may even have intensified. For the purposes of my "two Christianity" thesis, the Calvary Chapellers have already embraced it. There are true Christianities, "Team Jesus" and the false Christians. Being in the midst of this superiority complex eventually suggested a name for the phenomenon.

Collective Narcissism within Evangelical Christianity

At Calvary Chapels, Rodney Stark's concept of "supernatural compensators" is present.³⁴⁶ They want the payoff of being supernaturally delivered to a paradisiacal heaven. It is hard to imagine that they would still show up without the belief that that outcome awaits them, just around the corner. But there is more. One Sunday morning at ReGen church, as I was absorbing Valencia's sermon, I was struck by the metaphysical claims of the Calvary Chapel brand of evangelicalism. They are: 1) What God, the creator of the universe, really cares about is that you believe that he (and God is always represented as male) incarnated a part of himself in human form and then orchestrated that that part of himself would be martyred as a atoning sacrifice for the original sin of Adam and Eve; 2) all deeds can be forgiven by God except one, namely, failure to accept Jesus' atoning death, and accept him as your

³⁴⁶ Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, 352.

personal Lord and savior; and 3) soon there will be a rapture, followed by seven years of turmoil, after which all humans living and all those who have ever lived will be judged, and either thrown into the lake of fire, or granted everlasting life in eternal bliss (See Appendix C). Members of ReGen church imagine that they and their properly believing fellow evangelicals will soon have the satisfaction of seeing their “Christ rejecting” (in Jack Hibbs’ words) neighbors consigned to hell while they experience paradise, and this is acceptable because everyone consigned to hell always knew that Jesus was true and evangelical Christianity was the only way to avoid eternal torment (as Paul told them in Romans 1). Those consigned to hell will have knowingly and voluntarily chosen to be there.³⁴⁷ Hearing this, I thought, “this is collective narcissism,” and wondered if the concept had been investigated. As soon as I got home, I did an internet search and found the work of Agnieszka Golec de Zavala and her various collaborators developing and empirically investigating the phenomenon over the last decade.

Inspired by the work Theodor Adorno, Wilhelm Reich, and Erich Fromm, they theorized that the phenomenon of individual narcissism – “an excessive self-love or inflated, grandiose view of oneself that requires continual external validation” – might find expression as “collective narcissism.” They hypothesized “that if people can be narcissistic about their personal identities, they can also be narcissistic about their collective identities”:

We assume that collective narcissism is an exaggerated and unstable

³⁴⁷ Appendix V9, Valencia’s sermon on Rev. 19.

collective self-esteem. What lies in the core of collective narcissism is an inflated image of an ingroup, rather than of the self. Thus, although group self-importance and centeredness are part of the concept of collective narcissism, we also assume that the positive image of the ingroup is excessive and difficult to sustain. Our predictions about the intergroup effects of collective narcissism are an extension of threatened egotism theory into the intergroup relations.³⁴⁸

Golec de Zavala *et al* tested the hypothesis in the context of “social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and blind patriotism” and found empirical validation. I have reproduced the questions Golec de Zavala and her team use in making their assessments. (See Appendix CNSA). Not all of the them are relevant in an evangelical setting, but a surprising number are, and echo sentiments I have heard repeatedly over the last two years.

Collective narcissism helps explain the emotional payoff some evangelicals receive for their devotion to a form of theologically conservative American Christianity. Evangelical Christianity teaches its adherents that they are piously superior to everyone outside the community. God loves them most. Valencia frequently weaves declarations of this moral superiority into his sermons. Evangelicals are superior, not because they behave better. Indeed, he said in his sermon on Romans 1 that adultery and pornography usage are severe problems in evangelical churches. Their moral superiority comes not from their behavior, but

³⁴⁸ Agnieszka Golec de Zavala et al., "Collective Narcissism and Its Social Consequences," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 6 (2009): 1074, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19968420>. Golec de Zavala published an accessible article explaining the concept at “The Conversation.” Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, "Welcome to the Age of Collective Narcissism," *The Conversation* (2017), <https://theconversation.com/welcome-to-the-age-of-collective-narcissism-71196>.

from their right belief. On more than one occasion, Valencia would preach about the importance of being “intolerant” (he uses that word) toward those with wrong beliefs, even though intolerance is frowned upon in the larger culture. In one of the two sermons on Revelation 19 I witnessed, he explained, “Jesus is real. He's not some magical sky fairy that takes everyone to heaven. Those who reject him say they have their own spirituality and they reject his love. He continues to reach out to them, but judgment will come.” This sense of group importance and superiority is unstable and fragile, however, leading to various attempts at isolation from the larger community. Valencia, from his pulpit, at times acknowledges that he too struggles with doubt, and that the solution is to cling to faith.

Illyn did not use the term “collective narcissism,” but he described a very similar and analogous evangelical trait: “the narcissism of personal piety” and he notes that it has intensified over time. “Good works aren’t a requirement; works don’t matter; it’s what I believe that matters.”

Sleeth, also without using the phrase, made a similar point when he observed that many evangelicals are “functional polytheists” who only claim to prioritize their evangelical faith. Often, other concerns, like what the Kardashians are up to, are really more important.

Evangelical susceptibility to conspiracy theory

One example makes the point. Jack Hibbs delivered his opening sermon of his

Worldview Series while the Occupy Wall Street protests were occurring. In order to cast aspersions on the OWS protests, he displayed a picture of the actor Tim Robbins with a protester behind him holding up a sign saying “Weed, Not Greed.” Hibbs explained the picture as follows: “This is in New York. This is Occupy Wall Street people. These are the people that are saying capitalism/free enterprise is wrong, it's evil. Did a little homework. Didn't take long. In about five minutes, you can find out that they are being paid to protest. Now, they say they are against money, and capitalism and corporate greed... They are being paid by George Soros, by Kanye West, Rosanne Barr, Susan Sarandon among others, and Mr. Tim Robbins, the actor.” (Appendix H2). Of course, there was no evidence that George Soros was paying OWS protesters in 2011, just as there is no evidence that Soros was hiring “crisis actors” to protest the National Rifle Association in the wake of the Parkland, Florida mass casualty shooting on February 14, 2018.³⁴⁹ But Hibbs “did a little homework” on the internet and found “in about five minutes” that Soros was hiring OWS protesters. Hibbs comments about cap-and-trade policies, and how the catalytic converter came to be installed in American automobiles shows how susceptible he is to conspiracy theories. Dare I say it? This makes sense. His form evangelical Christianity is founded on a 3,000 year-old conspiracy theory about a talking snake who introduced death and suffering into a previously perfect world by convincing a

³⁴⁹ Michael M. Grynbaum, "Right-Wing Media Uses Parkland Shooting as Conspiracy Fodder," *New York Times*, February 20, 2018 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/20/business/media/parkland-shooting-media-conspiracy.html>.

naked woman to eat a piece of forbidden fruit. (See Chapter 3).

The sovereignty of God produced passivity

Calvary Chapelers are amazingly passive. They take the cues from their pastors, and they also see everything that happens to them as somehow part of the plan set for them by the creator of the universe, who they see as guiding every aspect of their lives, from whom they marry, where they live and for how long, what job they will have and for how long, etc. Listening to evangelicals talk among themselves about their lives in this manner helps explain their lack of environmental concern. Their God directs everything, including environmental despoliation. Being a good steward of God's creation requires nothing more than not littering. Both Hibbs and Valenica explained to me that they do not litter, and were angry at those who do. The idea that it might entail something more than that simply does not fit in their worldview.

Mainline to progressive Christianity: some good environmental outcomes

Alone among my interviews, Bingham was the only one who sees signs that the original hope is being realized, and even envisions a future where an increasingly secular American social landscape starts returning to church because of the inspiring environmental engagement happening there. Perhaps this optimism is because Bingham, unique among the three, works primarily among progressive faith

communities, and lives in San Francisco. By design, she works with faith communities that reach out to her and her organization because they want to enact a religious response to climate change in their own religious communities. Bingham is a good illustration that REMOs have been more successful within mainline Christianity than has been the case among evangelical creation care advocates, and she can point to ways her Interfaith Power and Light is producing real results on the ground. If there is interest within a congregation, environmental concern can manifest in meaningful ways, as was shown by my example of Redlands UCC. Both IPL and Redlands UCC are bright spots in an otherwise dismal landscape.

Texts matter

In 2017, Yasha Hartberg and David Sloan Wilson published a preliminary but still pathbreaking piece of research that helps illustrate how the *Two Christianities* phenomenon enacts itself in the churches. As evolutionary biologists who study culture change through a Darwinian lens, they analogize the human genome encoded in DNA to the cultural genome encoded in sacred texts. Just as individual genes can be both silenced and expressed, in their view, the cultural genome of sacred texts can be both silenced or expressed. They tested this hypothesis by studying the frequency with which pastors cite or quote from various bible books. They did this by scanning and then statistically analyzing the online sermons obtained from 6 churches (3 conservative and 3 progressive). Hartberg and Wilson found that there was a

substantial difference between the two types of churches. All the pastors in both types of churches frequently cited the four gospels of the Christian New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and from the Psalms. The pastors from the progressive churches, however, cite almost exclusively from these texts, while conservative churches cite from many more books, particularly in the New Testament. In addition to the Psalms, the conservative pastors also quoted from Genesis regularly, but like the progressive pastors, tended to ignore most of the rest of the Hebrew Bible. (See Heat Map of the Bible texts cited, included at the end of this chapter). As Hartberg and Wilson put it, “the Gospels and Psalms seem to form a kind of core set of passages, perhaps both necessary and sufficient to sustain a progressive Christian congregation... Considerably more text, however, seems to be required to sustain conservative churches.”³⁵⁰ Interpreted through the biological analogy, progressive pastors express a much narrower range from the cultural genome found in the sacred text of the Bible. I have argued elsewhere that the only way to construct a logically coherent progressive Christianity is by intentionally ignoring, and often denouncing, much of the Bible.³⁵¹ Hartberg and Wilson’s study shows that progressive Christian pastors do this in practice, even if they do not do it explicitly.

My experiences at progressive churches confirm Hartberg and Wilson’s finding. Psalms and the Gospels are indeed the primary texts cited in progressive

³⁵⁰ Yasha M. Hartberg and David Sloan Wilson, "Sacred Text as Cultural Genome: An Inheritance Mechanism and Method for Studying Cultural Evolution," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 7, no. 3 (2017): 187.

³⁵¹ Zaleha, "James Nash as Christian Deep Ecologist: Forging a New Eco-Theology for the Third Millennium."

sermons. Superficially, it seems that Hartberg and Wilson's finding should not hold with Calvary Chapels, given that their model claims to preach through the whole Bible. There is a habit of interpretation, however, that makes the model relevant to Calvary Chapel. Calvary Chapel pastors frequently utilize a hermeneutical method dating back to Mathias Illyricus' 1567 *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*, which declares the principle "the bible as a whole should be used to interpret itself."³⁵² Using this precept from early in the Reformation, Calvary Chapel pastors routinely say during their sermons, "How do we interpret the Bible? Using the Bible." And any part of the Bible can be pressed into use. As they read and teach through the whole Bible, whenever the text does not yield the desired lesson, the pastor simply brings in a favored passage to explain away the deviant passage and reinforce the favored interpretation, usually from John's Gospel, one of Paul's epistles (including pseudo-Paul), Genesis, or Revelation. This is just what Hartberg and Wilson would predict. Because they use this hermeneutic technique, Calvary Chapel pastors actually validate the Hartberg/Wilson finding.

Conclusion

Deeply immersing myself in the Calvary Chapel and Progressive Christian settings for the last two years, I conclude that Christianity has already split into two religions which, confusingly, both go by the same name. Traditional, supernaturalistic

³⁵² Bowker, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*.

Christian theism focus on rewards in the after-life. At the far opposite end of the spectrum, there is a small Christian segment that is either or some combination of post-theistic, atheistic, panentheistic, and pantheistic that either actively disbelieves Christianity's traditional supernaturalistic claims, or at a minimum, greatly de-emphasizes that aspect of the religion. This orientation is especially found among progressive Christian pastors, and to a lesser extent, some members of their congregations. The Progressive Christian Forum of Santa Cruz County is a prime example of the latter.

This research makes tangible why the majority of the survey research shows that Christianity suppresses environmental concern. This is especially true among evangelicals, but it is also the case in liberal Christian congregations. Progressive churches pay more lip service to environmental concern, but they are far more engaged on various social justice issues. In my interviews, congregations at the mainline churches that are affiliated with TCPC are not hotbeds of environmental activism, and these congregations are by far and away the most liberal in relation to the rest of American Christianity. Peace United is the most liberal church in the mostly liberal larger cultural setting.³⁵³ If significant Christian environmentalism is to be found, this is where it should be. Yet at Peace, the environment is a secondary concern. While I have found some pockets of strong concern for the environment within some of these congregations, activist energy is primarily directed to advocacy

³⁵³ Richard Gendron and G. William Domhoff, *The Leftmost City : Power and Progressive Politics in Santa Cruz* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), <https://books.google.com/books?id=v3aqBAAAQBAJ>.

for marriage equality, the needs of the homeless, the Movement for Black Lives, and other social issues. Environmental issues, including climate change, register at most as second tier issues. Like evangelicals, many TCPC congregants are also looking for some supernatural help from beyond our observable material sphere, even if it is a subdued hope, and even if they are more accepting of people on other spiritual paths. For the most part, they are seeking community, not opportunities to be activists, and some will resent it if their pastors push them too hard in an activist direction.

Amid this less than rosy assessment, it must be remembered that nineteen percent of white evangelicals did not vote for Donald Trump and his campaign promises to dismantle environmental protection. That still comprises millions of people. And some evangelicals are trying to press back.³⁵⁴ The Evangelical Environmental Network is still active, and it sponsors an annual Global Day of Prayer and Creation Care.³⁵⁵ In 2012, the Network called its third annual observance of a Global Day of Prayer for Creation Care & the Poor and partnered with global development organizations including Plant with Purpose, Food for the Hungry, World Relief, and World Vision to emphasize that Christian concern for the poor requires climate action, not climate denial. In April 2012, a new project of the EEN, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, organized a Day of Prayer and Action at Christian

³⁵⁴ Laurie Goodstein, "'This Is Not of God': When Anti-Trump Evangelicals Confront Their Brethren," *New York Times*, May 23, 2018 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/us/anti-trump-evangelicals-lynchburg.html>.

³⁵⁵ Michael Gryboski, "Evangelical Leader Sees Connection between Climate Change and Poverty," *The Christian Post* (2012), <http://www.christianpost.com/news/evangelical-leader-sees-connection-between-climate-change-and-poverty-73951/>.

college campuses across the United States and continues to be active.³⁵⁶

Although most conservative Christians are currently either skeptical of or not greatly concerned about climate change, the millennial generation of evangelicals is less uniformly conservative about classic “culture war” issues, such as being anti-LGBTQ, and they are more concerned about the environment and climate.³⁵⁷ They are even more committed, however, to an anti-choice/anti-abortion position than their parents.³⁵⁸ I interviewed Bew Lowe, the co-founder of Young Evangelicals for Climate Action in May 2018. I asked him, since only strong government action can mitigate climate change, how many of his fellow young evangelicals are ready to vote for the pro-choice Democrat, seeing the anti-abortion Republicans are uniformly against action to mitigate climate change. He actually seemed surprised at my suggestion that people like him would have to choose between their anti-choice commitments and their climate activism. I shared a story about a female anti-abortion evangelical wildlife biologist who told me she always voted for the pro-choice Democrat because God’s creation is more important than the human fetus. Lowe said they avoid talking about politics in YECA and that he had no idea how many young

³⁵⁶ Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, "Young Evangelicals for Climate Action," Web Page, URL <http://www.yecaction.org/>,

³⁵⁷ Gregory M. Lamb, "Conservative Evangelicals Embrace God and Green," *The Christian Science Monitor* (2010); Adam Stein, "Southern Baptists Shift Stance on Climate," *terrapass.com* (2008), <http://www.terrapass.com/politics/southern-baptist-leadership-shifts-stance-on-climate-change/>.

³⁵⁸ Daniel Cox and Robert P. Jones, "How Race and Religion Shape Millennial Attitudes on Sexuality and Reproductive Health," Washington, DC: Public Religion Research Institute, Web Page, URL <https://www.prrri.org/research/survey-how-race-and-religion-shape-millennial-attitudes-on-sexuality-and-reproductive-health/>, (Accessed May 30, 2018),

evangelicals could bring themselves to vote for Democrats. Implied was that it would be difficult to convince most evangelical millennials to vote for Democrats.

If one wants to be optimistic about the constructive role Christians might yet play as the drama of climate politics in the United States unfolds, one has to look at mainline Christian churches and at liberal segments of the Roman Catholic Church. As disclosed by the PRRI climate change study, Hispanic Catholics in the U.S. are very concerned about climate change even though their white counterparts are not (see PRRI graph reproduced at the end of this chapter).³⁵⁹ As illustrated by Berry and Fox, mainline Protestant and liberal Catholic theologians have developed robust pro-environment interpretations of Christianity. In contrast to conservative Christian environmentalists who remain devoted to traditional church doctrines, these progressive segments of Christian thought have accepted – sometimes explicitly – Lynn White’s suggestion that Christianity needs to reinvent itself and re-sacralize nature. This process of reinterpretation was underway among liberal Christian theologians (both Protestant and Catholic) before White’s indictment.³⁶⁰

The bad news is that after more than half century of promoting these ideas, there is little to no evidence that these new ideas from liberal Christian thought

³⁵⁹ Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera, "Believers, Sympathizers, & Skeptics: Why Americans Are Conflicted About Climate Change, Environmental Policy, and Science ".

³⁶⁰ Bron Taylor, "The Greening of Religion Hypothesis (Part One): From Lynn White, Jr and Claims That Religions Can Promote Environmentally Destructive Attitudes and Behaviors to Assertions They Are Becoming Environmentally Friendly," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 16, no. 3 (2016), <https://goo.gl/IiUW3D>.

leaders have been taken up by the laity to any meaningful extent. There is even less indication that this reinvention of Christianity has led to a politically significant increase in environmental advocacy from these sectors of mainline to liberal Christianity. Unlike the green evangelicals (who, some claim, had a significant political victory in the mid-90s in helping to fend off congressional attacks on the Endangered Species Act), these sectors can point to no political victories where their involvement was key or decisive. There may be more churches and synagogues with solar panels on their roofs due to the efforts of Interfaith Power and Light. Congregations may recycle more and use ceramic mugs instead of styrofoam cups at their post-service coffee hours. The coffee they serve may even be fair trade and shade grown. But there is no sign that these efforts have moved the needle in the major political conflicts over environmental and climate issues. Perhaps the Pope Francis' recent climate encyclical will yet prove to be the long hoped for catalysts to significant faith-based climate concern mobilization. Bingham told me she thought it would. Americans generally and American Catholics in particular, however, have a long history of ignoring Catholic popes when they dislike what he says. While we can choose to be hopeful, preliminary survey research suggests Francis' encyclical may become another example.

For those hoping for a Christian response to environmental woes, it is mainline Protestants – those most inclined to environmental concern – that are declining most precipitously. Whatever minimal political influence they may have now appears destined to shrink at an accelerating rate. Recent demographic reports

are informative. The third American Religious Identity Survey released in March 2009³⁶¹ showed that the percentage of Americans who self-identify as Christian dropped to 76% in 2008 compared to 86% in 1990, an 11.6% drop over 18 years. The Pew Research Center documents that between 2007 and 2014, Christian self-identity dropped from 78.4% to 70.6%, a 10% decline over only 7 years. This decline was accompanied by a jump in Americans unaffiliated with any particular religion from 16.1% to 22.8%, a 42% increase. Within Christianity, evangelicals held more or less steady, experiencing a slight decline from 26.3% to 25.4%.³⁶²

During the time period of this research, I have conducted a periodic experiment between 2014 and 2018 while teaching or invited to lecture, both at U.C. Santa Cruz and at San Jose State University. The courses varied in their content from environmentally-themed courses like Political Ecology and Global Climate Change, to two large-lecture Introduction to Sociology courses. In each, I or the instructor who invited me required the students to take and anonymously report their outcome on the Religion Selector quiz.³⁶³ In each case, the top result was Unitarian Universalist (with the overwhelming number of students having never heard of this religion). The runner up in each case was Secular Humanism. In four of the classes, these two together comprised these percentages: 41.4%, 50%, 41.4%, and 61.2%. In the fifth class, they took the quiz together in class via a clicker quiz, so their outcome is for the class as a

³⁶¹ Kosmin and Keysar, "American Religious Identity Survey."

³⁶² Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life, "America's Changing Religious Landscape: Christians Decline Sharply as Share of Population; Unaffiliated and Other Faiths Continue to Grow".

³⁶³ <http://selectsmart.com/religion/>

whole (their individual outcomes are unknown). The class collectively had a 100% affinity for Unitarian Universalist and the runner up was an 87% affinity for Secular Humanism. This is California. Colleagues who teach in the south report very different, mostly “conservative Protestant” outcomes. But in some regions, college students are moving beyond the Two Christianities, to the No Christianity option. It is a viable hypothesis that the outcome would be similar in Oregon, Washington and the northeast United States.

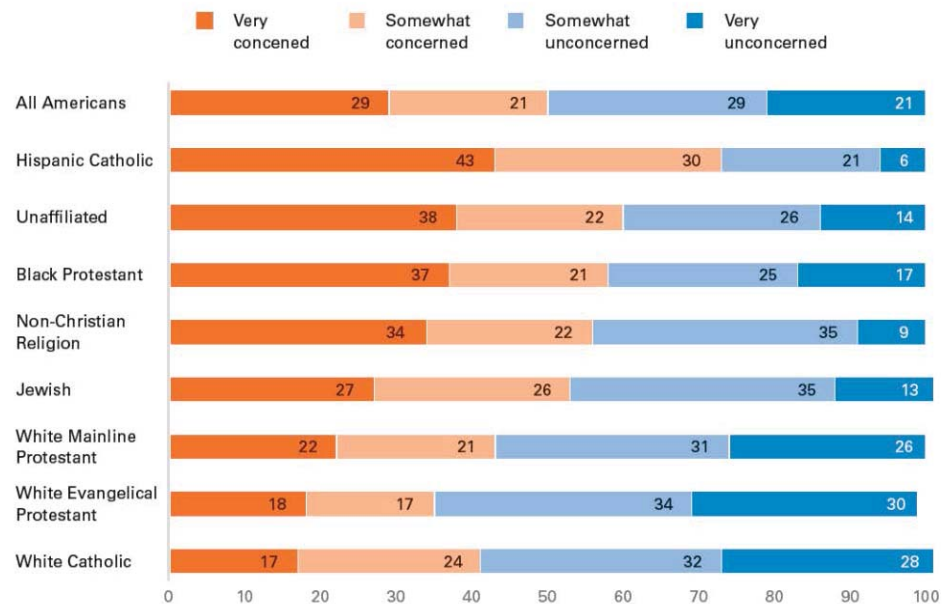
The hemorrhaging within Christianity is within the more moderate to liberal wings. While this may be bad news for institutional forms at this end of the Christian spectrum, the fact that those exiting are moving outside traditional religions altogether is perhaps good news for environmental protection generally and the advancement of public policies addressing climate change. As Szasz, Taylor, Van Wieren, and I have laid out elsewhere,³⁶⁴ the secular and the unaffiliated have some of the highest rates of environmental concern, perhaps showing that for them, planet earth really is their home, worthy of care, and worth the effort to preserve it. For those who favor action addressing climate change, skyrocketing rates of species extinction, and still persistent rates of water and air pollution, this is—tentatively—good news.

³⁶⁴ Bernard Daley Zaleha and Andrew Szasz, "Why Conservative Christians Don't Believe in Climate Change," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 71, no. 5., Taylor, Van Wieren, and Zaleha, "The Greening of Religion Hypothesis (Part Two): Assessing the Data from Lynn White, Jr, to Pope Francis."

Jones, Robert P., Daniel Cox, and Juhem Navarro-Rivera. “Believers, Sympathizers, & Skeptics: Why Americans Are Conflicted About Climate Change, Environmental Policy, and Science” *publicreligion.org* (2014). Published electronically Nov. 21, 2014. <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2014-Climate-Change-FINAL1.pdf>

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FIGURE 3. Climate Change Concern Index by Religious Affiliation



Source: PRRI/AAR, Religion, Values, and Climate Change Survey, November 2014

Hartberg, Yasha M., and David Sloan Wilson. "Sacred Text as Cultural Genome: An Inheritance Mechanism and Method for Studying Cultural Evolution." *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 7, no. 3 (2017): 178-90

Figure 4

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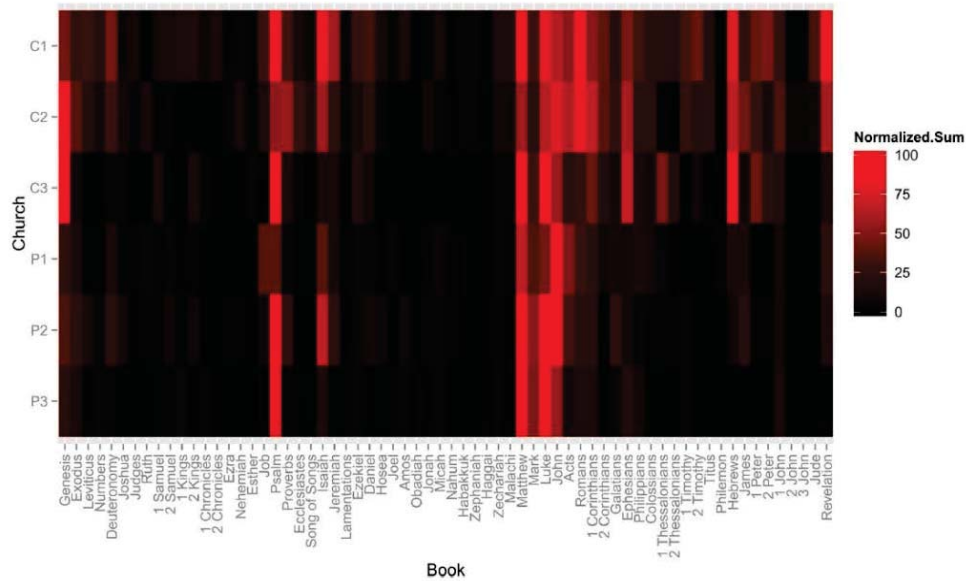


Figure 4. Heat map comparing the frequency with which six churches, three highly conservative (C1–C3) and three highly progressive (P1–P3), cite specific books within the Protestant Bible in their Sunday sermons.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Appendices

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- B1 **Wednesday night sermon on Daniel 11:1-35** by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Aug. 31, 2016
- B2 **Wednesday night sermon on Daniel 11:36-40** by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Sep5. 7, 2016
- B3 **Wednesday night sermon on Daniel 12** by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Sept. 14, 2016
- B4 **Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 1** by Asst. Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Sept. 21, 2016
- B5 **Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 3** by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Oct. 5, 2016
- B6 **Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 6** by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Nov. 2, 2016

Appendix C - Campbell sermon

- C **The End Times-Ten Upcoming Evetns in Bible Prophecy** by Charlie Campbell, Sept. 22, 2013

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- H2 **What you believe defines you**, Jack Hibbs, Nov. 9, 2011, Chino, CA
- H3 **When Life Begins” [Anti-abortion/anti-choice]**, by Jack Hibbs, Nov. 30, 2011
- H4 **What is Environmentalism?- Part 1**, Jack Hibbs, Jan. 4, 2012
- H5 **What is Environmentalism?- Part 2**, Jack Hibbs, Jan. 11, 2012

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Appendix FG-CCSGM - Arizona Calvary Chapel focus group

Appendix EV - Evolution court cases

Appendix PC8 - The 8 Points of Progressive Christianity

Appendix R - Defining Religion

Appendix CNSA - Collective Narcissism Scale Assessment

Appendix WS-ReGen - worship songs

Appendix RE - Restoring Eden bumper stickers

Appendix B - Bjorkman sermons

Appendix B1

Wednesday night sermon on Daniel 11:1-35 by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman,
Aug. 31, 2016

URL: <https://bit.ly/2w7z1f5>

Appendix B2

Wednesday night sermon on Daniel 11:36-40 by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman,
Sep5. 7, 2016

URL: <https://bit.ly/2jpXG5D>

03m50s "They [these verses] have not been fulfilled historically by Antiochus in the same way that we've seen these other prophecies fulfilled "

03m59s "we don't find that they have been fulfilled so we look forward"

04m04s "as we've seen things so many times in this very book, the way that we've seen things so accurately fulfilled in the past, we can depend on that very same thing happening in the future."

05m22s "Final world ruler"

05m31s "He is the Antichrist. He is the beast [of Revelation]"

05m41s "back in Revelation chapter 17"

06m10s "He [the antichrist] is going to rise to the status of a world dictator in that very end of time just before the return of Jesus Christ. So starting here in verse 36 the prophecy moves from being very near to Daniel to being very far."

07m54s "Revelation chapter 17" again

08m15s "We see all this increasing strife and this division within the emerging EU as we've just seen recently with Brexit... Quite possible all these leaders who are now there sharing power jointly are at some point probably going to call for one man to lead the Union in an effort to save this crumbling organization."

U.N. Robert Muller [Not Mueller]

12m37s "We can see the stage being set for the antichrist to seize control"

Appendix B3

Wednesday night sermon on Daniel 12 by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Sept. 14, 2016

URL: <https://bit.ly/2HLSGCY>

03m08s "All answers to all of our questions are found right here in this book, the Bible."

06m55s: "The Book of Revelation tells us that ... there is going to be a war in heaven." At this point, Bjorkman spends more of the rest of this sermon on Revelation.

14m08s: "At this point they [the righteous dead] are going to be resurrected bodily. They are going to receive their glorified bodies. They are going to enter into some sort of blessing during that millennium period. It says in Revelation, Chapter 20, in verse 4, it says 'They came to life and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.' But notice it says ... not all who sleep in the dust will be raised... because in Revelation Chapter 20, the very next verse, in verse 5, it says that the rest of dead did not live again until the 1000 years were finished. This is the wicked dead, those who died all throughout history without professing faith in Christ. They won't be raised until after the millennium. They'll be raised simply to be sentenced at the great white throne judgment, sentenced to an eternity of separation and ultimate punishment in the lake of fire. That's the destiny of the unsaved."

Appendix B4

Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 1 by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman, Sept. 21, 2016

The Regeneration Church, Scotts Valley, CA

Link to video of sermon: <https://goo.gl/dX8b28>

Based on <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-1/>

For Genesis, Bjorkman told me he also relies on Ken Ham's [Answers in Genesis](#).

Example: <https://answersingenesis.org/angels-and-demons/were-angels-created-in-the-image-of-god/>

When I asked him about the conflict between the two creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2, he sent me this link:

<https://answersingenesis.org/contradictions-in-the-bible/do-genesis-1-and-2-contradict-each-other/>

Ham made a media splash four ears ago with his Feb. 4, 2014 debate on evolution vs. creationism (televised on YouTube) with Bill Nye, the Science Guy. Debate video (<https://youtu.be/z6kgvhG3AkI>)

<https://www.npr.org/2014/02/05/271873763/science-guy-bill-nye-debates-creationist-ken-ham>

Key moments in Bjorkman's sermon on Genesis 1:

05m36s "It is safe to say that the Bible would surely be both incomplete and incomprehensible without the book of Genesis because this is the book that really sets the stage for the entire drama (if you'll pardon the word), the drama of redemption that we watch unfold in the rest of the bible"

06m52s "Inspired by the spirit of God, what we see that Moses has written down for us... He's told us where we've come from, he's told us why we're here, and he's told us what God expects us to do; and it's precisely because people have abandoned the truths of the book of Genesis ... that we can say that is why our world and our society are in such disarray..."

53m26s "**The bible tells us that angels were not made in God's image, [dubious assertion] only we are. It's this right understanding of who man is, it begins with this knowledge that we are made in the image of God, that we are different from every other order of created beings. We are not the products of galactic accident, nor are we just at the top rung of some sort of an evolutionary ladder. God made us!** And what that means, the Bible says, we're wholly dependent on Him. In the Book of Acts it says that 'In Him we live and we move and we have our being' [Acts 17.28], because **unlike the animals, even unlike the angels, we as humans are the only created beings that can have this very special relationship with God.** Not only

did he give us personality, we have minds to think with, we have emotions to feel with, we have wills don't we to make decisions with, but he also gave us this inner spiritual nature that enables us to know Him, and to worship him. And that's what causes this unbridgeable gap between human life and animal life. Absolutely, we were created by this same designer, so there's some biological similarities that we share with some animals but we are distinct in this sense of spirituality and morality. We're able to make moral judgments. We have a conscience. We're made to be in communion with God. Very simply, animals possess a mind and a body, but only humans possess a mind, and a body, and a spirit, and it's on that spirit level that we communicate with the Lord."

55m20s "And this, honestly, is the main reason why the theory and the thought of evolution is so spiritually damaging, because what it does is it strips us of our uniqueness of being created in the image of God and it reduces us to the level of an animal, no matter how advanced a level that may be. And it's when we strip people of this uniqueness, that human dignity, and we tell them that they evolved from animals, how surprised should we be when they start to act like animals? We are the pinnacle aren't we, we are the pinnacle of God's masterpiece of creation. And it says in these next verses that we've been given this special place in it and over it. Verse 28 says that "[reads Gen 1.28-31]"

57m15s "Adam and Eve were the first rulers, the regents if you will, over God's creation."

Appendix B5

This sermon captures the vital importance to Calvary Chapel evangelicals understanding the bible as literal history, not metaphor.

Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 3 by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman,
The Regeneration Church, Scotts Valley, CA
Oct. 5, 2016

Link to video of sermon: <https://goo.gl/E718tX>

03m02s **"The account here in Genesis chapter 3 I hope that it goes without saying, this is not a myth. This is both history as well as rich, rich theology, because if the fall of man didn't actually occur then the whole Christian faith is just built on fables, not fact.** Therefore Jesus Christ suffered needlessly, didn't he, on the cross. From Genesis chapter 3 where we are tonight all the way through Revelation chapter 21 where were just a few Sundays ago the Bible records this conflict between God and Satan, between sin and righteousness, and records pleading with sinners to repent and to trust God. There is so much for us to consider together that form the foundation, not only of our study through the rest of this tremendous book [Genesis], but also, needless to say, for our lives."

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Appendix B6

Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 6 by Assistant Pastor Bill Bjorkman,
The Regeneration Church, Scotts Valley, CA
Nov. 2, 2016

Link to video: <https://goo.gl/FAUxNY>

This was the sermon that sent me to internet to find out where Bjorkman was getting these extraordinary and outlandish (to me at least) theories, and in so doing found Guzik's online commentary which lays out this theory of Genesis 6:1-4. It is also a dramatic display of conspiracy thinking in a religious context. A secret knowledge is being transmitted to a favored few.

09m53s "The bible tells us that one third of all the angelic hosts joined with him [Lucifer/Satan] in that rebellion and now became demons serving Satan in his plan to pollute and to ultimately try to destroy the human race."

10m30s Demons/fallen angels having sex with human women (cites to Jude 1:6 (fallen angels chained) and Enoch 7:1-2,10-11 (beautiful and comely daughters)

14m13s - 1 Enoch
Long passage from Enoch

10m00s Pollute and destroy the human race.

15m45s-16m07s

"Satan was probably trying to pollute the genetic pool of mankind, to corrupt it and effectively introduce like a genetic virus that would make the human race unfit to bring forth that promised seed of the woman [Jesus, the redeeming Son of God] in Genesis chapter 3. Now Boice [James Montgomery Boice] comments that 'the savior could not be born of a demon possessed mother so if Satan could succeed in infecting the entire race the deliverer could not come.'"

Exhibit C - Campbell sermon

The End Times-Ten Upcoming Evetns in Bible Prophecy by Charlie Campbell,
Sept. 22, 2013 Video: <http://youtu.be/iwfr3QI5zGA>.

In this dissertation, where the beginning location of a particular portion of an online video or audio file needs to be designated, I will follow this convention: #h##m##s. For instance, the 1 hour, 5 minute, 5 second point will be displayed as **1h05m05s**. If the video has a runtime of less than an hour, the #h element will be omitted.

03m40s Hundreds of prophecies in the Bible that have already been fulfilled.
no fulfilled prophecies in the hindu vedas, koran, book of mormon, the tripitaka [Buddhist], the Bahgavad Gita, or Upanishads

05m00s #1. "Coming of Christ for his church" (Also known as "The Rapture")

13m37s #2. "Believers' day of rewards" judgment of the works of each Christian

20m15s #3. "The Rapture of the Church" The Tribulation

27m15s #4. "Invasion of Ezekial 38 & 39" during the first 3.5 years of the Trib.
29m00s Islam and its burning demonically inspired hatred of the Jewish people

33m25s #5. Battle of Armageddon toward the end of the Tribulation, which will occur in the state of Israel, at Meggido.

35m05s #6. "Second Coming of Christ" Matt 24 and Rev 19

39m08s #7. "Judgement of the Nations" Matt 25.31-46

41m20s #8. 1000 year Reign of Christ wolf with the lamb

45m00s #9. Great White Throne Judgment - Judgment of the Wicked, thrown into the lake of fire

48m45s #10. Eternity in the New Jerusalem

49m37s Based 2 Pet 3:10, this present moment and present earth are going to pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat. And for good reason.

50m00s **"This earth that we live on has been contaminated by mankind's sin. So in its place is going to be a brand new heaven and earth."** [citing 2 Peter 3:10-13]

Appendix H - Hibbs sermons

Appendix H1

“The Day Of The Lord - Part 1”, a sermon on 2 Peter 3:10-13, by Jack Hibbs, delivered on November 9, 1997 <https://goo.gl/ngLo2x>

Link to audio of sermon: <https://goo.gl/b6x2JA>.

2nd Link:

<https://d1ur5dvvg8a7x1.cloudfront.net/content/live/audio/smx/SMX275.mp3>

Link to New Testament text: <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=385887715>

19m30s “the wicked are simply those who refuse to have a personal relationship with Christ. You don't have to be a bank robber or some pervert to be wicked. All you have to be is a Christ rejecter.”

Daniel 9.27 <http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=385911599> The European Union

28m10s “Prophecy should cause us, number 1, to live a life dedicated to god, number 2, it should cause us to witness to our friends.”

29m40s “Lord forgive me for I have sinned... so far have I removed your sin, as far as the east from the West...” citing [Ps 103.12]

32m30s-33m10s “All the heavens all that you see up there, is going to pass away ... that is awesome, it says with a great noise [2 Peter 3.10].” Hibbs equates with nuclear war/nuclear fission. But 1 Thessalonians 1: 10 ‘Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.’

41m40s “If your lord desires to come back, I hope he does today.”

44m15s **“Remember hell's going to filled with a lot of good people, because the Bible says it's not by being good that you make it in there [heaven]”**

46m53s “Listen, the raptures comin’, get ready! Stop playing and get ready now...”

47m07s **“Everything's going to come apart. It's all going to end. It's all going to burn up. It's all going to burn, melt. Gone! Look at the clothes you're wearing right now. It's going to go, melt with fervent heat.”**

51m05s “You need pray every morning ‘Lord Jesus come back today please and prepare my heart for it.’ Should we be ready to live here another 50, 100, 2000 years. Of course... Occupy until I come.”

51m08s “There will be a Russian/Islamic invasion into the Middle East... Those of you left behind, you’ll be able to watch it on CNN”

Appendix H2

“What you believe defines you”, Jack Hibbs, Nov. 9, 2011, Chino, CA

20111109_What you believe defines you

<https://vimeo.com/33357683>

https://youtu.be/1Enbac_GJjs

First in Worldview Series

<http://www.openscreenshot.com/#/i/HkZiSURpG>

20111109_What you believe defines you NOTES

https://www.calvarycch.org/media_files/notes/WNX552.pdf

11m13s "What you believe defines you"

27m10s "The person that would say to you tonight 'I don't believe in any of this. I don't believe in God,' they are lying to you in the sense that there is a fear within them that a god or gods may exist and that they will answer to them someday. This is universal. In cultures that are yet to even receive the bible... where missionaries have stumbled across cultures... isn't it interesting to find out ... there has never been culture discovered or tribe in the jungle that has yet to not have an alter or some form of worship."

28m25s "This is the issue that props up so much of what is wrong with the world. 'There is not god, so fill in the blank.' What people are really saying is that my worldview makes no allowance for god because if this god or gods exist then it would quench my lifestyle,... so there must not be a god. So the question is do you believe in god. Psalm 19.1 says 'The heavens declare the glory of god, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.'"

31m51s "You and I are arguing from the position of absolute truth."

37m50s #2 "Your worldview supports your actions.

39m28s "How you live is your worldview. Your worldview is not what you say. Your worldview is what your do."

45m50s "Atheism is a religion"

46m58s "Is your lifestyle worth duplicating? [categorical imperative]"

47m58s "If evolution is true, how can there be homosexuality?"

53m45s #3 "Your worldview produces your outcome"

53m55s #3a "Is your worldview for the moment"

55m08s "[sign]'Weed not greed'[with Tim Robbins]... This is in New York. This is Occupy Wall Street people. These are the people that are saying capitalism/free

enterprise is wrong, it's evil. Did a little homework. Didn't take long. In about five minutes, you can find out that they are being paid to protest. Now, they are against money, and capitalism and corporate greed... They are being paid by George Soros, by Kanye West, Rosanne Barr, Susan Sarandon among others, and Mr. Tim Robbins, the actor."

58m00s #3b "Do you consider a future judgment?"

1h09m10s "Is that [Tehachapi Renewable Transmission line] a religious thing? It's not a religious thing to me, because **I don't live here anyway**... I mean I live here, I mean I hang out here. My house is just down the street, but I'm waiting to go to heaven [from the audience 'Amen!']... I waiting to go home. I haven't been home yet, but I'm waiting to go home [with smile, pointing to the sky]."

Appendix H3

“When Life Begins” [Anti-abortion/anti-choice], by Jack Hibbs,

Chino, CA, Nov. 30, 2011

URL: <https://vimeo.com/33359894>

No YouTube link

14m22s "I recently watched a program, maybe you saw it as well, it's called 'Whale Wars.' You've seen that?! [incredulous tone]. And I was saddened and yet amused at the same time that really smart educated people would literally almost get themselves killed trying to protect a whale. Well pastor, don't you like whales? I love whales. I mean they're fantastic, they're beautiful, they're great. But to sacrifice your life for a whale? What is your worldview? Apparently, they're worldview is 'I will give my life to preserve the whale,' and the sad thing is that the whale doesn't even appreciate that. But the danger is that you can so love the creation of God and miss the Creator that you would end up sacrificing yourself for it, rather than for him! [Exclaiming voice]. What and when, how, where does the value of life come from and how do we conduct ourselves regarding it?"

then proceeds with anti-abortion sermon

Appendix H4

"What is Environmentalism?- Part 1," Jack Hibbs, Chino, CA, Jan. 4, 2012 (Wed.)

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lScrwNksFY>

URL2: <https://vimeo.com/34685575>

SERMON NOTES: https://www.calvarycch.org/media_files/notes/WNX556.pdf

16m38s Expounds on Creation *Ex Nihilo* "God brought things out of nowhere and made them exist..."

16m55s "He brought stuff from nowhere into something."

20m20s "When it comes to environmentalism, is it a political issue, is it a moral issue, or is it a spiritual issue?... All of them... You are in a campaign year.

Environmentalism will come up in the campaign among the candidates. It will be discussed. They will speak about it. People will vote based upon it. Is it a moral issue? Oh yes!... And is it a spiritual issue?... You either believe that god created it [earth], or you believe it evolved. Unfortunately, there is a rising group of people in modern evangelicalism that don't believe either one... They do believe that God created it, but he is unable to sustain it... This is huge in churches across America. He made it but it's gotten out of hand... He [God] can't take care of what he has made. I simply call that 'your little god religion'... You call yourself a Christian, you read the bible, you but your worldview has been so tainted by the doctrines of this age, in college classrooms, the modern interpretation of what is now called science rather than facts."

27m15s "That may even be really good creation care of the environment..."

30m07s "You cannot be an evolutionist and be an environmentalist, in my opinion. It's not possible..."

30m46s "A pure evolutionist would not be concerned [with the health of the environment] because an evolutionist believes everything is an accident, is in a state of chaos, and whatever it does... remember in Jurassic Park Jeff Goldblum says, 'life will find a way.'"

41m24s "Radical environmentalists believe that the natural state, the untouched state is the only way to live."

43m31s "God said, 'Adam, preside over the earth, everything I've made, use it to the betterment.'"

46m36s "Have you heard of Cap and Trade? Do you know what it is?" Then proceeds with a totally false description. It is so totally wrong, it is hard to imagine where he got it.

49m00m "According to Harvard professor, without regulation, just California could feed 35 billion people."

52m55s "Creation Care"

53m36s "Ladies and Gentlemen, environmentalism will drive this year's election to a great degree of how people vote, and ... sad to say the young people will fall for it hook line and sinker. 'I heard that politician say he's for the environment, I'm voting for him,' and they don't even know what it's about."

Appendix H5

"What is Environmentalism?- Part 2," Jack Hibbs, Chino, CA, Jan. 11, 2012

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r126PRxi8Mg>

URL2: <https://vimeo.com/34984316>

03m58s After part 1, "Why in the world are we wasting our time talkin' about this issue on Wednesday night in the worldview series of environmentalism? 50 years of age and over, it's a waste of time... 50 year of age and under, especially 30 years of age and under, they can't get enough of it. This is generational gap in our attention... This topic that we're talking about is engulfing our young people today, and us oldies don't get it. We don't understand that young people today have been indoctrinated in their schools regarding this topic of environmentalism to the point that it has become a religion. It is shocking. You can watch cartoons now (because I'm doing that now more than ever) and you'll be surprised how many cartoons are out there about saving mother earth. God forbid we should have a cartoon about Jesus loving you or Jesus loving your little kid. You can't have that out there but... We need to be very, very aware that what our young people are being taught is what's called 'The Green Gospel.' I'm not making it up. 'The Green Gospel' that we as Christians need to save the earth because it's in great peril and it's about to die if we don't save it. This is being taught in churches! [Hibbs explains in disbelief]... Church budgets are being allocated, not to evangelism, but to environmentalism. And that is happening across America. And for many of us who have been raised in bible teaching churches, this comes as a shock to us! But the reality is that the young generation today is seeing a great disconnect from the biblical worldview understanding and the world they are being taught in the public arena. And what we're talking about is the Christian of any age, any background, any color, whatever, should be taught to think biblical about everything and take the Bible to be the standard, the governing authority your life and every bit of your world and all that you do. That's called an authentic Christian."

07m43s "Moses knew what a microscope reveals, that in the genetic code of the seed is all the information to replication the same plant..."

10m50s "I want to say again loud and clear that as Christians our God made everything that we enjoy in our environment... We are not to abuse things. The Christian should be the best steward over what God has made, but he according to God has given us these things to use them, to manage them, to protect them, but put them into use to better human life. Nature is not to be exalted above human life. The Bible makes this clear."

11m47s "Look at the doctrine of environmental groups such as Earth First! Boy, I tell you if you read their website... They say we don't practice reproduction, because it's

going to harm the planet, and if we do get somebody pregnant, we'll just abort it, because we are going to hurt the planet if we produce any more kids. Is that true?

12m22s "God gave us the environment to use. He says so. That's what the Bible says."

12m40s "Where does this come from regarding the meaning of environmentalism? If you go to [hinduwisdom.com](http://www.hinduwisdom.com) [now http://www.hinduwisdom.info/Nature_Worship.htm], I quote

'Hinduism has always been an environmentally sensitive philosophy.' This is from their website

'No religion, perhaps, lays as much emphasis on environmental ethics as Hinduism... [Hinduism] contain[s] the earliest messages for preservation of environment...'

That's not true. My bible outdates that. God said 'In the beginning.'

'and ecological balance. Nature, or Earth, has never been considered a hostile element to be conquered or dominated. In fact, man is forbidden from exploiting nature. He is taught to live in harmony with nature and recognize that divinity prevails in all [of the] elements, including plants and animals.' Did you hear that?!
[Incredulous tone]

'The [masters] of the past have always had a great respect for nature. Theirs was not a superstitious primitive theology. They perceived that all material manifestations [or avatars] are a shadow[s] of [or from] the spiritual [realm]. The ... Gita advises us not to try to change the environment, improve it, or wrestle with it. If it seems hostile at times tolerate it. Ecology is an inherent part of a spiritual world view in Hinduism.'

19m10s "It's a zeal that causes people to say things like (this is from Earth First! website) 'Mother Nature is really giving us a nasty winter'... That term mother nature goes all the way back to Babylonianism. It's over 4,000 years old, that term. Mother Nature was the ancient goddess in Greek mythology called 'Gaia'... Al Gore mentions Gaia... In one of those websites of Gaia, it says that the increase of natural disasters is a result of mother earth being angry with us. That's at the Earth First! conference in 2009. we would say, 'Well, that's ridiculous. Who would believe this? That's stupid stuff! That's crazy!' But this is the prevailing focus of young people today."

21m2s "2000 years ago Paul wrote to the Italians there in Rome this amazing portion of scripture

21m33s "Romans 1:18 [NKJV]

'18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.’ **The Bible says every human being has an internal witness that God exists.**
 ‘20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,
 21 because, although they knew God,’ they didn’t know him personally but knew, **they were convinced by observation that God exists.**
 ‘they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened...
 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.’ Evolution theory in reverse. You read that backwards, that’s the evolutionary theory.
 ‘24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.’ says the Bible. That’s amazing.

23m22s “In Psalms 8:6 ‘You have made [man] to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
 You have put all things under his feet,
 7 All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field,
 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.’

24m06s “#3. **The cause of environmentalism...** The cause of environmentalism, the ‘ism’ of it, **is lack of belief and faith in God as creator**”

24m58s “If God is big and his word is true, how should we approach the environment? Because **you and I and our children are being a fed a line that is a doctrine literally rooted and founded upon the worship of nature.** And it is being called science... in school textbooks... And you’d say what be the advantage of somebody doing such a thing? **Billions of dollars** [with knowing smirk]. Follow, as the old saying goes, the money.”

25m53s “It is interesting to note that many of the prophets of environmentalism movement live in palaces and fly around the world in their private corporate jets, you know [likely a reference to Al Gore], leaving massive carbon footprints [with scare quotes] to get to the next speaking engagement about how bad everything is.”

27m43s “[1 Tim 6:20 KJV] **Watch out for false science. Paul told that to Timothy 2000 years ago.**”

28m10s Joke about dirty environmental protesters “Honestly, they were so dirty in

their appearance from camping out that their very physical presence was probably an environmental threat. [Laughter from congregation] They really needed a bath, badly.”

30m20s “ExxonValdez” every is fine. Volcanos are cleaned up by nature. Lightning cleans the air.

37m00s Density argument

44m38s Cites various charts in Lomborg’s ‘Skeptical Environmentalist’
lomborg page 165 graph

57m42s “Why would you settle to hug a tree or to focus on a crystal... Go look past the trees, and see him [Jesus].” Don’t hug a tree, Love Jesus

Appendix H6

"What is Environmentalism?- Part 3," Jack Hibbs, Chino, CA, Jan. 18, 2012

20120118(Wed.)_What is Environmentalism?, Part 3.mp4

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cinLBfVr4Mo>

URL2: <https://vimeo.com/35341355>

SERMON NOTES: https://www.calvarycch.org/media_files/notes/WNX558.pdf

04m05s "The world is going to hate us" for rejecting the pagan religion of 'environmentalism'" Persecution complex

04m31s "Environmentalism is now other than a pagan worship system"

05m16s "We apply our biblical worldview to every issue that comes into our lives."

07m47s "Historically, [environmentalism] is the collective sense, it is a combination of all the gods of the Babylonian worship system and all that they represent, because environmentalism is a very ancient worship system, it's a vast array of gods and goddesses that control the heavens, the earth, the world, the underworld,... When we talk about 'environmentalism' we are talking about what is infiltrating our culture, and successfully, so that the earth is dependent upon us, it personifies the earth as though it has feelings, though it somehow can't survive without us...

Environmentalism ... is a declaration... (a) we're evolutionist but we've got to take care of the earth or it will die and then we'll die... or we believe in God but he does not really take care of the stuff that he's made, so we've got to do it for him."

09m15s "Boy did I get an eyeful today of researching churches in America [incredulous tone] that are having conferences, and having symposiums, and having sermons on this saving the earth [continues incredulous tone]. Yet **my bible tells me that my God made it, he knows all about it, he has sustained it, he even gave us the authority to manage it.**"

10m18s **"Environmentalism ... always has a message to lessen the value of humanity and exalt nature."**

11m30s **"What is the fallacy of [environmentalism] ... and the deception of it?... It leaves God out of the factor of what he has made... We should be excellent stewards over the earth that God has given us, but when man begins to push god out of his thinking, man naturally fills the void. Push God out, man steps in."**

14m18s "Is there not wars and rumors of wars right now? [Alluding to the 'Little Apocalypse' Mark 13:7, Luke 21:9 and Matthew 24:6]"

#5 "The effects of environmentalism."

Hibbs puts forth all manner of climate change denialist misinformation.

20m16s "30,000 scientists now condemn the global warming data. That's why you're not hearing about it [global warming] any more. 30,000 scientists around the world say it's not happening." [Alluding to the bogus Oregon Petition]

21m05s "What was coming? The ice age."

21m30s "In total [environmentalism is] a false worship system that has caused untold

suffering and poverty worldwide.”

21m56s #6 The Reality of Environmentalism: “It’s a secular/pagan ancient religion and it’s enjoying a tremendous revival right now in all the areas of our culture. It is ultimately the worship of Gaia/Mother Earth/Mother Nature. Gaia she’s called in Greek Mythology. In Roman culture she’s Terra, the mother of all.”

23m01s 1 Kings 14:23 NKJV “For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree”

25m56 1 Timothy 4:1 *‘Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.’”*

26m50s “Have you been to Sedona, Arizona... You can buy rocks and crystals that you can bathe in.”

27m35s **“Satan doesn’t care how he gets someone into hell.”**

29m20s “Environmentalism is a doctrine. It’s not based on science.”

33m25s “The Bible says a culture disintegrates when every man does what is right in his own eyes [Judges 17:6 & 21:25; Prov 21:2]”

36m40s Blacked - Plays the Animal Planet cartoon

"The Animals Save the Planet - Gassy Cows"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIforUNXrUQ>

41m05s CNN Clip talking about Copenhagen climate conference and need for population control to address climate change

Text of clip here: <http://caffertyfile.blogs.cnn.com/2009/12/11/mandatory-population-control-to-fight-global-warming/>

The Cafferty File: Overpopulation & the Earth’s Limited Natural Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LlcJoZyG2N4>

46m20s “Job 38:1-41”

52m33s “It’s not mother nature; it’s father god”

Appendix H7

Jack Hibbs and Warren Duffy discuss Environmentalism - Part 1, Jan. 27, 2014

<https://reallifewithjackhibbs.org/video/jack-hibbs-warren-duffy-discuss-environmentalism-part-1/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su5yO7wtPUQ>

<https://vimeo.com/85689134>

14m11s "mother nature not god" god causes

15m17s Warren Duffy: "savages were always savages until a missionary came and straightened them out"

Jack Hibbs: "That's true."

15m47s: "You and I both believe it [Environmentalism] is a religion."

16m50s: rant about owl and the poor

18m36s: "The foundation of your view on creation really sets in order a whole pathology of thinking and lifestyle that everything is linked to. For example, if you are an environmentalist that exalts the natural setting above human life, for example, I can almost tell you how you'll vote in other areas, what your values are."

19m10s Tell me your view on national defense, on abortion, on homosexual marriage

Hibbs what is your view on abortion, marriage, and Israel.

24m30s "For a lot of people out there this is their hill to die on, the environment is their god. They're looking for 'Mother Earth' [with scare quotes] to deliver them

24m42s "Some people have even stated that man needs to eradicate himself. There needs to be a human suicide to the earth can continue on with her evolution. I believe this is demonic at the very least"

25m20s "This issue of environmentalism and how it will dictate your life unless it is really resisted."

Appendix H8

Jack Hibbs and Warren Duffy discuss Environmentalism - Part 2, Feb. 3, 2014

<https://reallifewithjackhibbs.org/video/jack-hibbs-warren-duffy-discuss-environmentalism-part-2>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXjrEaoUohw>

<https://vimeo.com/86288374>

<https://www.lightsource.com/ministry/real-life/pastor-jack-and-warren-duffy-discuss-environmentalism-part-2-392074-full.html>

03m00s "Islamic terrorism" "communism" "environmentalism"

08m00s Duffy discusses earth day, mentions Gaylord Nelson, extinction crisis, Paul Ehrlich

08m38s Duffy "you know what it was? They were predicting the ice age."

20m30s Duffy: "The most significant thing is the U.N. was looking to impose an agenda. you have to remember that. There are globalists who really believe in a global, you can fill in the blank here, new world order, one world government. Hillary Clinton is famous for saying 'global governance' and it all leads to a one world economy and before you know it you're talking about one person who can impose their will, and gosh,"

21m05s Duffy: "I brought my bible here, and I looking back here at 'The Revelation' and I don't see where God is going to delay the ending of his creation because I change my light bulbs" Hibbs: "Right" Duffy: "Or because I drive a plug-in car. He's going to end this whole thing and create the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem in his good time."

21m45s Hibbs: You and I know Christians that are attending churches that are giving up the missions budget and they're the the money over to the environmental recovery, this or that, what should the Christian be doing at a time like this?"

22m01s Duffy: "First, get educated. We have to learn what the environmental movement is really all about... There's something called the scientific method, and it's what we all learned in junior high school, and it's very simple. It's say if the data doesn't support the theory, you can't revise the data, you revise the theory. And we've got now a lot of data since the first earth day and since the first earth summit when they started talking about global warming, here's an inconvenient truth, Mr. Gore and anyone else that would care to listen, for the last 17 years, 15 of them there has been no appreciable global warming." Hibbs: "That's a fact." Duffy: "None. Zero. As a matter of fact for the last four years we have had the temperature begin to decline, and environmental scientists are starting to predict and [Ice] Age again."

23m13s Hibbs: "**I just saw this on the 'Discovery Channel'. They were talking about, 'Could there be a possible ice age coming.'**"

23m23s Duffy: "If you live long enough, you see these things running their course. So we have the data, we know that the ocean levels are not rising dramatically. Al Gore forecast that the Galapagos Islands were going to be submerged. That was in the

movie. Have you ever bothered to check the sea levels of the Galapagos Islands? I have for 35 years. There has been no sea level rise at the Galapagos Islands. The polar bears. We all remember the pictures, the poor little polar bears... The polar bears are thriving. And Alaska, the the extent that Eskimos are now saying would you please take them off the endangered species list, because they are invading the cities and coming into our trash cans and they're a nuisance. So all of these scare tactics that we've had since the very beginning of the environmental movement, whatever happened to the hole in the ozone layer? Whatever happened to acid rain? ... I call them Eco-babble [lifts up his book]. It's one imagined disaster after another, and they haven't happened and it's time we went back and revised the theory."

24m50s Hibbs: "What Duffy is really talking about is a religion. You have a religion. You may be saying I don't have a religion. Yes you do. You have a religion. What we want you to consider is--by the way Christians should never be afraid of the data. Is it real data? If it's good data, if it's real data, then we shouldn't be afraid of it, ... because years ago, Dr. A.E. Wilder-Smith, a great [creationist] scientist from Europe stated that God had created two bibles, one in print and for you to step outside and look around. They both speak of the creation powers of God. So do you know the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you know him personally? That's the God we are introducing you to always. The God of the Bible is the creation God, the one who died on the cross for your sins and mine. He wants you to know him personally. Listen, it's always here our intentions, our purpose, our very hearts ministry that through Jesus Christ you will know Real Life. God bless you."

25m59s Announcer: "How do you see the world? Was it made by God for man to subdue and rule over, is it 'Mother Earth,' that's the mother of us all? What's our responsibility? In this three part series, Jack Hibbs takes a look at one of the most controversial issues of our time, environmentalism... Order the DVD set, What is Environmentalism, for a gift of any amount to the ongoing ministry of Real Life we'll send you this DVD set for free. Go online to reallifewithjackhibbs.org"

Appendix H9

"What Is the Christian Vote?," Jack Hibbs, Chino, CA, Oct. 30, 2016

URL <https://youtu.be/t8n5cQQvTXs>

URL2 <https://vimeo.com/189734001>

SERMON NOTES: https://www.calvarycch.org/media_files/notes/JHX409.pdf

18m55s Do all to the Glory of god. You can't sit out the vote. When babies' lives are stake, when the Supreme Court choices are at stake, when liberty is at stake, and when the existence of you and I being able to have this Sunday morning dialogue is at stake, Christian sit idle."

What policies will win the day?

20m00s Cast your vote over the head of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton... There is more at stake then his hair and with her crimes."

20m40s " what is the Christian vote? Number one, abortion and a child's right to life... God sanctions war..."

23m52s " you're going to learn today and then you're going to vote not the way you feel but you are going to vote in obedience to god's word."

24m07s "God has laid it out very clear that he abortion the murdering of children."
Natural Marriage

37m30s "Pure emotionalism versus facts. Our culture is broken because we've gotten our eyes off of facts and reality. We've departed from science and we are in some no man's land now... The bible says when Israel had no king every man did what was right in their own eyes. That's called chaos... We need to stop voting for lunatics... Number 3. Which is the third installment of What is known here at this church as the Trinity of truth. Abortion, Natural Marriage, and the Christian should always vote for the defense of Israel."

Appendix H10

Jack Hibbs, "What Is the Christian Vote? - Results!," Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, Nov. 9, 2016

URL: <https://youtu.be/f3XBBhTHsTM>,

URL2: <https://vimeo.com/191108597> (Accessed Feb. 27, 2018).

SERMON NOTES: https://www.calvarycch.org/media_files/notes/JHX410.pdf

01m13s. Declared "a night of thanksgiving to God and praise."

18m55s Do all to the Glory of god. You can't sit out the vote. When babies' lives are stake, when the Supreme Court choices are at stake, when liberty is at stake, and when the existence of you and I being able to have this Sunday morning dialogue is at stake, Christian sit idle."

What policies will win the day?

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24m07s "God has laid it out very clear that he abortion the murdering of children." Natural Marriage

37m30s "Pure emotionalism versus facts. Our culture is broken because we've gotten our eyes off of facts and reality. We've departed from science and we are in some no man's land now... The bible says when Israel had no king every man did what was right in their own eyes. That's called chaos... We need to stop voting for lunatics." "Number 3. Which is the third installment of What is known here at this church as the Trinity of truth. Abortion, Natural Marriage, and the Christian should always vote for the defense of Israel."

Appendix V - Valencia sermons

Appendix V1

Sunday morning sermon on Romans 1:16-28,

by Senior Pastor Matt Valencia, May 10, 2015

10m55s Barna says "Most people who attend a Christian church can not explain or define the gospel biblically"

14:39 John Stott https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stott

16:20 Christian polarization

39m35s "As people try to suppress the truth, one of the ways ways that the truth rises up that people have to fight against, is general revelation. Now what is general revelation? Specific revelation is this book [holding up his bible], the Bible... General revelation is how God reveals himself to people even outside of his word. Let's read this in verses 19-21...

[19] because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. [20] For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, [21] because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

God reveals things to people. His invisible attributes are clearly seen. We know that is Psalm 19, that the Heavens declare the glory of god. So there are things that God reveals to all people, in all places, everywhere. When I was teaching in public high school, we went through this section on logic. I really loved going through this section on logic. I was teaching in an English lit class. And I was teaching about how to look at fact versus opinion, and how to form logical thoughts. This topic came up, because the students were kind of interested in it, and they started talking about it. It also came up in a Bible literature class that I had taught. We talked about this question. Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Doesn't that seem like an easy question, right? But you'd be amazed at how teaching all the way back in the 90s, that I'd have high school students that'd say 'Nah. There really is no right and wrong. It just depends on what you think. It's just up to you. If you think it's right, it's right'... [Valencia give hypothetical where young track star pushes over an old lady in order to get the last seat on the bus, and most of his students conceded that was wrong]... We suppress truth. There is right and wrong. God has built in to us in any culture that you go into, any part of the world-- There are some cultural mores and standards of morality, that culturally it's right in this culture, and wrong in this culture, but in every culture that your go to around the world, murder just for the sake of murder... is

wrong in every culture... To say that there is no such thing as right and wrong is to suppress truth and make life nonsensical..."

43m50s Makes intelligent design argument. "What about intelligent design? I think about DNA... You look at a single cell, something called a flagella ... there's this irreducible complexity ...

44m35s "If everything is random

45m00s "It was Darwin who said that over the course of time we are going to see millions of transitional forms... But we don't have billions or millions of transitional forms..."

45m55s "What about beauty?..." A sunset is beautiful everywhere.

46m30s "We have to push that truth down... I have to ... cover my ears and cover my eyes and say I won't believe..."

47m50s "Verse 22:

[22] Professing to be wise, they became fools, [23] and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. [24] Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, [25] who exchanged the truth of God for the lie,

It doesn't say a lie, it says "the lie"

and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

49m30s "So what is 'the lie'? The lie all the way back in Genesis 3 it this: I can be God."

[26] For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. [27] Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. [28] And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting"

50m22s "Let me just pause here..."

52m45s "When it comes to homosexuality, I think there are two mistakes that people can make... One of the mistakes is not calling it sin... Charles Spurgeon [() English evangelical pastor] wouldn't even read this part of Romans publicly in church..."

53m30s "Now, it [homosexuality] is not only not unthinkable, but it is so socially acceptable that to not accept that is to be thought of as bigoted... Narrow-minded, and hateful..."

53m55s "The second mistake ... [is] we could categorize it as a greater sin than other sins... There is a list of 21 things.. that god lists that break down a society."

Appendix V2

Sunday morning sermon on Rev. 3:14-22: Lukewarm and Liking It,

by Senior Pastor Matt Valencia, May 22, 2016

URL: <https://bit.ly/2w6QYdT>

04m40s "I see Laodicea as representative of much of the church today, especiall in America. "

08m02s "They [Laodicean] just wanted to do things their way. Did ever hear Frank Sinatra's famous song, 'I did it my way'? It's absolutely terrible theology."

Rev 3:14 "Beginning of the creation of god"

16m10s "Beginning of the creation of god" tied to John 1:3

18m10s "You know what really, really blows me away is that there are churches today that don't believe in the deity of Christ. They don't believe that Jesus is God. They don't believe that he is DNA the son of God who came in the form of man, a 100% man, a 100% God. They don't believe that, they don't think that... Why do they sometimes have names in the names of their church with Jesus in it when they believe that Jesus is who he says that he is."

19m10s "One group, I call them Team Jesus, like Jesus is God, we believe in the Bible, and there's another group that says you know he's a great teacher, I'm not sure he was God and the Bible has myth and it has all these other things and it's inspirational. I don't know what that Team is but it's not Team Jesus because they've lost a sense of who Jesus is."

28m37s "Jesus himself is the one that say 'I hate your indifference. I hate your indifference'"

28m50s "Elie Wiesel ... says 'the opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Elie_Wiesel]"

35m20s Santa Cruz most expensive place to buy a home.

39m45s "[Charles] Spurgeon says this... "

45m50s critique of the rich

48m40s Agape John 3:16

51m10s "When I was a high school student, I had become a Christian that summer, ...
I'm running for [ASB] president ... Baldwin Park High School and [William]
Workman High School joined us ... welcome to West Covina High School"

Appendix V3

Sunday morning sermon on Rev. 4: [This World Is Not Our Home],

by Senior Pastor Matt Valencia, May 29, 2016

URL: <https://bit.ly/2HLZeBo>

Recounts the messages to the 7 churches.

02m49s "Tolerance doesn't mean your beliefs are equal to my beliefs... It means we love people even with different beliefs... When it comes to tolerance, we are to hold fast to the truth. An early church historian [Rupertus Meldenius] wrote this: 'In the essentials, unity; in the non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity. In the essentials of the Christian Church, we should be unified. Jesus is God, he came in the form of a man, he died for our sins, he rose again, we're saved by grace through faith alone, and that's it, not of works lest anyone should boast. There are some essentials of our faith that we should be unified in. But then there's going to be some differences. People will have a different eschatology, people have different views about the nature of the gifts of the holy spirit. There is going to be some of those non-essentials in which there is liberty. But in all things there should be charity..."

05m50s "Do any of you remember a book by a guy named Hal Lindsey. Anyone know what it was called? [someone in the audience names it]. 'The Late Great Planet Earth.' ... In the 90s, there was a series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. What is that called? Left Behind. If you read those books, some of our kids had the children's version of those books, they kind of dealt with that. When most people think of Revelation, they think of those aspects of the Book of Revelation."

06m38s "When we look at our world today, is this all that there is? Is this it? We have elections that are coming up... This is going to be one of the most controversial elections in our history... When we open up to the book of revelation one of the things it reminds of is that it reminds that God is still in control, no matter what happens in this world."

09m11s "Some people open up the book of revelation with fear... So what I'm going to do is I'm going to move to Idaho, I'm going dig a well, I'm going to buy property, get guns, we're going to make a compound."

09m53s "My brother... senior year of high school ... why study? Jesus is coming back."

10m37s "There's another attitude that I hope that we do have... It's hopeful. I hope that when we read the book of Revelation that we're motivated to reach people. I hope that when we read the book of Revelation that we're looking for Jesus's return. I hope

that it brings comfort and hope knowing that he's in control and that he hasn't left us behind, and he's not just going to leave us in this world without this blessed hope and expectation."

11m40s "Are we living in last days?"

13m19s "Biblical prophecy is real and it's true. It's one of the things that sets this book [holds up his Bible] apart from any other religious book... So when we read the Bible, prophecy is the assurance that this is a supernatural, holy spirit inspired book. It shows us that God keeps his promises."

14m20s "One of my good friends is a pastor here in Aptos, his view of Preterism... all of the book of revelation has already taken place during that first century... Instead of reading future things, we're reading church history."

23m03s brings in "John 10.7" to explain revelation 4.
24:35s brings in 1 Thes 4:16-17

25m35s "When I was at Azuza Pacific University, we did this thing called Walkabout. Walkabout was a training to become an RA they take you on an 8-day backpacking experience... One of the trails we went on was called the Hemlock Trail
"

43m08s [Closing Prayer] "Lord,... I'd pray that you'd remind us that **this world is not our home**"

Appendix V4

Sunday morning sermon on Rev. 5, by Senior Pastor Matt Valencia, June 5, 2016

URL: <https://bit.ly/2w7ETFi>

Christian Leaders Network (Evangelical)

01m40s "St Boniface ... fields of iron really hard to plant ... Boniface send me to that place

02m10s "planting a church in Santa Cruz is like planting seeds in fields of iron" "have to plow together"

03m27s "learning to hear god's voice"

04m04s "The Rooted Experience" graphic

11m03s "There are four views... We're taking ... the old testament and applying it the new testament"

11m19s "There are different views of the book of revelation"

1. "The Preterist view" "most of the prophecies in the book of revelation were fulfilled during the time of the Roman Empire"

2. "There's the Historicist view... all of these things are events in history. In the Reformation, they really took to the historicist view that the prophecies have been fulfilled throughout history and are still being fulfilled today."

12m05s 3. "We have the futurist view" "most of these prophecies from chapter 4 to the end of the book are yet to be fulfilled"

4. "There's the spiritual view that most of these things are symbolic"

26m26s "Death culture"

Appendix V5

20160828_Rev19

URL: <https://bit.ly/2JRk0Qy>

4m00s

Babylon is false belief

5m30

False belief, especially in America, especially in California, especially here in Northern California, this sense of materialism.

Appendix V6

20160911_Rev21_Valencia

05m45s-07m20s Reads Rev 21:1-9

07m32s Prayer "We want to pray for comfort for Wayne's family [a just deceased member of the church] and we ask God that they would hold deep within their hearts the hope of heaven, the confident expectation of heaven. We pray that we would do the same."

08m0s "Revelation chapter 21 is why the gospel is so important to preach."

10m53s "It says in Is 65.17, 'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind' [NKJV]"

It says in Second Peter 3, 12 & 13 'looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.' ... Everything is going to be made new."

51m05s Slide: "Heaven is real; Jesus is the Only way in; It's better than you can imagine; Love people enough to show/tell them."

51m10s "**Live for thing that matter in eternity.**"

Revelation 21

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

‘See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.’

5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’

Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' 6Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. 7Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. 8But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death.'

Vision of the New Jerusalem

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' 10And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. 11It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. 12It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites; 13on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 The angel who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17He also measured its wall, one hundred and forty-four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using. 18The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. 19The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20the fifth onyx, the sixth cornelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. 27But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Appendix V7

Wednesday night sermon on Genesis 2 by Senior Pastor Matt Valenica, Sept. 28, 2016

The Regeneration Church, Scotts Valley, CA

URL: <https://goo.gl/V7QDBQ>

2m10s "The pinnacle of creation is people. The pinnacle of creation is Adam and Eve created in his image. And it says in Genesis 1:26 [NKJV] "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' Remember that God created us in his image unlike any other beings in creation. And contrary to what people say today, **we are not animals!**" Valencia then complains about educational displays at the Monterey Bay Aquarium and at zoos referring to 'you, the human animal,' and it drives me crazy because **we aren't animals, we're human beings created in the image of God...** we're different than those animals. We have reason. We have guilt. A lion doesn't kill a zebra out there in the Serengeti going 'I just feel so bad I had to do this but I was hungry.' There's no thinking about it. It's survival. So consider this, we're not just another animal. In verse 27 [of chapter 1], 'God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created them.' Now listen to this: 'male and female He created them. **Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**'"

06m08s "This is where the first law of thermodynamics starts... We see that God rested on the seventh day. Why did he rest?

8m12s "Jesus is the lord of the sabbath...

15m48s "**To Adam only was given a spirit that was breathed in by God, not the animals, but Adam...** Now Adam was not born into sin but later on we see that in sin the spiritual part of a person is dead. That's why we have to be born again. That's why we have to be regenerated by the spirit of God, to inherit the kingdom of God and to see heaven. For the unbeliever, unless you open up and believe and humble yourself, there's no life spiritually speaking. In fact, the bible teaches that those who have not been regenerated are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins."

16m45s "We sometimes just look at a person's life. **There are very kind people, nice people, people who are generally philanthropic and do things to help other people out, that if that person is not regenerated by the spirit of God, then that person is spiritually dead.**"

Appendix V8

Wednesday night sermon on Romans 1 by Senior Pastor Matt Valenica, Oct. 18, 2017

The Regeneration Church, Scotts Valley, CA

URL: <https://bit.ly/2FDuzEB>

39m20s "They are without excuse."

40m00s "Intelligent design" redux "second law of thermodynamics"

41m30s "I can't believe that just happened. So we both have faith. Your faith is probably stronger than my faith. [Perhaps alluding to this book by evangelical authors Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist" (2004)]"

47m11s "The sin of pornography and the sin of adultery would probably be much greater than the sin of homosexuality in the church today..."

Appendix V9

Wednesday night sermon on Revelation 19: Hallelujah to the Lamb

by Senior Pastor Matt Valenica, Dec. 20, 2017,

The Regeneration Church, Scotts Valley, CA

URL: <https://bit.ly/2kxBirt>

35m50s “You can be saved and forgiven or you can judged and that is totally up to you”

36m12s “Jesus is real. He's not some magical sky fairy that takes everyone to heaven. Those who reject him say they have there own spirituality and they reject his love, and he continues to reach out to them [but] judgment will come.”

Appendix FG-CCSGM - Arizona Calvary Chapel focus group

Focus Group, Calvary Chapel, Saving Grace Mesa (Arizona) - May 14, 2017

01m45s "The doctrine was more sound, it was Chapter by Chapter, Verse by Verse"

08m10s "Looking for a church that would teach the entire bible."

18m00s Woman: "How long is a school lecture."

19m07s "You've listened to chuck smith? Great guy... My son was going to bible college and one of the things you have to do [is to listen to] the Chuck tapes... Very monotone, they would actually speed up the tapes... It's what they're teaching... No huge spark in the way he spoke."

After explaining ECI and Cornwall:

25m17s "I look at a lot the stuff you just mentioned as a Christian... A lot of that ... I look at it as more of a political thing... I'm a Christian first... Every thing you mentioned is a liberal point of view. It's not a Christian point of view. I set my faith on Christ and Christ alone, not on the political views of the world we live in..."

[26m42s] "This has become more of a political thing ... and more of a controlling thing. If you look at climate change, it's not just be concerned about the planet, everything else has to change along with it. You have to talk about population, you have to talk about a lot of different things... It's a control thing... Twenty years ago, this wasn't an issue but now it's become an issue... My brother, he says he's a Christian but yet he has some political views, and I say this isn't sound with the gospel... If I take God out of the equation completely, do what you want; but if I put God in the equation,... there's accountability; there's boundaries."

28m25s Woman: "He [the preceding male speaker] is speaking what we all think."

28m48s Woman: "It doesn't belong in the church... It's not in the Bible. It's not to be taught. It shouldn't be there. It doesn't belong there... [29m06s] Our truth is what's in the Bible, and if it's not in the Bible, it shouldn't be taught in the church."

29m15s Man: "The Lord's the same yesterday, today, and forevermore [alluding to the New Testament passage, Hebrews 13:8]. You're speaking of climate change and such. I remember back in the 70s when I was in school. The big hype was we're going into another ice age... If we take our focus off of the Lord and his word that he has there and we look at what is surrounding us, then we don't accept that the Lord is in control of all things... It's all politics."

30m40s Another Man: "We as Christians are obligated by God to help the earth, and the animals and everything else, because that's the way it was originally set up... We are concerned about our earth, our society, especially the poor, but it's all become political as a way for a lot of people to make a lot of money off of it."

31m13s Zaleha: "Have any of you heard of Katharine Hayhoe?" No one had.

32m33s "It [climate change concern] is not a focus point... because we live in a world that goes through cycles."

33m22s Man [Cory]: "It's not an issue that affects my life... I know that God is the

creator of the universe... He's in charge, and he's fully aware of what's going on. I also know the days that we are living in... I'm a personal believer in last days... In the Bible, it talks about the weather, the changes that's going to take place, the earthquakes, ... and we're living in those days. If I turn around and focus on global warming, instead of saying, 'Wait a second, if I believe the Bible is the word of God... it says there are going to be earthquakes, there's going to be droughts, there's going to be famines.' Well, which one am I going to believe. Obviously, it's going to be the gospel... The world is winding down. Christ is coming back. This is where we're at. This is going to happen. It's biblical. So if I turn around and say I'm going to get caught up ... in [global warming], you're not going to stop something that's already happening. If scripture is true, if the gospel is true, then this is what's going to happen... It's going to take place whether [or not] we put a different president in office."

35m10s Woman: "We live in the world but we are not of the world. We're of God's matters and what he wants us to do.... If we're worrying about global warming, we're not worried about someone over here that needs saving. We have different priorities." 37m00s Zaleha explains the Bill Moyers PBS show from 2006 on green evangelicals and on Calvin Beisner.

37m50s Man [Cory]: "This [world] is temporary for you. At some point, you're going to face death. Everyone does. The thing of it is ... when I become a born again Christian, and I know that I know that's not the end, that I do go on beyond that. This planet, it will pass. It does have a beginning and an end... I'm very secure in what I believe... because it's not only been confirmed in the word and the holy spirit does [confirm my beliefs] too... [38m39s] To sit there and say I'm concerned about the planet, is it going to last another 500 years, my ultimate thing is I'm not concerned about the planet lasting another 500 years. I'm concerned about that person across the street that's going to be condemned for eternity if he doesn't have that relationship with Christ, because that's real, and this planet will pass. If you're not sure of that, go back to the ruins in Rome... God is the creator, he created all this, ... at some point this is going to be gone and renewed [probably alluding to 2 Peter 3:10-13]. I have got to believe that as a Christian, not as a Calvary Chapel, but as a Christian..., as a Bible believing Christian."

41m18s "All the prophecy of it [in the Old Testament] is 100% accurate and we're coming to the end out of everything that was said was going to happen has taken place... The evidence is overwhelming that God is in control. It may not seem like it... [With] Jewish people..., it wasn't until our generation that they became a nation again. [43m20s] Scripture says those who bless his chosen people will be blessed. Those who do not will be cursed. As a Christian we should stand by everything that represents with Israel."

45m44s "Everything in prophecy points toward Israel ... in the last days."

51m53s Male speaker: "[Catholics] call themselves Christians, Mormons call themselves Christians, some Jehovah Witness sects call themselves Christians... [but they're not]."

Appendix EV - Evolution court cases

Court cases concerning evolution

Epperson v. Arkansas (1968)

Overtured a Arkansas statute that prohibited the teaching of evolution, finding that the statute was intended to reinforce fundamentalist Christian beliefs, contrary to scientific evidence

Segraves v. State of California (1981)

Upheld state educational standards directing the teaching of evolution, against a claim that teach evolution infringed on Segraves and his children's free exercise of religion. Court found that the states standards already accommodated Segraves religious beliefs while still fulfilling the need to teach evolutionary science in the state's classrooms.

Edwards v. Aguillard, (1987)

Overtured Louisiana's "Creationism Act" which prohibited the teaching of evolutionary science unless accompanied by instruction in "creation science." The Court held tha, by advancing the non-empirical concept that a supernatural being created humanity, it was endorsing a particular religious belief. Court relied on the Lemon test.

**Webster v. New Lenox School District, Illinois
(federal 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, 1990)**

Prohibiting a teacher from teaching creationism fulfills the school's responsibility to ensure that the establishment clause is not violated, and does not violate the free speech rights of the teacher who desired to include creationism in biology class.

**Peloza v. Capistrano School District,
(federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, 1994)**

a teacher's First Amendment right to free exercise of religion is not violated by a school district's requirement that evolution be taught in biology classes. The 9th Circuit rejected Peloza's attempt to define "evolutionism" as a "religion," the Court found that the school had mere required its science teachers actual scientific theories in biology class.

Freiler v. Tangipahoa Parish Board of Education,
(federal trial court in Louisiana, 1997)

Invalidated a policy requiring teachers to read aloud a disclaimer whenever they taught about evolution: "In mandating this disclaimer, the School Board is endorsing religion by disclaiming the teaching of evolution in such a manner as to convey the message that evolution is a religious viewpoint that runs counter to ... other religious views." Also ruled that "intelligent design" is equivalent to "creation science".

(Freiler v Tangipahoa Board of Education, No. 94-3577

(E.D. La. Aug. 8, 1997). The case affirmed by 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Selman et al. v. Cobb County School District (Georgia)
(federal trial judge, 2005)

A school district in Florida put the following evolution warning label on its biology books: "This textbook contains material on evolution. Evolution is a theory, not a fact, regarding the origin of living things. This material should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully, and critically considered." The court ruled that this was an "establishment of religion."

Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover School District
(federal Pennsylvania trial judge John E. Jones III, 2005)

Invalidated an Intelligent Design policy, which stated "students will be made aware of gaps/problems in Darwin's Theory and other theories of evolution including, but not limited to, intelligent design." Teachers were also required to announce to their biology classes that "Intelligent Design is an explanation of the origin of life that differs from Darwin's view. The reference book *Of Pandas and People* is available for students to see if they would like to explore this view in an effort to gain an understanding of what Intelligent Design actually involves. As is true with any theory, students are encouraged to keep an open mind."

Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover School District, 2005)

(federal Pennsylvania trial judge John E. Jones III

Judge Jones ruled that it was "abundantly clear that the Board's ID [Intelligent Design] Policy violates the Establishment Clause" and that "ID cannot uncouple itself from its creationist, and thus religious, antecedents."

http://ncse.com/files/pub/legal/kitzmiller/highlights/2005-12-20_Kitzmiller_decision.pdf

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/evolution/intelligent-design-trial.html>

Appendix PC8 - The 8 Points of Progressive Christianity - 2011, 2003, 1994
<https://progressivechristianity.org/the-8-points/>

2011– By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who

2003– By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who

1994– By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who:

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;

1. Have found an approach to God through the life and teachings of Jesus,

1. Proclaim Jesus Christ as our Gate to the realm of God;

2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;

2. Recognize the faithfulness of other people who have other names for the way to God's realm, and acknowledge that their ways are true for them, as our ways are true for us,

2. Recognize the faithfulness of other people who have other names for the gateway to God's realm;

3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
Believers and agnostics,
Women and men,
Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
Those of all classes and abilities;

4. Invite all people to participate in our community and worship life without insisting that they become like us in order to be acceptable (including but not limited to):
believers and agnostics,
conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
women and men,

those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
those of all races and cultures,
those of all classes and abilities,
those who hope for a better world and those who have lost hope;

4. Invite all sorts and conditions of people to join in our worship and in our common life as full partners, including (but not limited to):
believers and agnostics,
conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
homosexuals and heterosexuals,
females and males,
the despairing and the hopeful,
those of all races and cultures, and
those of all classes and abilities,
without imposing on them the necessity of becoming like us;

3. [Deleted; no equivalent]

3. Understand the sharing of bread and wine in Jesus' name to be a representation of an ancient vision of God's feast for all peoples,

3. Understand our sharing of bread and wine in Jesus's name to be a representation of God's feast for all peoples;

4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;

5. Know that the way we behave toward one another and toward other people is the fullest expression of what we believe,

5. Think that the way we treat one another and other people is more important than the way we express our beliefs;

5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;

6. Find more grace in the search for understanding than we do in dogmatic certainty - more value in questioning than in absolutes;

6. Find more grace in the search for meaning than in absolute certainty, in the questions than in the answers;

6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;

7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;

7. Form ourselves into communities dedicated to equipping one another for the work we feel called to do:

striving for peace and justice among all people,
protecting and restoring the integrity of all God's creation, and
bringing hope to those Jesus called the least of his sisters and brothers; and

7. See ourselves as a spiritual community in which we discover the resources required for our work in the world:

striving for justice and peace among all people;
bringing hope to those Jesus called the least of his sisters and brothers;

8. Commit to a path of lifelong learning, compassion, and selfless love.

8. Recognize that being followers of Jesus is costly, and entails selfless love, conscientious resistance to evil, and renunciation of privilege.

8. Recognize that our faith entails costly discipleship, renunciation of privilege, and conscientious resistance to evil—as has always been the tradition of the church.

Appendix R - Defining Religion

Defining Religion

The late religious studies scholar, James C. Livingston, in his still widely used introductory undergraduate religion textbook, listed the following nine definitions of religion posited by a variety of 19th and 20th century theorists:

- A. Religion is the belief in an ever-living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding moral relations with mankind.—James Martineau;
- B. The essence of religion consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence.—Friedrich Schleiermacher;
- C. Religion is that which grows out of, and gives expression to, experience of the holy in its various aspects.—Rudolf Otto;
- D. Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands.—Immanuel Kant;
- E. The religious is any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of its general and enduring value.—John Dewey;
- F. Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life—Paul Tillich;
- G. Religion centers upon an awareness and response to a reality that transcends ourselves and our world whether the 'direction' of transcendence be beyond or within or both ... this object is characterized more generally as a cosmic power, or more specifically as a personal God.—John Hick;
- H. Religion is comparable to a childhood neurosis.—Sigmund Freud;
- I. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature. . . . It is the opium of the people. Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself.—Karl Marx.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2009), 5.

The *Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, listed several more definitions that have also been influential in the study and/or practice of various religions through history:

Religion is a daughter of Hope and Fear, explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable (Ambrose Bierce);

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them (Emile Durkheim)³⁶⁶;

It seems best to fall back at once on this essential source, and simply to claim, as a minimum definition of religion, the belief in Spiritual Beings (Edward Tylor);

Psychoanalytic investigation of the unconscious mental life reveals that religious beliefs correspond closely with the phantasies of infantile life, mainly unconscious ones, concerning the sexual life of one's parents and the conflicts this gives rise to (Sigmund Freud);

Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness (Alfred North Whitehead);

A brief, handy definition of religion is considerably more difficult than a definition of evolution, so, for limited purposes only, let me define religion as a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence (Robert Bellah);

Viewed systemically, religion can be differentiated from other culturally constituted institutions by virtue only of its reference to superhuman beings... (Melford Spiro);

Without further ado, then, a religion is:

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Clifford Geertz)³⁶⁷;

Religion is the human attitude towards a sacred order that includes within it all being—human or otherwise— i.e., belief in a cosmos, the meaning of which both includes and transcends man (Peter Berger);

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world (Letter of James).”³⁶⁸

Mark C. Taylor provides this definition which has been much commented upon in

³⁶⁶ Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain, Free Press Paperbacks (New York,: Free Press, 1965), 62.

³⁶⁷ Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90.

³⁶⁸ Bowker, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, xv.

contemporary religious studies:

“Religion is an emergent, complex adaptive network of symbols, myths, and rituals that, on the one hand, figure schemata of feeling, thinking, and acting in ways that lend life meaning and purpose and, on the other, disrupt, dislocate and disfigure every stabilizing structure.”³⁶⁹

(See Caputo for a useful explication of Taylor’s theory).³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Mark C. Taylor, *After God*, Religion and Postmodernism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 12.

³⁷⁰ John D. Caputo, "Review of Mark C. Taylor's 'after God'," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77, no. 1 (2009).

Appendix CNSA - Collective Narcissism Scale Assessment

Questions used for Collective Narcissism Scale Assessment

1. I wish other groups would more quickly recognize authority of my group.
2. My group deserves special treatment.
3. I will never be satisfied until my group gets all it deserves.
4. I insist upon my group getting the respect that is due to it.
5. It really makes me angry when others criticize my group.
6. If my group had a major say in the world, the world would be a much better place.
8. Not many people seem to fully understand the importance of my group.
9. The true worth of my group is often misunderstood.
10. I love my group almost as much as I love myself.
11. My group is extraordinary.
12. My group stands out positively among other groups.
13. I like when my group is a center of attention.
14. My group rarely fails.
15. People in my group are more attractive than others.
16. I want my group to amount to something in the eyes of the world.
17. My group has all predispositions to influence and direct others.
18. If it only wanted, my group could convince other groups to do almost anything.
19. My group has made significant contributions to humanity.
20. Other groups are envious of my group.
21. My group is a great influence over other groups.
22. My group never forgives an insult caused by other groups.
23. I am envious of other groups' good fortune.

Appendix WS-ReGen - worship songs

The Regeneration Church (Calvary Chapel) - Scotts Valley, Calif.

5/22/2016-6/26/2016

Worship service songs performed by the church band and sung by the congregation, with lyrics displayed on the large screen, over scenic vistas.

May 22, 2016 - Lukewarm and Liking It

9:57a I'm going free (jailbreak) - Benji Cowart/Jacob Sooter/Tyler Miller,
Video playing before the ReGen church band starts playing, Vertical Church Band

<https://www.essentialworship.com/songs/vertical-church-band/im-going-free-jailbreak#LIVE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2ZMjmZMo1o>

#1 Holy, by Brenton Brown (2001)

<https://www.worshipsong.com/music/songs/songdetails/holy>

<https://www.praisecharts.com/songs/details/1896/holy-sheet-music/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQRUQWiEJBk>

#2 10:05a Everlasting God (2005), by Brenton Brown, Ken Riley (Isaiah 40:28-31)

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/everlasting-god/>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4556538/everlasting-god>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuudVoMyZyE>

#3 10:10a You're Beautiful (2007), by Phil Wickham

<http://www.e-chords.com/chords/phil-wickham/youre-beautiful>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZEltZXQpuM

10:15am Welcome prayer, Bill Bjorkman

First greeting with Michael and Melissa]

#4 10:22a "Be my refuge", by Antonye Holyde, formerly of CC Moro Bay, now London, UK

10:30a Pastor Matt talks about Raul Ries

<http://www.calvarygs.org/ministries/kung-fu-san-soo/>

11:30a "Fall Afresh" (2011) by Jeremy Riddle

<https://bethelmusic.com/chords-and-lyrics/the-loft-sessions-fall-afresh/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfPnK6dv3pY>

May 29, 2016

#1 10:00am “Holy is the Lord” (2003, written by Chris Tomlin & Louie Giglio)

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/holy-is-the-lord>

<https://www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/mtd.asp?ppn=MN0088166>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7J2v2U_hrU

#2 10:05am “This Is Amazing Grace,” written by Josh Farro, Phil Wickham, Jeremy Riddle

<https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Bethel-Music-feat-Jeremy-Riddle/This-Is-Amazing-Grace>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bn5zk3yCRr0>

#3 10:09am “Forever Reign” by Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan

Scripture Reference(s): Lamentations 5:19, Isaiah 9:7

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/forever-reign/>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/5639997/forever-reign>

#4 10:20am “Adoration” by Brenton Brown

Scripture Reference(s): Psalm 119:35-37

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/adoration-brenton-brown/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F99vIecAiWc>

#5 11:30 “Let my words be few,” by Matt Redman

Scripture Reference(s): Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

<http://worshiptogether.com/songs/let-my-words-be-few/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OipSg-ERI50>

#6 11:37am “Agnus Dei”, also “Holy, Holy” by Michael W. Smith

<http://wordtoworship.com/song/502>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0Ke8p93QRk>

“Revelation Song” by Kari Jobe

Scripture: Rev. 4:3, 4:5, 4:8, 5:12-13

<http://genius.com/8201151>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGgX_oqdib4

June 1, 2016 - Daniel 1

#1 7:00pm “Hallelujah (Your Love Is Amazing)” (2000), Words and Music by
Brenton Brown and Brian Doerksen
Psalms

<http://wordtoworship.com/song/2024>

[http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Brian_Doerksen:Hallelujah_\(Your_Love_Is_Amazing\)](http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Brian_Doerksen:Hallelujah_(Your_Love_Is_Amazing))

<http://us.search.ccli.com/songs/3091812/hallelujah>

#2 7:04pm “We Fall Down” (1998) by Chris Tomlin

<http://wordtoworship.com/song/1388>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/2437367/we-fall-down>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FIZUyAr9_E

#3 7:08pm “You Alone” by David Crowder and Jack Parker

Scripture Reference(s): Matthew 7:11

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/you-alone/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPkNXv8BL3I>

#4 8:03pm “Lord, I Need You” (2013) by Daniel Carson, Kristian Stanfill, Christy
Nockels, Matt Maher, Jesse Reeves

<https://worshipwithscripture.com/2013/11/19/songs-scripture-lord-i-need-you-matt-maher/>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/5925687/lord-i-need-you>

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/lord-i-need-you/>

similar to traditional 1872 hymn, “I need thee every hour”

https://hymnary.org/text/i_need_thee_every_hour_most_gracious_lor

http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/I_Need_Thee_Every_Hour/

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XO-I8XgU5ac> [Mormon Choir]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKsr49csFYk> [Mormon Tabernacle Choir-

Nearer My God to Thee]

June 5, 2016

#1 10:00am “Let Everything That Has Breath” (1997) by Matt Redman

Scripture Reference(s): Psalm 150:6

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/let-everything-that-has-breath/>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/2430979/let-everything-that-has-breath>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7lvyd1JdQU>

#2 10:04am “Your Love Never Fails” (2008) by Anthony Skinner, Chris McClarney

Scripture Reference(s): 1 Corinthians 13:8, 2 Corinthians 9:8

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/your-love-never-fails/>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/5337172/your-love-never-fails>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEquqQI3WwA>

#3 10:07am “After All (Holy)” (2012) David Crowder, Mark Waldrop, Matt Maher, Mike Dodson

Scripture Reference(s): Isaiah 6:2-4

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/after-all-holy>
<http://us.search.ccli.com/songs/6191221/after-all-holy>
<http://wordtoworship.com/song/9377>
<https://worshipwithscripture.com/2013/05/13/songs-scripture-after-all-holy-david-crowder-mark-waldrop-matt-maher-mike-dodson/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4452I4veIY0>

#4 10:24am “Holy and Anointed One” (1998) by John Barnett

<http://vineyardsongs.com/songs/holy-and-anointed-one/>
<http://wordtoworship.com/song/3222>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/164361/holy-and-anointed-one>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olBnC2nxCNw>

#5 11:36am “Beautiful Things” 2009 by Michael Gungor & Lisa Gungor

Scripture Reference(s): Isaiah 65:17

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/beautiful-things>
<http://us.search.ccli.com/songs/5665521/beautiful-things>
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/emergentvillage/2013/12/gungor-the-postmodern-anthem-band/>
http://www.newreleasetoday.com/article.php?article_id=384
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyPBtExE4W0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIroFNU1Y-Y>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48T7wlp4fhI>

#6 11:39am “Holy is the Lord” (2003) by Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio
Scripture Reference(s): Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 5:13b

Repeat from May 29, 2016

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/holy-is-the-lord>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/4158039/holy-is-the-lord>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7J2v2U_hrU

June 12, 2016

#1 10:00am “Hosanna (Praise Is Rising)” (2005) by Brenton Brown, Paul Baloche

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/hosanna-praise-is-rising/>
<http://songselect.ccli.com/songs/4662491/hosanna-praise-is-rising>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAaQ5EEXidc>

#2 10:07am “Cannons” (2007) by Philip Wickham

<http://www.digitalsongsandhymns.com/songs/3019>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Dhvk5ojYHI>

#3 10:10am “Ever Be” (2015) by Kalley Heiligenthal

<http://genius.com/Bethel-music-ever-be-lyrics>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhasSpSBdEE>

#4 10:am “Your Great Name” (2008) by Michael Neale & Krissy Nordhoff

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11
http://www.newreleasetoday.com/article.php?article_id=543
<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=9ECCECNU>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us929FE6_-M

#5 11:34am “All The Poor And Powerless” (2011) written by: Leslie Jordan, David Leonard

<https://vimeo.com/15344436>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/5881130/all-the-poor-and-powerless>
<https://dcbplus.weebly.com/all-the-poor-and-powerless.html>
<http://wordtoworship.com/song/8997>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6fheuBf0Pk>

June 15, 2016 Daniel lesson #3

Opening song:

All Creatures Of Our God And King,

by Francis of Assisi (paraphrased by Wm. H. Draper)(1919)

Ralph Vaughn Williams (classical arrangement)

modern arrangement by David Crowder

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_Creatures_of_Our_God_and_King

<http://www.hymnary.org/text/all-creatures-of-our-god-and-king>

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/all-creatures-of-our-god-and-king/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSFK7UiH5Us>

<https://www.amazon.com/Passion-Hymns-Ancient-Modern/dp/B0001BS3KW>

#2 O Come to the Altar (2015), by Words and Music: Christopher Brown, Mack Brock, Steven

Furtick, and Wade Joye

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/elevationworship/ocometothealtar.html>

<https://www.essentialworship.com/songs/elevation-worship/o-come-altar>

https://youtu.be/rYQ5yXCc_CA

#3 Hosanna (aka, I See The King Of Glory) (2006), by Brooke Ligertwood

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/hillsongunited/hosanna.html>

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/hosanna-united/>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/4785835/hosanna>

#4 I am set free, by Tim Neufeld

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/allsonsdaughters/iamsetfree.html>

http://www.lyricsfreak.com/t/tim+neufeld/i+am+set+free_21087880.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9fzxHx7W9A>

Song by Bill Bjorkman as closing event at Wednesday services:

I love you, Lord, by Jill Klein (1978)

<http://www.songlyrics.com/laurie-klein/i-love-you-lord-lyrics/>

<https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Laurie-Klein/I-Love-You-Lord>

<http://staugustine.com/living/religion/2015-02-05/story-behind-song-i-love-you-lord#.V2RKOPkrLGg>

http://www.hymnary.org/text/i_love_you_lord_and_i_lift_my_voice

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw_uBn9zJfc

June 19, 2016

#1 10:00am “Holy” (unknown) by Eddie James (unconfirmed)

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/eddiejames/holy.html>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/essay-death%E2%80%94swallowed-victory>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGK4rBT72RA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGHrEyVtUHE>

#2 10:07am “This Is Amazing Grace,” written by Josh Farro, Phil Wickham, Jeremy Riddle

Repeat from May 29, 2016

<https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Bethel-Music-feat-Jeremy-Riddle/This-Is-Amazing-Grace>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bn5zk3yCRr0>

#3 10:11am “I hear the Savior say” (1865) by Elvina Mable Reynolds Hall (1822-1889) and music by John Thomas Grape (1834-1915)

https://www.hymnary.org/text/i_hear_the_savior_say_thy_strength_indee

<https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/997>

#4 10:22am “Find us Faithful” (1987) written by Jon Mohr

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/find-us-faithful>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/18259/find-us-faithful>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eERKnxzNzww>

#5 11:19am “All who thirsty” (1998) by Glenn Robertson and Brenton Brown

http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Kutless:All_Who_Are_Thirsty

<http://vineyardsongs.com/songs/all-who-are-thirsty>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJH9BLrN83U>

June 22, 2016 - Daniel, Chapter 4

#1 7:00pm “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”, words by Robert Robinson (1757), music by John Wyeth & Asahel Nettleton (1825)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come_Thou_Fount_of_Every_Blessing

<http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh400.sht>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax_NMWLEb6U

<https://www.hymnary.org/tune/nettleton>

#2 7:05pm “Christ is Risen” (2009) by Matt Maher, Mia Fieldes

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/5242683/christ-is-risen>

<https://www.essentialworship.com/songs/matt-maher/christ-risen>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8QVwC6RWUc>

#3 7:11pm “You Are My Hope”

by Antonye Holyde, formerly of CC Moro Bay, now London, UK

#4 8:15 “I Exalt Thee” by Jesus Culture (lyric and music authorship & date unclear)

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jesusculture/iexaltthee.html>

https://sonichits.com/video/Jesus_Culture_%26_Chris_Quilala/I_Exalt_Thee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-IY8VQpSTY>

<http://biblehub.com/psalms/97-9.htm>

Appears to be an expansion from the 1983 song by Pete Sanchez, popularized by Phil Driscoll

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Exalt_Thee

<http://www.lyricsera.com/1058938-lyrics-i-exalt-thee.html>

June 26, 2016

#1 10:01a Everlasting God (2005), by Brenton Brown, Ken Riley (Isaiah 40:28-31)

[Repeat from May 22, 2016](#)

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/everlasting-god/>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/4556538/everlasting-god>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuudVoMyZyE>

#2 10:05am “Blessed Be Your Name” (2002) by Matt and Beth Redman

<http://wordtoworship.com/song/14>

<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/3798438/blessed-be-your-name>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Qp11X6LKYY>

<https://worshipwithscripture.com/2014/09/04/songs-scripture-blessed-be-the-name-of-the-lord-matt-redman/>

#3 10:09am “Fill This House” (2012) by Judah & the Lion

<https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Judah-the-Lion/Fill-This-House>

<https://genius.com/Judah-and-the-lion-fill-this-house-lyrics>

<https://vimeo.com/55780644>

The Browsers Mission video (Peru)

#4 10:30am “Ever Be” (2015) by Kalley Heiligenthal

[Repeat from June 12, 2016](#)

<http://genius.com/Bethel-music-ever-be-lyrics>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhasSpSBdEE>

#5 11:29am “Fall Afresh” (2011) by Jeremy Riddle

[Repeat from May 22, 2016](#)

<http://www.worshipsong.com/music/songs/songdetails/fall-afresh>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/6032768/fall-afresh>

#6 11:35am “Because He Lives (Amen)” (2014) by Matt Maher et al.
<http://www.songlyrics.com/matt-maher/because-he-lives-amen-lyrics/>
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/because-he-lives-amen>
<https://songselect.ccli.com/songs/7027887/because-he-lives-amen>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBvU7arNhQs>

#7 11:38am “My Lighthouse” (2014) by Rend Collective
<http://www.metrolyrics.com/my-lighthouse-rend-collective-rend-collective-experiment-ml-video-6k3.html>
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/my-lighthouse/>
<http://us.search.ccli.com/songs/7002032/my-lighthouse>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itiB52mVJ9Y>

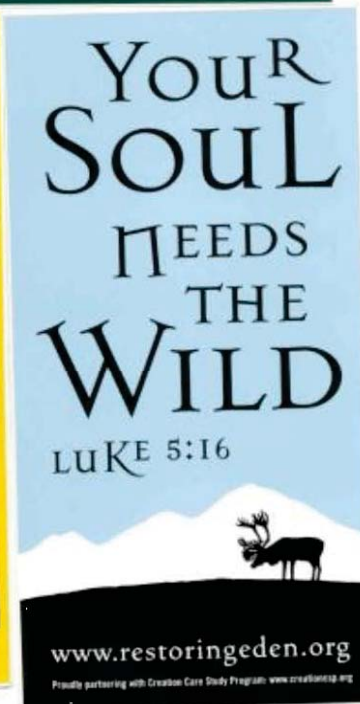
Proclaim software used by church bands at ReGen. <https://proclaimonline.com/>

Appendix RE - Restoring Eden bumper stickers



i ♥ GOD'S CREATION

restoringeden.org Proudly partnering with Creation Care
Study Program: www.creationcsp.org



**If you're pro-life,
be anti-coal**

(ask me why) www.justpower.org

EXTINCTION



ISN'T STEWARDSHIP

Proudly partnering with Creation Care Study Program: www.creationcsp.org

**IF YOU LOVE
THE CREATOR,
TAKE CARE
OF CREATION**

www.restoringeden.org Partnering with Creation Care Study Program www.creationcsp.org

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