

Hot Damned America: Evangelicalism and the Climate Change Policy Debate

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If evangelicals were to take climate change, the environmental issues, seriously, do it from a biblical standpoint—not a secular ideology here but from a biblical standpoint, developing their own voice—there’s no question Washington would pay heed.

—Reverend Richard Cizik, National Association of Evangelicals¹

Glaciers are melting and threatening the survival of polar bears, weather seems to be more extreme and erratic, and the global mean temperature appears to be steadily rising—all consequences, scientists argue, of global climate change. One could learn this much—and also that the United States is lagging far behind other industrial nations, particularly in the European Union, in addressing climate change—from Al Gore’s documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* or any number of news reports. But Gore and the news media have largely failed to acknowledge that a brewing sea change in the traditional political engagement among an unlikely group—evangelical Christians—perhaps represents America’s greatest hope for instituting climate change legislation. No longer focusing their political engagement almost exclusively on issues such as abortion and gay marriage, a segment of evangelical Christian leaders has broken rank with the politically conservative leadership and begun to address climate change in ways that suggest real possibility for change, both politically and in terms of faith. Yet this group continues to encounter strong resistance from such popular evangelical leaders as James Dobson and Charles Colson, who refuse to believe that climate change is an issue evangelicals are morally obligated to address and fear that it may become a wedge within evangelicalism, irreparably dividing what has been a fairly cohesive political force over the past quarter century.

An analysis of evangelical Christians’ role in climate change policy proves both urgent and fruitful for two main reasons. First, evangelicals have risen to a point of prominence wherein they seem to possess great influence in American politics, making their impact on future climate change policy potentially quite

significant. Considered simply as a voting bloc, evangelical Christians are a force to be reckoned with, making up roughly 30 percent of the American population.² Second, and perhaps more important, the response to climate change within the evangelical community has been quite discordant, thereby offering valuable insight into the complex and oft-misunderstood group labeled “evangelical.” It is important to realize, whether from the perspective of policymakers, environmentalists, or evangelicals, that, as a group wielding significant political capital, evangelicals are currently deeply divided on the issue of climate change policy. Like secular politicians and activists, evangelicals disagree on two main facets of decision making regarding climate change—economics and science. Unlike their secular counterparts, evangelicals address a unique third area that, for them, is the basis for all decision making: the scriptures. In large part because the Bible is open to interpretation when it comes to environmental issues, evangelicals are neither a monolithic mass nor inflexible in their environmental beliefs. While it is no doubt cliché to frame the issue in such a way, the fact remains that there are rhetorical, theological, and ideological battles to be won. Evangelicals are in the midst of not only deciding upon an appropriate response to climate change, but also whether or not that response is worth pursuing at the expense of or in addition to such steadfast evangelical political issues as abortion and gay rights.³

Despite sharing many common values, not all evangelicals map their spiritual beliefs onto political and social action in the same way; in fact, while all evangelicals are *theologically* conservative, they are not necessarily all *politically* conservative.⁴ Evangelicals interpret the scriptures diversely, sometimes emphasizing different chapters and verses in support of their worldview. Some place importance on personal responsibility and morality; these believers, typically cast as political conservatives, have dominated evangelical political agendas and media representations in recent history. Others tend to believe that social justice issues are more critical to following biblical teachings; these evangelicals are typically cast as politically liberal and marginal to the evangelical political leadership. While “conservative” and “liberal” are loaded terms politically, I nonetheless employ them throughout this essay as useful shorthand when speaking about evangelicals and their approaches to environmental stewardship. Here the terms simultaneously imply a distinct polarity on climate change policy while also affording the flexibility of a continuum that includes more moderate environmental views.

While there is certainly room for unique, more complex evangelical approaches to environmentalism, evangelical leadership has eschewed any sort

of productive dialectical discourse, instead tending to exhibit two distinct and irreconcilable positions.⁵ One group, which I will call liberal evangelical environmentalists, generally accepts the scientific claim that climate change is occurring in part due to anthropogenic effects and interprets biblical mandates to mean that action should be taken to reduce manmade carbon emissions and mitigate environmental impacts. Liberal evangelical environmentalists are represented by the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) and, most recently, the Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI). Among the group's foremost supporters are Rick Warren, best-selling author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*; Richard Cizik, NAE vice president of government affairs; Jim Ball, executive director of EEN; and Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals. The other group, which I will call conservative evangelical environmentalists, often remains skeptical of scientific evidence supporting the anthropogenic climate change theory and interprets biblical mandates to mean that no action should be taken to reduce emissions, even if climate change is occurring. Rather than attempt to mitigate environmental impacts—a prohibitively costly proposition, they argue—conservative evangelical environmentalists believe the more sensible approach is to promote economic development aiding adaptation to environmental changes.⁶ Conservative evangelical environmentalists are represented by the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES) and, more recently, the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (ISA).⁷ The most prominent ISA supporters are conservative evangelical heavy hitters such as Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries, and James Dobson, Focus on the Family founder. But the most vocal conservative evangelical environmentalist is E. Calvin Beisner, ISA spokesman and associate professor of historical theology and social ethics at Knox Theological Seminary, who almost exclusively outlines the conservative side's environmental theological underpinnings—a subject of paramount importance in evangelicalism, a faith whose bedrock is the Bible.⁸

Theory and Practice: Biblical Interpretations and Practical Applications

Evangelicals' biblical interpretation is crucial to their role in the climate change debate—and, more broadly, environmental stewardship—precisely because the Bible plays so central a role in evangelical faith. While liberal Protestants may tend to invoke more secular ethical or moral arguments for environmentalism, evangelical environmentalists—both liberal and conservative—return to the

Bible as their guiding text.⁹ Somewhat less clear is exactly how the Bible should be interpreted. Conflicting theological interpretations focus mainly on two different biblical principles—stewardship and concern for the poor.

The debate over biblical environmentalism has historically focused on how to reconcile the ideas of dominion and stewardship.¹⁰ In Genesis 1:28, humankind is given dominion over the environment: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” And in Genesis 2:15, man is commanded to be a steward to the garden: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”¹¹ The conservative perspective on these verses and others is articulated chiefly by E. Calvin Beisner, who argues that “linking these two commissions together—cultivate and guard the Garden, and fill, subdue and rule the Earth—implies that God intended, and still intends, mankind to transform the Earth from wilderness into garden.”¹² Beisner envisions an active role for humankind in its relationship to the environment and makes no apologies for what many would agree are the negative effects of environmental exploitation. The cultivation of wilderness might have seemingly little to do with twenty-first-century environmental stewardship, let alone climate change policy, but Beisner argues that “this Biblical principle also applies to debates over global warming. Rising atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations might result in some increase in global average temperature. However, increasing CO₂ levels also result in enhanced plant growth and reduce desertification. This fact is firmly established and must not be ignored” and he goes on to espouse the benefits of global warming in reducing species extinction.¹³ In this sense, then, conservative evangelical environmentalists see carbon dioxide emissions as actually fulfilling both the subdue-and-rule and be-fruitful-and-multiply commands of dominion, turning wilderness into the garden and transforming previously unfarmable areas into regions hospitable to plant growth.¹⁴ In other words, good stewards are necessarily those who exercise active dominion over the earth’s resources. Even though Beisner argues for the beneficial effects of increased CO₂ levels on the earth’s biological systems, he seems aware that this claim could be easily disputed by those who argue that the costs of increased CO₂ levels far outweigh the benefits. Citing Psalm 19:1–6, Beisner’s answer to this argument is that God is too wise and his creation too adaptable to be much negatively affected by mankind’s activities.¹⁵ Such a construction, along with Beisner’s argument that CO₂ emissions are actually beneficial for the environment, could easily be taken as a blank check

for environmental exploitation. By contrast, liberal evangelical environmentalists have historically interpreted the same passages from Genesis in such a way as to explicitly limit this type of anthropocentrism.

A typical liberal evangelical environmentalist interpretation of stewardship is that of Ron Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action, who writes that “the Bible teaches . . . that the non-human creation has worth and significance, quite apart from its usefulness to humanity . . . Anyone who thinks God created the non-human world merely for the benefit of persons has not read the Bible carefully.”¹⁶ While liberal evangelical environmentalists see Jesus’s version of dominion (read as a type of servanthood in Matthew 20) as the template for man’s dominion over the earth, Beisner argues that to interpret “Christ’s suffering servanthood [as] . . . the real model of human dominion over the earth” is a mistake because “while indeed all of man’s tilling of the earth should be service to God, it is inaccurate to say that it is service to the earth itself. Rather, man’s cultivating the earth is designed . . . to cause the earth to serve man.”¹⁷ In making this distinction, Beisner alludes to a very real risk liberal evangelical environmentalists run when they advocate a more biocentric view of stewardship, a risk that threatens the roots of evangelical belief. Because of Christianity’s reverence of God as Creator, any attempt to worship anything other than God—in this case, the earth—is antithetical to scriptural teachings. Occasionally, liberal evangelical environmentalists’ rhetoric does open itself to accusations of nature worship, despite their best efforts to the contrary. For example, *Redeeming Creation*, a book offering a liberal evangelical environmentalist approach to stewardship, argues that evangelical Christians should heed the “call to accept our rightful place in creation as its servant and protector . . . By Christ’s example we are instructed to put the welfare of the nonhuman world above our own, to seek its good first, to rule as servants.”¹⁸ The direct emphasis on an inversion of the man-nature hierarchy is enough to make many evangelicals uncomfortable. The Cornwall Declaration, adopted by the conservative evangelical Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (the predecessor of the newly formed Interfaith Stewardship Alliance) and released in the spring of 2000, reflects this angst:

Many people believe that “nature knows best,” or that the earth—untouched by human hands—is the ideal. Such romanticism leads some to deify nature or oppose human dominion over creation. Our position, informed by revelation and confirmed by reason and experience, views human stewardship that unlocks the potential in creation for all the earth’s inhabitants as good.¹⁹

One sees reiterated here the desire to turn the earth into the garden by “unlock[ing] the potential in creation” (natural resources) paired with a dismissal of nature reverence. Perhaps sensing the tenuous position of defending a more biocentric version of environmental stewardship on a biblical basis, liberal evangelical environmentalists have recently begun downplaying this approach in favor of one based on treatment of the poor in society, an area that has long been the province of conservative evangelical environmentalists.²⁰

Although poverty has lately become the primary focus of liberal evangelical environmentalists, an acknowledgment of the relationship between poverty and environmental issues has always been evident in the movement. EEN’s 1994 Declaration on the Care of Creation, for instance, states: “We recognize that human poverty is both a cause and a consequence of environmental degradation.”²¹ Yet this earlier approach buries these considerations below an emphasis on stewardship and does not deal with climate change directly, mostly because a decade ago liberal evangelical environmentalists began by focusing on the Endangered Species Act—an issue that did not lend itself favorably to highlighting the interplay of poverty and environmentalism.²² More recently, as the movement has matured, the focus has gradually shifted to put climate change at the forefront of the evangelical environmentalist agenda. In fact, it seems apparent that a change in focus on environmental issues actually facilitated a shift in theological focus. While endangered species are not particularly conducive to utilizing more anthropocentric New Testament theology, climate change’s potential affects on humankind—including rising sea levels and more intense heat waves, droughts, floods, and hurricanes—are direct, thus affording evangelicals an opportunity to engage a theology more familiar, and perhaps less offensive, to the laity.²³ The 2002 Oxford Declaration on Global Warming takes this approach as well, but the most publicized campaign prior to ECI was the 2002 EEN “What Would Jesus Drive?” ad campaign (WWJDrive for short), which riffed on the popular “What Would Jesus Do?” slogan and implored drivers to think about whether or not Jesus would drive an SUV, or a similar vehicle, that gets excessively poor gas mileage. The implication of the ad campaign was that since SUVs contribute disproportionately to climate change through their excessive greenhouse gas emissions, Jesus would do the ecologically conscientious thing and not drive such vehicles. Though the impetus for the campaign was rooted in stewardship, a letter from campaign leaders addressed to U.S. auto executives reveals a more anthropocentric agenda, stating that pollution due to automobiles is “warming the planet, contributing to causes of war and increasing the burden on the poor.”²⁴

Following the 2002 WWJDrive campaign, the Sandy Cove Covenant and Invitation adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) on June 30, 2004, at the Creation Care Conference was the most notable evangelical statement on climate change prior to ECI's 2006 *Call to Action*. The covenant "invite[s] our brothers and sisters in Christ to engage with us the most pressing environmental questions of our day, such as . . . the important current debate about human-induced climate change,"²⁵ an important step because the NAE represents a much broader base of evangelicals than the EEN, to which much of the movement had been previously confined. In the wake of the covenant, the NAE has been no stranger to the argument that evangelical Christians should push for action on climate change policy based on a biblical need to care for the poor. John Houghton, evangelical Christian and former chairman of the scientific working group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), stated in a March 2005 presentation to the NAE that "there is already a strong tendency in the world for the rich to get even richer while the poor get poorer."²⁶ The impacts of human induced climate change will tend to further bolster that trend."²⁷ In effect, environmentalism has been turned into something more closely resembling humanitarianism.

With the 2006 Evangelical Climate Initiative, liberal evangelical environmentalists continue to simultaneously work at broadening their base while driving home the poverty issue. Backed by a media blitz that included a press conference and print ads in both the *New York Times* and *Christianity Today*, the ECI recruited more than eighty signatories, many of whom represented an extension beyond typical liberal evangelical environmentalist boundaries. As Jim Ball noted, "It's a very centrist evangelical list, and that was intentional. When people look at the names, they're going to say, this is a real solid group here. These leaders are not flighty, going after the latest cause."²⁸ The signers to ECI's *Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action* advocate social justice that is both biblically based and urgent, arguing that "millions of people could die in this century because of climate change, most of them our poorest global neighbors."²⁹ To achieve their desired ends, liberal evangelical environmentalists may have found that it pays to craft a message more universally palatable to evangelicals. While creation care represented what at least seemed like a new—and potentially hazardous—theological approach to man's relationship with the environment, arguing climate change from the angle of its impact on the poor strikes a more familiar chord with evangelicals. With this shift, movement leaders may be addressing what could be termed a triage mentality on the part of evangelicals: the idea that with limited resources (financial

and otherwise), only a finite number of issues warrant attention. By folding environmental issues into the context of addressing poverty, movement leaders avoid adding another issue to an already crowded plate full of such hot-button issues as abortion and gay rights. If there was any doubt at all about why liberal evangelical environmentalists believe climate change is worthy of their attention, Richard Cizik puts that doubt to rest, definitively stating: “Environmentalists say the Earth is in jeopardy. The Earth will go on. I believe human beings are in jeopardy. Those who say, ‘Well, you’re caring about plants and animals more than people.’ Au contraire, this is about people.”³⁰

Of course, in a sense, liberal evangelical environmentalism’s newfound anthropocentric humanitarianism merely mimics an already established conservative evangelical environmentalist approach. The spring 2000 Cornwall Declaration, considered by some to be “the first major statement politically conservative evangelicals have made on the environment,”³¹ takes aim directly at global warming, stating that “some unfounded or undue [environmental] concerns include fears of destructive manmade global warming, overpopulation, and rampant species loss.” The Declaration goes on to say that these problems “tend to be speculative,” are “of concern mainly to environmentalists in wealthy nations,” are “of very low and largely hypothetical risk,” and that solutions “are unjustifiably costly and of dubious benefit.” The reference to cost applies most directly, it argues, to the poor: “Public policies to combat exaggerated risks can dangerously delay or reverse the economic development necessary to improve not only human life but also human stewardship of the environment. The poor, who are most often citizens of developing nations . . . are often the most injured by such misguided, though well-intended, policies.”³² Similarly, the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, in a 2006 press release responding to ECI’s *Call to Action*, directly states that “effort[s] to cut greenhouse gases hurt the poor. By making energy less affordable and accessible, mandatory emissions reductions would drive up the costs of consumer products, stifle economic growth, cost jobs, and impose especially harmful effects on the Earth’s poorest people.”³³ So while liberal evangelical environmentalists view climate change from the perspective of how the *environmental consequences* of climate change will affect the poor, their conservative counterparts focus on the potential *economic impacts*. Both sides cast themselves as defenders of the poor, but disagree on the scientific basis and economic impacts of climate change. Consequently, the challenge for liberal evangelical environmentalists now is less about proving and defending their theological foundations and more about arguing the scientific legitimacy of reports that anthropogenic emissions are contributing

to a potentially catastrophic warming of the earth. This shift opens up entirely new problems for those seeking to mobilize evangelicals on environmental issues since so many remain deeply suspicious of science.

Politics and Climate Change Science

Fueled in part by the creation-evolution debate, many evangelicals detest what they see as the nearly religious significance science has taken on in contemporary culture. In an August 2005 *Christianity Today* editorial, Andy Crouch makes a direct connection between creationist thinking and skepticism regarding climate change science. Crouch writes, “If evangelicals mistrust scientists when they make pronouncements about the future, it may be because of the history of antagonism between biblical faith and evolution,” and he goes on to say that “perhaps no result of the creation-evolution stalemate is as potentially disastrous as the way it has stymied courageous action on climate change.”³⁴ To combat this mistrust, liberal evangelical environmentalists have turned to evangelical scientists to bridge the credibility gap, taking pains to point out evangelical scientists who argue for the validity of data suggesting global mean temperatures are rising. An early example of this tactic is Howard A. Snyder’s suggestion in a 1995 *Christianity Today* article titled “Why We Love the Earth” that Christians “become informed on environmental issues. A number of books and other publications by Christian writers and scientists are now available,” implicitly arguing that Christians should turn first and foremost to Christian writers when looking for the truth on scientific matters.³⁵ If, as Andy Crouch notes in his *Christianity Today* editorial, “all science is ultimately a matter of trust,” evangelicals seem to trust fellow evangelical scientists more than their secular counterparts. More recently, the most notable instances of an evangelical partiality to Christian scientists are the repeated references of liberal evangelical environmentalists to Sir John Houghton, former chairman of the scientific working group of the IPCC. Andy Crouch suggests the IPCC’s conclusions should be taken seriously because the international scientific body was “chaired for many years by the evangelical Christian Sir John Houghton.”³⁶ Intended to speak to an evangelical audience, this article and other EEN and ISA documents strive to show that Houghton is a fellow believer, a man worthy of trust. Houghton himself often invokes his faith when speaking about climate change science. In an interview with the EEN-published *Creation Care Magazine*, he says that “the discipline of science is a marvelous area to operate in. Why? Because it’s God’s science and we’re looking for truth . . . I

was also conscious that I had God's help in [Chairing the IPCC's Scientific Assessment]."³⁷ Houghton's strategy, adopted by the liberal evangelical environmentalist movement, is perhaps all the more effective given evangelicals' emphasis on personal testimony; in a sense, he evangelizes his audience with the word of climate change science, much like evangelicals seek to spread the word of God.³⁸

A typical conservative evangelical environmentalist response to climate change science is similar to the conservative Republican response: to highlight both its scientific uncertainty and theoretical nature. Roy Spencer, a research scientist at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, argues in an ISA document that

manmade global warming is a *theory*, and not a scientific observation. How much of the current or predicted warming a scientist (or anyone else) believes is due to mankind ultimately comes down to how much faith that person has in our present understanding of what drives climate fluctuations, the computer climate models that contain that understanding, and ultimately, in how fragile or resilient is the Earth.³⁹

Again, one sees tied up in this discussion of uncertainty two elements that speak directly to evangelicals: the resilience of the earth (recall Beisner's reference to Psalms) and a reference to having faith in science. Subtract blatant biblical references, and the current conservative evangelical environmentalist stance on climate change science begins to look strikingly similar to George W. Bush's first-term position on the issue. While the vast majority of the scientific community insists that global warming is indeed occurring and is at least in part due to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, Bush administration officials continued to advocate more scientific study rather than immediate action. In remarks made on June 11, 2001, Bush emphasized the uncertainty involved with climate change science, and repeatedly referred to what scientists "do not know." He noted:

We do not know how much effect natural fluctuations in climate may have had on warming. We do not know how much our climate could or will change in the future. We do not know how fast change will occur, or even how some of our actions could impact it . . . And, finally, no one can say with any certainty what constitutes a dangerous level of warming, and therefore what level must be avoided.⁴⁰

The Bush administration's stance on climate change has evolved over the course of his administration, however. A June 2005 news release titled "Fact Sheet: President Bush Is Addressing Climate Change" mutes the uncertainties

emphasized in his policy four years prior, simply admitting that “we know that the surface of the Earth is warmer, and that an increase in greenhouse gases caused by humans is contributing to the problem”⁴¹ and promoting economic development to deal with climate change. Rather than emphasizing uncertainty about the very existence of anthropogenic climate change, Bush has now begun emphasizing the uncertainty inherent in predicting the precise effects of such change, lending slightly more credence to climate change science. Late in 2006, the Department of the Interior went even further by proposing to list the polar bear as a threatened species, an animal whose polar habitat is literally thought to be melting as a direct result of climate change.⁴² Although it is difficult if not impossible to label the Bush administration as proactive on climate change legislation, and it remains unclear to what extent Bush’s evangelical faith informs his climate change policy, his administration’s stance may be very slowly coming to more closely resemble liberal evangelical environmentalism than it once did.

Compared to the Bush administration’s wariness, the stance of James Inhofe, evangelical Christian and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, can be characterized as outright hostility. Inhofe goes far beyond merely questioning the certainty of global warming (though he does that often, as well), consistently calling climate change “the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people.”⁴³ Whereas movement toward acceptance can be seen, if not in practice then at least in rhetoric, on the part of the Bush administration, Inhofe shows no willingness to budge on his position that climate change is a hoax. And the connections between his stance and his personal evangelical Christian beliefs seem much clearer. The closing comments of a 2003 Inhofe speech read like an evangelical sermon as he exhorts his listeners to uphold all that is good and decent about the United States:

With all the hysteria, all the fear, all the phony science, could it be that manmade global warming is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people? I believe it is. And if we allow these detractors of everything that has made America great, those ranging from the liberal Hollywood elitists to those who are in it for the money, if we allow them to destroy the foundation, the greatness of the most highly industrialized nation in the history of the world, then we don’t deserve to live in this one nation under God.⁴⁴

Inhofe’s rhetoric seems reflective of historian James Davison Hunter’s assertion that “the evangelical heritage has long identified itself with the hopes and promises of America. Evangelicals view themselves as having helped to create

and sustain all that is good in America: its traditions of moral virtue; its ethic of work, commitment, and achievement; and its political and economic institutions.”⁴⁵ Taken in conjunction with Inhofe’s own evangelical Presbyterian faith, it seems clear that Inhofe is consciously appealing to his conservative evangelical constituents. He plays to their distrust of science by calling much of it “phony,” condemns Hollywood elitists whom many evangelicals see as morally bankrupt, and ties it all to a threat upon America’s religious and economic traditions. Inhofe has brought up climate change several times in a religious context. In a January 2005 speech, he said that “put simply, man-induced global warming is an article of religious faith to the radical far left alarmists,”⁴⁶ and during an April 2005 speech he stated that “for the alarmists, global warming has nothing to do with science or scientific inquiry. Science is not about the inquiry to discover truth, but a mask to achieve an ideological agenda. For some, this issue has become a secular religion, pure and simple.”⁴⁷ When one recalls the evangelical angst over science becoming a faith within the secular community, it becomes apparent that Inhofe is likely both reflecting his own personal religious concern while also appealing to his evangelical constituency. While Inhofe’s hostility toward climate change science could be chalked up purely to a conservative Republican agenda, loyalty to campaign contributors in the oil and gas industries, or loyalty to his oil-rich Oklahoman constituency, it is hard to ignore the religious rhetoric when Inhofe himself is an evangelical and his rhetoric so closely matches that of the conservative evangelical environmentalists.⁴⁸

Politics and Climate Change Economics

It is clear, then, that the evangelical stance on climate change science directly affects whether or not evangelicals believe emissions reductions policies should be instituted. Yet these policy positions also rely on biblical applications to economics that extend beyond New Testament social justice commands to care for the poor. While liberal evangelical environmentalists advocate emissions restrictions and immediate action to address climate change based upon the idea of biblical prudence (roughly equivalent to the secular idea called the precautionary principle), their conservative counterparts use biblical prudence to advocate more research before instituting such policies. For example, E. Calvin Beisner invokes prudence as it is represented in Proverbs 22:3 (which reads: “A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it”)⁴⁹ to argue in the conclusion, titled “Applying Biblical Prudence to Global Warming,” of a 2006 Interfaith Stewardship Alliance document that

a prudent person foresees danger and hides himself . . . Given all the uncertainties of global warming, . . . it is crucial that we adopt a decision process that can guide us through the labyrinth of errors to a sound outcome—one that, in particular, does not impose greater risks and harms on the most impoverished and powerless people among us.⁵⁰

The main tenets of conservative evangelical environmentalist ideology—adherence to the Bible, suspicion of climate change science, and concern for the poor—come together to inspire prudent action. Prudence, in this case, dictates more research before any action is taken, implicitly prioritizing protecting the economy rather than the environment, a position that is evident in much conservative evangelical environmental discourse. The spring 2000 Cornwall Declaration comes very close to making economic considerations more important than environmental ones, stating that “a clean environment is a costly good; consequently, growing affluence, technological innovation, and the application of human and material capital are integral to environmental improvement. The tendency among some to oppose economic progress in the name of environmental stewardship is often sadly self-defeating.”⁵¹ The environment is cast as just another commodity in a market economy (“a costly good”), perhaps no less or more valuable than an SUV rolling off the production line. The declaration also implies that those who do not rely solely on the market to solve these problems are necessarily opposed to economic progress, a claim that is not clearly supportable. Such a construction threatens to negate the biblical mandate to be good stewards of an earth that God created, instead subsuming the “clean environment” into man’s market economy; any ethical or spiritual arguments carry no weight unless they assume a dollar value. The declaration takes the prototypical conservative economic approach to environmental problems: affluence and innovation are the solutions to environmental problems and the rest will take care of itself. In fact, much of the Cornwall Declaration is focused on a conservative economic approach to environmental stewardship, so much so that the biblical foundation of stewardship seems nearly lost.⁵² The conservative evangelical environmentalist approach to economics and the environment is strikingly similar to the Bush administration position, articulated in part by the statement that “President Bush is dedicated to climate change policies that grow economies, aid development, and improve the environment.”⁵³ The goals of climate change policy are phrased such that economic prosperity is the main goal, and addressing environmental issues becomes secondary or even tertiary. This affinity for business goes beyond conservative evangelical environmentalists and politicians; even liberal evangelical environmentalists have, to an extent, prioritized the protection of business interests.

A 2006 Evangelical Climate Initiative document quotes CEOs of corporations such as BP, DuPont, and General Electric that confirm the threat of climate change and call for action, offering inspiration while also perhaps soothing the concerns of evangelicals who might worry that emissions restrictions would hurt big business.⁵⁴ Former NAE president Ted Haggard, a vocal believer in the validity and urgency of global warming, has said that evangelicals “want to be pro-business environmentalists,” making it unclear whether protecting business interests or the environment is the top priority.⁵⁵ Despite this lingering concern for the effects on big business, liberal evangelical environmentalists in general advocate immediate action on climate change—interpreting biblical prudence in terms of potential impacts on the environment, not on the economy. John Houghton, for example, argues:

When it comes to future climate change, it would not be prudent to rule out the possibility of surprises . . . [though] much stronger in the argument for precautionary action is the realisation that significant anthropogenic climate change is not an unlikely possibility but a near certainty; it is no change of climate that is unlikely . . . to “wait and see” would be an inadequate and irresponsible response to what we know.⁵⁶

To address the potential threat and respond prudently, liberal evangelical environmentalists argue that action must be taken now, because the costs of ignoring climate change are much greater than the costs of addressing it, in spite of scientific uncertainty. Similarly, Andy Crouch, in a *Christianity Today* editorial, applies the precautionary principle to the environment and likens it to Pascal’s wager, translating the “better safe than sorry” idea into terms that might resonate with evangelicals. He writes,

believe in God though he does not exist, Pascal argued, and you lose nothing in the end. Fail to believe when he does in fact exist, and you lose everything. Likewise, we have little to lose, and much technological progress, energy security, and economic efficiency to gain if we act on climate change now—even if the worst predictions fail to come to pass.⁵⁷

Crouch sees only positives resulting from instituting climate change policy—technological progress, energy security, and economic efficiency. It is a vision that conservative evangelical environmentalists believe is a case of having one’s cake and eating it too; for them, economic prosperity and emissions reductions are mutually exclusive. Crouch’s editorial prompted a direct response from the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, whose E. Calvin Beisner writes that “Crouch turns a blind eye to both the costs of CO₂ emission reduction and the benefits of increasing CO₂. His wager is a false analogy to Pascal’s. In Pascal’s, there

was nothing to lose if the believer in God turned out wrong but everything to gain if he turned out right; in Crouch's wager, there are many costs and benefits of varied kinds to be identified, measured, and compared."⁵⁸ Beisner argues that benefits from economic growth are proven while benefits from emissions reductions are unproven and points to benefits of increased CO₂ concentrations, suggesting that these possible benefits of inaction far outweigh the economic costs of action.⁵⁹ For Beisner and the ISA, even if climate change is occurring, facilitating adaptation through economic development is a more prudent solution than pursuing costly mitigation strategies. But do any of these arguments resonate with evangelical voters, or are the debates among the leadership taking place in a sort of rhetorical vacuum? A turn to empirical data, however spotty, may shed some light on this issue.

Environmental Attitudes of the Evangelical Masses and a Look to the Future

Several polls and sociological studies have attempted to gauge evangelical environmental attitudes; although the results of these studies are varied, in general they have found that no aspect of Christian religious belief other than a fundamentalist biblical literalism is an accurate predictor of negative environmental attitudes.⁶⁰ A 1995 study also found that "among clergy, evangelicals are least environmental" when compared to Catholics and mainline Protestants, which indicates that awareness and engagement with evangelical environmentalism is not widespread and perhaps prevalent among only very high level elites.⁶¹ Yet these studies generally use data more than a decade old, when climate change had not yet galvanized evangelical leadership. It seems unlikely that most evangelical leaders even broached environmental issues with their congregants a decade ago; it is a likelihood that continues to grow, however, as prominent evangelical leaders and organizations become increasingly engaged in the issue and garner media coverage.⁶² For that reason, newer data from national polls may offer more insight into the evangelical laity's views on climate change.

A 2004 poll conducted for PBS's *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly* found that, when asked how important they thought "combating global warming and other environmental threats" was, only 45 percent of evangelicals answered that they believed it was extremely or very important, as compared to 53 percent of the general population.⁶³ Clearly an 8 percent gap represents a fairly significant difference in relation to the general population, but with 45 percent of evangelicals

admitting climate change is an important problem, the skepticism among that group does not appear either overwhelming or monolithic in nature.

A 2006 poll conducted by ABC News, *Time*, and Stanford University obtained similar results, but cast them in a much different light, finding

little resonance for [the 2006 ECI *Call to Action*] among evangelical white Protestants. They're less likely than others to think about their personal impact on the environment, to see global warming as a threat to the global environment, or to say the government should address it. Evangelicals also are no more likely than others to think scientists agree on the issue—and they're 12 points less likely than other Americans to trust environmental scientists in the first place.⁶⁴

Perhaps these findings are unsurprising, but they contradict ECI's own polling, which suggests that evangelicals may be more receptive to scientific claims regarding climate changes. The ECI study found that "overall, three out of four evangelicals tend to support environmental issues and causes such as reducing global warming or protecting wilderness areas from development, including one out of four who tend to support these issues strongly."⁶⁵ Though these results are intended to show evangelical support for addressing global warming in particular, they seem to be just vague enough to preclude any definitive claims about evangelicals' true attitudes toward the particulars of climate change policy. The same study also found that "a majority of evangelicals (54%) also believe that a person's Christian faith should generally encourage them to support environmental issues."⁶⁶ In comparison to the three out of four evangelicals who support environmental issues, this number seems curiously low, particularly given that *both* liberal and conservative evangelical environmentalists push a biblical basis for Christian environmentalism. Yet perhaps the most striking finding of the entire study was that "half [of evangelicals] went so far as to say steps need to be taken to reduce global warming, even if there is a high economic cost to the U.S. Even among evangelicals who are political conservatives, over four out of ten believe global warming must be reduced even if there's a high economic cost, and half feel we must begin addressing the issue immediately."⁶⁷ Ten percent, while a significant difference between evangelicals as a whole and politically conservative evangelicals, is not as much as one might have expected, particularly on a question that deals with taking action regardless of economic cost. If this poll is any indication, then there may be hope for liberal evangelical environmentalists who advocate taking action on climate change and are less concerned about the economic cost than their conservative counterparts are.

The future of evangelical engagement with environmental issues is anything but clear. On the one hand, there are several reasons to believe that liberal evangelical environmentalists are growing in strength—their biblical message is becoming more focused and viable, they appear to be broadening and better publicizing the movement, and climate change science appears to be on their side. On the other hand, there seem to be just as many reasons to believe that conservative evangelical environmentalists will continue to find success—their biblical interpretations have withstood disagreement, they have support from deeply entrenched evangelical power structures, and their adaptation and economic development solution is much more consistent with the current U.S. political approach to climate change. While the liberal evangelical environmentalist movement appears to be growing in strength, it suffers not only from resistance from conservative evangelicals, but internally as well. Liberal evangelical environmentalists struggle with themselves over what moral issue should take priority—is it worth advocating action on climate change if it means sacrificing political influence on issues such as abortion and gay marriage and perhaps being cast as liberals? Evangelicals are unlikely, after all, to see confirmations to the Supreme Court of justices as conservative as Samuel Alito and John Roberts if Congress remains under the control of the Democratic Party.

If nothing else, liberal evangelical environmentalists exhibit an awareness of these challenges. NAE's Richard Cizik admits that "it is hard to oppose [Bush] when he has the moral authority of the president and a record of standing with us on moral issues like abortion."⁶⁸ EEN's "Global Warming Briefing for Evangelical Leaders" takes an ambivalent approach to the Bush administration, stating that "while currently insufficient to meet the challenge of climate change, the Bush Administration's efforts to address global warming have helped to set the stage for more significant action."⁶⁹ Clearly most liberal evangelical environmentalists are hesitant to condemn the president outright for his environmental policy, yet some go a step further. A March 2004 *Sojourners Magazine* article called for readers to "get rid of the president" in the 2004 election cycle, and *Creation Care Magazine* articles have lent vocal support to the 2004 McCain-Lieberman Stewardship Act and the 2005 Bingaman resolution, both of which go further than the Bush administration in addressing climate change.⁷⁰ These steps may indicate that evangelicals are becoming more willing to broaden the core set of issues upon which they base their voting choices; despite solidarity with Bush on abortion and gay marriage, evangelicals were willing to let environmental issues assume a more central

role. A Democratic-controlled Congress that seems more ready than previous Congresses to take on climate change will begin to put these allegiances to the test, though it may not be until the 2008 presidential election that one can get an accurate sense of how much traction environmental issues has truly gained with evangelicals.

Perhaps one of the more effective strategies liberal evangelical environmentalists have recently employed is to directly link climate change with traditionally conservative issues. A 2006 ECI print advertisement run in *Christianity Today* states in part that

with the same love of God and neighbor that compels us to preach salvation through Jesus Christ, protect unborn life, preserve the family and the sanctity of marriage, defend religious freedom and human dignity, and take the whole Gospel to a hurting world, we the undersigned evangelical leaders resolve to come together with others of like mind to pray and to work to stop global warming.⁷¹

Clearly anticipating the key issues of importance to its evangelical readership, the ad places climate change among them, thereby seeking to alleviate concerns that becoming involved in the issue somehow necessarily makes one politically “liberal” across the board. ECI directly addresses this concern in its “Frequently Asked Questions” document, which first articulates the biblical basis for stewardship, then argues that “climate change is not a liberal issue. It is a profound problem for people Jesus loves, people Jesus died to save.”⁷² No matter how savvy and far-reaching ECI may be, however, the fact still remains that ISA represents a coherent and powerful opposition.

The ISA’s opposition is powerful enough, in fact, to deter two prominent NAE officials, Richard Cizik and then-president Ted Haggard, from signing the ECI *Call to Action*.⁷³ This development was clearly frustrating for Calvin DeWitt, who said that “a year ago, it looked as though evangelicals would become a strong, collective voice for what we call ‘Creation care’ and others may call environmentalism . . . [Haggard’s and Cizik’s lack of action] will have negative consequences for the ability of evangelicals to influence the White House, unfortunately and sadly.”⁷⁴ The discord among the evangelical leadership surely affects not only their political power but their influence among the evangelical laity as well; the lack of a coherent message seems likely to confuse the masses. At this point, though the liberal evangelical movement appears to be gaining momentum, the liberals still do not hold the same sway that conservative evangelicals do on this issue. The next few years will be critical in determining which group succeeds in articulating a coherent stance on

climate change. Although the issue of global warming remains in question at least for some, its inherent uncertainties are attenuated with each passing year (the most recent IPCC report, released early in 2007, assessed the likelihood of anthropogenic climate change at 90 percent or more), forcing the real battle between conservative and liberal evangelical environmentalists to occur on the economics of the issue. For liberal evangelical environmentalists, the challenge is in convincing fellow evangelicals that emissions reduction policies (1) will not hurt them economically (or will be worth the hurt) and, more important, that (2) such policies are the best way to address the effects of climate change and fulfill the biblical obligation to the poor of the world.

Climate change, along with other social humanitarian issues such as genocide, human rights, and the AIDS epidemic may yet prove to be a catalyst for evangelical political realignment encompassing more traditionally “liberal” issues. Of course, the promise of a less politically conservative evangelicalism has come before, only to be squashed by the ascendance of the Christian Right. Robert Wuthnow argues that in the 1960s and 1970s, “it appeared that the gap between religious liberals and conservatives might be bridged by a significant segment of the evangelical community,” but that these voices were drowned out by evangelicals mobilizing around the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision and elections of the early 1980s.⁷⁵ If climate change proves to inspire a sustained iteration of the change that glimmered and then faded some forty years ago, the current internal evangelical fight over the issue raises two distinct possibilities: on the one hand, a liberalizing, centrist evangelical consensus about climate change that succeeds in broadening the evangelical agenda to include environmental and social justice issues; on the other hand, discord within evangelicalism, splintering the faith into new centrists with a broad social agenda and old traditionalists with a narrower moral agenda. Key to the ultimate success of either liberal or conservative evangelical environmentalists, however, may be the observable (and nearly impossible to ignore) impacts of climate change—irregular weather patterns, severe storms like Hurricane Katrina, melting ice caps, and the like—which are wholly out of their control. These natural events have already proven critically important in driving the urgency of religious and political responses to environmental questions. For evidence of this, one only has to look to conservative evangelical Pat Robertson, who reversed course and admitted that 2006’s summer heat wave convinced him of global warming’s legitimacy.⁷⁶ In a sense, then, only nature itself holds the answers to how hot and how damned the United States will become.

Notes

Many thanks are due to Susan Curtis, Leigh Raymond, and especially P. Ryan Schneider for their insightful suggestions and criticisms at various points in the development of this essay, which unquestionably made the finished product a better one.

1. Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly, "Evangelicals and the Environment," <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week920/cover.html> (accessed June 5, 2007).
2. Estimates vary widely in part because researchers and scholars have found it difficult to agree upon what exactly the term *evangelical* means, but 30 percent appears to be a reasonable figure.
3. While this essay necessarily deals with theological and scientific issues, I do not pretend to be either a theologian or a scientist; I do not attempt to interpret biblical passages or hard scientific evidence on my own. Instead, I endeavor to analyze the state of the theological and scientific debates centering on environmental stewardship and climate change policy.
4. Although "evangelical Christian" is a term that has been used by the news media interchangeably with terms such as "Christian conservative," "Christian Right," "Christian fundamentalist," and so on, these do not accurately describe a significant number of self-described evangelical Christians. I contend that the definition offered by Mark Noll, an evangelical and a scholar, is appropriate, in a sense bridging the gap between scholarly and self-applied definitions. Following British historian David Bebbington, Noll sees "the key ingredients of evangelicalism as conversionism (an emphasis on the 'new birth' as a life-changing religious experience), Biblicism (a reliance on the Bible as ultimate religious authority), activism (a concern for sharing the faith), and crucicentrism (a focus on Christ's redeeming work on the cross)," all of which are characteristics that not only differentiate evangelicals from mainline Protestants, but also shape the ways in which they respond to climate change. See Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 8. Noll's book is a plea for evangelicals to embrace intellectual life. He is a professor of Christian thought at Wheaton College, an evangelical school in Illinois.
5. It is because these two groups—both liberal and conservative evangelical environmentalists—line up closely with so-called liberal and conservative political approaches to climate change policy that I refer to them as such. Again, this denotation does not refer to their theological orientation or even their broader political orientation; it instead refers solely to their stance on climate change.
6. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment advocates a combination of mitigation and adaptation strategies. See IPCC Working Group II, *Climate Change 2007: Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Summary for Policymakers*, at <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM13apr07.pdf> (accessed June 5, 2007).
7. While the ISA is indeed "interfaith," it is largely evangelical, as evidenced not only by its leadership, but also by its direct engagement with the NAE and its oppositional evangelical group, the Evangelical Climate Initiative. Although the ISA was founded in November 2005, yet another group, created in May 2007 and calling itself the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, has already supplanted ISA as the primary conservative evangelical environmentalist group working from the principles of the Cornwall Declaration. The Cornwall Alliance appears to have become a more unapologetically exclusive evangelical organization, dropping "Interfaith" from its title and trumpeting its formation as something announced (solely) by evangelical leaders (see <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/Announcement.pdf> [accessed June 5, 2007]). That said, the succession from ICES to ISA to the new Cornwall Alliance should be seen as changes in name only rather than radical departures from previous groups. Indeed, the people and organizational documents carry over nearly seamlessly from one group to the next; E. Calvin Beisner, for example, remains the organizational spokesman for the Cornwall Alliance (see www.cornwallalliance.org for more information). For these reasons and because of the Cornwall Alliance's organizational infancy, in this essay I continue to refer to the ISA and not the Cornwall Alliance as the primary conservative evangelical environmentalist organization.
8. Before the analysis of biblical interpretations can proceed, I must address the distinction between beliefs and practices of the evangelical leadership and the laity. While the laity surely has its own diversity of biblical interpretation, the theological conclusions I analyze are by and large limited to the evangelical leadership. There are inevitably pitfalls to this type of analysis, but the assumption is that evangelical leadership anticipates and influences, if not represents, the attitudes of the masses.
9. For a conservative perspective, see 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, 1997), 43. The liberal perspective is embodied by Evangelical Environmental Network, "On the Care of Creation," <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/declaration.php> (accessed June 5, 2007).
10. This essay mainly seeks to examine evangelical environmentalism as it has engaged climate change. For a more historical perspective on the movement, see David Kenneth Larsen, "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967–2000" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001).
 11. *Holy Bible: New International Version* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: International Bible Society, 1984).
 12. E. Calvin Beisner, "Biblical Principles for Environmental Stewardship," in Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, "An Examination of the Scientific, Ethical and Theological Implications of Climate Change Policy," http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pdf/ISA_Climate_Change.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007), 14.
 13. Beisner, "Biblical Principles for Environmental Stewardship," 15.
 14. For a balanced and readable account of the science underlying climate change theory, see John Houghton, *Global Warming: The Complete Briefing*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For a good reference on the areas of agreement as well as areas of uncertainty in climate change science, see Donald A. Brown, *American Heat* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 103–17.
 15. See Beisner, "Biblical Principles for Environmental Stewardship," 13.
 16. Ron Sider, "Message from an Evangelical: The Place of Humans in the Garden of God," *The Amicus Journal* 17 (Spring 1995): 13.
 17. Beisner, "Where Garden Meets Wilderness," 15.
 18. Fred Van Dyke et al., *Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 97.
 19. Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, "The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship," <http://www.stewards.net/CornwallDeclaration.htm> (accessed June 7, 2007).
 20. For a secular take on climate change's potential impacts on the poor, see Brown, *American Heat*, 92–94, who culls most of his information from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2001 assessment.
 21. Evangelical Environmental Network, "An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation," <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/declaration.php> (accessed June 5, 2007).
 22. An early attempt to apply New Testament theology to Creation Care failed to significantly alter the movement's rhetoric. See Calvin B. DeWitt, ed., *The Environment and the Christian: What Does the New Testament Say about the Environment?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991).
 23. Liberal evangelical environmentalists tend to rely heavily on verses from the book of Matthew in arguing a biblically based concern for the poor.
 24. John Porretto, "Religious leaders ask automakers to build more fuel-efficient products," *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*, November 21, 2002.
 25. National Association of Evangelicals, "The Sandy Cove Covenant and Invitation," <http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=editor.page&pageID=121&IDCategory=9> (accessed June 5, 2007).
 26. The IPCC is the foremost international organization researching climate change. It released comprehensive assessment reports in 1990, 1995, 2001, and 2007.
 27. John Houghton, "Climate Change—a Christian Challenge and Opportunity," <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/climate/houghton.php> (accessed June 5, 2007).
 28. Laurie Goodstein, "Evangelical Leaders Join Global Warming Initiative," *New York Times*, February 8, 2006.
 29. Evangelical Climate Initiative, *Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action*, <http://www.evangelical-climateinitiative.org/statement> (accessed June 5, 2007).
 30. Quoted in Bill Moyers's PBS program *Moyers on America: "Is God Green?"* at http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/print/isgodgreen_transcript_print.html (accessed June 5, 2007).
 31. "Evangelicals attack environmentalists," *Christian Century*, May 3, 2000, 497.
 32. Interfaith Council, "The Cornwall Declaration."
 33. Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, "Vast Majority of Evangelicals Not Represented by 'Evangelical Climate Initiative,'" <http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/060208/dcw045.html> (accessed March 8, 2006).
 34. Andy Crouch, "Environmental Wager: Why Evangelicals Are—But Shouldn't Be—Cool toward Global Warming," *Christianity Today*, August 2005, 66.
 35. Howard A. Snyder, "Why We Love the Earth," *Christianity Today*, May 15, 1995, 15.

36. Andy Crouch, "Environmental Wager," 66. Crouch's invocation of Houghton is far from an isolated incident; an EEN global warming fact sheet makes sure to note that the IPCC's "first three scientific assessments, in 1990, 1995, and 2001, were chaired by Sir John Houghton, an evangelical Christian," and the 2006 *Climate Change* further emphasizes Houghton's strong evangelical faith by stating that "from 1988–2002 the IPCC's assessment of the climate science was Chaired by Sir John Houghton, a devout evangelical Christian." See Evangelical Environmental Network, "EEN's Global Warming Briefing for Evangelical Leaders," http://www.creationcare.org/files/global_warming_briefing.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007), 2, and Evangelical Climate Initiative's *Climate Change*.
37. "Interview with Sir John Houghton on the Mall in Washington, D.C." *Creation Care Magazine*, Summer 2005, <http://www.creationcare.org/magazine/summer05.php> (accessed June 5, 2007).
38. In fact, that is precisely what John Houghton did when he "converted" Richard Cizik to realizing the "truth" of climate change science in 2002. See Moyers, *Moyers on America*, and Terry Gross, "Green Evangelist Richard Cizik," radio interview, *Fresh Air*, from WHYY and National Public Radio, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6646568> (accessed June 5, 2007).
39. Roy W. Spencer, "Global Warming: How Much of a Threat?" in Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, "An Examination of the Scientific, Ethical and Theological Implications of Climate Change Policy," http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pdf/ISA_Climate_Change.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007): 5.
40. "Bush Administration Position: Remarks by the President on Global Warming," *Congressional Digest*, January 2004, 8.
41. White House News Release, "Fact Sheet: President Bush Is Addressing Climate Change," June 30, 2005, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050630-16.html> (accessed June 5, 2007).
42. U.S. Department of the Interior, "Interior Secretary Kempthorne Announces Proposal to List Polar Bears as Threatened Under Endangered Species Act," <http://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2006/12-27-06polarbearnews.pdf> (accessed June 5, 2007).
43. "Global Warming Debate," *Congressional Record*, January 4, 2005, S18.
44. "Science of Climate Change," *Congressional Record*, July 28, 2003, S10022.
45. James Davison Hunter, "The Shaping of American Foreign Policy," in *Evangelicals and Foreign Policy*, ed. Michael Cromartie (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989), 72.
46. "Global Warming Debate," S18.
47. "Four Pillars of Climate Alarmism," *Congressional Record*, April 7, 2005, S3348.
48. Neither conservative nor liberal evangelical environmentalists have formally acknowledged or endorsed views forwarded by Bush or Inhofe, yet their approaches to climate change science bear so much resemblance to one another that it is worth pointing out. Additionally, although neither Bush nor Inhofe has explicitly aligned himself with either evangelical group, Inhofe in particular has been quite critical of the ECI. See Moyers, *Moyers on America*.
49. *Holy Bible: New International Version*, Proverbs 22:3.
50. Beisner, "Biblical Principles for Environmental Stewardship," 17.
51. Interfaith Council, "The Cornwall Declaration."
52. See, in particular, the "aspirations" of the signers of the Cornwall Declaration, found in the Interfaith Council's "Cornwall Declaration."
53. White House News Release, "Bush Is Addressing Climate Change." Also see White House News Release, "Climate Change Fact Sheet," May 18, 2005, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/05/20050518-4.html> (accessed June 5, 2007). See Spencer Abraham in *Science* 305 (July 30, 2004) for the outline of Bush's plan, and Paul Higgins in *Science* 306 (December 17, 2004) for a scientific reply.
54. See Evangelical Climate Initiative, "Scientific and Business Perspectives on Climate Change," http://www.evangelicalclimateinitiative.org/pub/scientific_business_perspectives_fact.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007). Similar concerns are evident in EEN publications. See, in particular, Evangelical Environmental Network and Creation Care Magazine, "EEN's Global Warming Briefing for Evangelical Leaders," http://www.creationcare.org/files/global_warming_briefing.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007).
55. Laurie Goodstein, "Evangelical Leaders Swing Influence Behind Effort to Combat Global Warming," *New York Times*, March 10, 2005.
56. John Houghton, *Global Warming*, 229–30. For similar arguments from the movement, see also Evangelical Environmental Network, "Hurricanes, Climate Change, and the Poor," http://www.creationcare.org/files/hurricane_briefing.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007); "Heat Stroke: The Climate for

- Addressing Global Warming Is Improving,” *Christianity Today*, October 2004, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/10/10.26.html> (accessed June 5, 2007); Evangelical Environmental Network, “A Call to Action: On Global Warming,” *Creation Care Magazine*, Spring 2004, <http://www.creationcare.org/magazines/spring04.php> (accessed June 5, 2007).
57. Andy Crouch, “Environmental Wager,” 66.
 58. E. Calvin Beisner, “No Sure Bet: Two Replies to Andy Crouch’s ‘Environmental Wager,’” <http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/content/printarticle.php?id=150> (accessed June 5, 2007). For a similar response, see also Kenneth W. Chilton’s piece in the same article.
 59. Predictions of economic costs of instituting climate change policy (more specifically, the Kyoto Protocol) vary widely. For a good overview of “predicted climate impacts from global warming,” derived mainly from the IPCC reports, see Brown, *American Heat*, 87–92.
 60. See James L. Guth et al., “Theological Perspectives and Environmentalism among Religious Activists,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32.4 (1993): 373–82; Heather Hartwig Boyd, “Christianity and the Environment in the American Public,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38.1 (1999): 36–44; Douglas Lee Eckberg and Jean T. Blocker, “Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28.4 (1989): 509–17; and Andrew Greeley, “Religion and Attitudes Toward the Environment,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32.1 (1993): 19–28.
 61. James L. Guth et al., “Faith and the Environment: Religious Beliefs and Attitudes on Environmental Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science* 39.2 (1995): 373.
 62. Add to that varying definitions of “evangelical” and “literalism,” not to mention a wide variety of methodologies across studies and polls, and it becomes virtually impossible to draw any hard and fast conclusions, particularly from older data.
 63. Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc., “Religion and Ethics Newsweekly Frequency Questionnaire,” April 5, 2004, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week733/questionnaire.pdf> (accessed June 5, 2007), 7. White evangelicals are somewhat less likely to see global warming as an extremely or very important threat, at 40 percent of respondents. The racial divide evident in evangelical environmental views is an important area for further research, particularly as Hispanic evangelicalism continues to grow.
 64. ABC News/*Time*/Stanford University, “Intensity Spikes Concern on Warming; Many See a Change in Weather Patterns,” March 25, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/images/Politics/1009a1GlobalWarming.pdf> (accessed March 27, 2006). See also ABC News/*Washington Post*, “Most Think Global Warming Has Begun But Differ with Scientists on Urgency,” June 6, 2005, <http://abcnews.go.com/images/Politics/983a3GlobalWarming.pdf> (accessed June 5, 2007).
 65. Ellison Research, “Nationwide Study Shows Concerns of Evangelical Christians over Global Warming,” February 2, 2006, www.evangelicalclimateinitiative.org/pub/polling_report.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007).
 66. *Ibid.*
 67. *Ibid.*
 68. Blaine Harden, “The Greening of Evangelicals: Christian Right Turns, Sometimes Warily, to Environmentalism,” *Washington Post*, February 6, 2005.
 69. Evangelical Environmental Network, “Global Warming Briefing.”
 70. See Bill McKibben, “Sins of Emission,” *Sojourners Magazine* 33.3 (March 2004): 8–12; Evangelical Environmental Network, “A Call to Action”; Jim Ball, “Progress in Senate on Addressing Global Warming,” *Creation Care Magazine*, Summer 2005, <http://www.creationcare.org/magazines/summer05.php> (accessed June 5, 2007).
 71. Evangelical Climate Initiative, “Our Commitment to Jesus Christ Compels Us to Solve the Global Warming Crisis,” www.evangelicalclimateinitiative.org/pub/ct_ad.pdf (accessed June 5, 2007).
 72. Evangelical Climate Initiative, “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs),” <http://www.evangelicalclimateinitiative.org/faq> (accessed March 8, 2006).
 73. Cizik’s name actually appeared as a signer on the *Christianity Today* print ad, but was removed on all subsequent ECI documents.
 74. Alan Cooperman, “Evangelicals Will Not Take Stand on Global Warming,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 2006. Haggard had previously signed the Sandy Cove Covenant; Cizik had signed both the covenant and the Oxford Declaration.

75. Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989), 35. See also Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 374.
76. "Heat Convinces Robertson of Global Warming," *Reuters*, August 3, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14171691/> (accessed August 7, 2006).