The Evangelical Debate Over Climate Change

John Copeland Nagle
John N. Matthews Professor of Law

Notre Dame Law School
Legal Studies Research Paper No. 07-46

This paper can be downloaded without charge from the Social Science Research Network electronic library at:
http://ssrn.com/abstract=1021712

A complete list of Research Papers in this Series can be found at:
http://www.nd.edu/~ndlaw/faculty/ssrn.html
The Evangelical Debate Over Climate Change

John Copeland Nagle

Fides et justitia
In 2006, a group of prominent evangelicals issued a statement calling for a greater response to climate change. Soon thereafter, another group responded with their own statement urging caution before taking any action against climate change. This division among evangelicals is surprising because evangelicals are usually portrayed as homogenous and as indifferent or hostile toward environmental regulation. Yet, there is an ongoing debate among evangelicals regarding the severity of climate change, its causes, and the appropriate response. Why?

* John N. Matthey Professor of Law, Notre Dame Law School: nagle.89@nd.edu. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in the symposium Peace with Creation: Catholic Perspectives on Environmental Law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law and to present earlier versions of this essay at a faculty workshop at the University of Notre Dame and at the University of Minnesota’s MacLaren Institute’s conference Positive Harmony: A Conference on Christianity and the Environment. I am also grateful for the comments shared by Arty Barrett, Calvin Beiner, Andy Crouch, Nicole Garner, Rick Garnett, Alex Klass, Lisa Nagle, Kris Ritter, Vance Rougeau, Aaron Simmons, James Tomkovich, John Wilson and Sandi Zeller. I am especially indebted to Kris Ritter, whose extraordinary research on how evangelicals are approaching climate change contributed greatly to my understanding of the issues discussed here, and to Pablo Rodes, who researched the science and policy of climate change.
The answer to this question is important because of the increasing prominence of both evangelicals and climate change. After forsaking the political process for much of the twentieth century, evangelicals have now gained significant political importance. In their own words, "never before has God given American evangelicals such an awesome opportunity to shape public policy in ways that could contribute to the well-being of the entire world." Evangelicals "recognize both our opportunity and our responsibility to offer a biblically moral witness that can help shape public policy in the most powerful nation on earth, and therefore contribute to the well-being of the entire world." Those outside the evangelical community recognize the same phenomenon, albeit with varying levels of approval or disapproval. E.O. Wilson, the eminent Harvard biologist and self-anointed "secular humanist," wrote a book-length letter to an imaginary Southern Baptist pastor beseeching the evangelical church to support environmental causes. But Kevin Phillips is one of many observers who warn that the United States is becoming a theocracy, and Salt Lake City librarian Chip Ward has decried "zealous fundamentalist Christians" as "America’s Taliban, also known as George Bush’s base." The prospect of evangelicals dictating public policy is frightening to such observers, even when they might agree with the policy in question. These views prompted New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof to write about the need to "hug an evangelical."

At the same time, climate change has achieved a central role in political debate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2007 that the evidence for climate change is now "unequivocal" and is almost surely caused in part by human activities. Six weeks after the report was issued, former Vice President Al Gore testified before Congress that climate change "is a planetary emergency—a crisis that threatens the survival of our civilization and the future of our children." The sudden appearance of the IPCC and Gore to warn the nation of the impending crisis is not unprecedented. As science writer David Quammen notes in his book "The Second Bill of Rights," the issue of global warming has been raised as early as the 1950s, with calls for action from scientists such as William Alles and Barry Commoner. However, it was not until the 1980s that the issue gained significant political attention. The 1990s saw the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which set targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

1. See especially General MacArthur, Fundamentalism and America’s Culture (2d ed. 2006).
survival of our civilization and the habitability of the Earth." Both the IPCC and Gore won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts. Nicholas Kristof again opined that climate change "could be the most important issue of this century."

The sudden prominence of evangelicals and climate change has also been matched by a recognition of the relationship between the two. One scholar observed that "it's the evangelicals, with their close ties to the GOP, who have the power to move the debate . . . . They could produce policies more palatable to people who have . . . . seen [un]moved by secular environmental groups." Prominent environmental organizations are boosting their connections with evangelicals interested in responding to climate change. The political debate regarding the appropriate responses to climate change is still evolving, so garnering the support of a key political constituency is important. The emergence of evangelical interest in climate change has intrigued observers accustomed to linking evangelicals to social issues and the Republican Party. For example, the policy director of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Richard Cizik, was pictured on the cover of Vanity Fair as walking across water.


10. Karen Brenan & Martha Brintnall, God, Green Soldiers, A New Call to Combat Global Warming Triggers Soul Searching and Controversy Among Evangelicals, Newsweek, Feb. 13, 2006, at 49 (quoting John Green of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life). See Steven F. Hayward, A Cross of Green: Reflections on Eco-Theology, ENVTL. POL.'S Outlook, July-Aug. 2005, at 1 (touting that "the potential fusion of evangelicals, who voted for Bush by a four-to-one margin, and environmentalists, who voted for Kerry by a four-to-one margin, is the perfect man-bites-dog story for the media."). I do not wish to diminish the importance and influence of other religious communities who are involved in the climate change debate, but their work is not the focus of my attention here.


Some evangelicals, however, are notably cool to calls to respond to climate change. Three of the four evangelicals who testified at a June 2007 congressional hearing exploring the impact of religious beliefs on the response to climate change called for caution and prudence, not immediate action.14 Further, the national media attention given to the unusual alliance of evangelicals and traditional environmentalists who oppose climate change probably exaggerates the support within the broader evangelical community for addressing climate change.

The evangelical community, in short, is divided among those who believe that action to combat climate change is necessary and those who are more skeptical about the need to prioritize climate change. The former group, favoring a more aggressive response to climate change, is led by the Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI), which was founded in 2006 and supported by dozens of evangelical leaders. The Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (ISA), founded in 2005 and likewise supported by many evangelical leaders, represents those who question the wisdom of expending significant societal resources on climate change. These groups reflect the broader divisions among evangelicals who are beginning to engage many environmental issues from their shared faith perspective.

This essay explores some of the possible explanations for the division among evangelicals with respect to climate change. Part I provides an overview of evangelicals, climate change, and how evangelicals are responding to climate change. Part II considers theology and ethics, science, and law and politics as the source of the differences among evangelicals regarding climate change. None of these explanations prove to be definitive, though contrasting perspectives on political engagement may offer the best explanation for the division among evangelicals. Part III suggests some lessons from the climate change debate for future environmental engagement by evangelicals and sketches my own tentative thoughts on the problem.

Throughout this essay, I hope to provide insight into the contemporary relationship between religious faith and public policy. My endeavor here is descriptive, not normative. I am hopeful that a better understanding of the contrasting views within the evangelical community will lead to more thoughtful responses to climate change, a more constructive engagement between evangelicals and environmental activists, and a deeper understanding of the relationship between religious teachings and environmental protection.

---


---

2008]

I. OVER

Let me begin by exploring how the climate change debate may be of interest to the legal community. Energy from fossil fuels is essential to our economy. The removal and burning of fossil fuels can result in large amounts of greenhouse gases, which have a significant impact on the Earth's climate. These greenhouse gases trap heat from the sun, leading to an increase in global temperatures. This increase in global temperatures has caused the melting of glaciers and ice caps, leading to rising sea levels and increased frequency of extreme weather events such as hurricanes and droughts.

A. Climate Change

"Climate change is a complex issue that affects our planet in many ways. It involves the intricate balance of natural systems and human activities. To understand the impact of climate change on our planet, we must consider the changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea level, as well as the effects on ecosystems and human health."

These "greenhouse" gases are primarily emitted by human activities such as industrialization, agriculture, and transportation. The burning of fossil fuels is a major contributor to these emissions. The increase in greenhouse gases has led to a rise in global temperatures, causing a variety of environmental problems such as rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and increased frequency of extreme weather events.

The effects of climate change are not limited to environmental issues. The increase in global temperatures has also led to an increase in natural disasters such as hurricanes and droughts. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reported that the observed increase in the number of observed natural disasters is due to climate change. The EPA has also reported that the observed increase in the number of observed natural disasters is due to climate change.

15. U.S. Envi- 

rment proj. office, Climate Change/Global 

warming" are often asked. More 

frequently, there are [15].

16. U.S. Envi- 

rment proj. office, Climate Change/Global 

warming" are often asked. More 

frequently, there are [15].

17. U.S. Envi- 

rment proj. office, Climate Change/Global 

warming" are often asked. More 

frequently, there are [15].

18. Interagency 

observed increase in the observed increase.
I. OVERVIEW OF EVANGELICALS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Let me begin with a brief overview of the two aspects of my topic and how they fit together. I will first summarize the science and policy of climate change, next describe the evangelical community, and then explain how evangelicals have become involved in the climate change debate during the past few years.

A. Climate Change

"Climate change refers to any significant change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, or wind) lasting for an extended period (decades or longer)." The basic science behind the earth's retention of heat is as follows.

Energy from the Sun drives the Earth's weather and climate. The Earth absorbs energy from the Sun, and also radiates energy back into space. However, much of this energy going back to space is absorbed by "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere... Because the atmosphere then radiates most of this energy back to the Earth's surface, our planet is warmer than it would be if the atmosphere did not contain these gases. Without this natural "greenhouse effect," temperatures would be about 60°F lower than they are now, and life as we know it today would not be possible.

These "greenhouse gases" include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. Such gases exist naturally in our atmosphere. Changes in the sun's intensity, earth's orbit, ocean's circulation and volcanic eruptions are among the natural factors that can change the climate. Human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, reforestation, urbanization and desertification can affect the climate as well. The IPCC concluded in 2007 that human activity "very likely" has caused most of the rise in temperatures since 1950.

The effects of climate change could include flooding in coastal areas, droughts elsewhere, heat waves, cold spells, extinctions, and the spread of...
diseases. The IPCC’s 2007 report concluded that “changes in arctic temperature and ice, widespread changes in precipitation amounts, ocean salinity, wind patterns and aspects of extreme weather including droughts, heavy precipitation, heat waves and the intensity of tropical cyclones” have already been observed.19 Many people fear that climate change could work far more dramatic changes in the future. Al Gore’s documentary An Inconvenient Truth, for example, fears that climate change could displace twenty million people from Beijing, forty million from Shanghai, and sixty million from Calcutta and Bangladesh. 20 A number of scientists and policymakers, though, contest these more apocalyptic scenarios.21

The international community responded to climate change in 1992 with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which sought to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions.22 The Kyoto Protocol, added to the convention in 1997, contains legally binding emissions targets for developed countries and encourages investment in emissions reductions in developing countries.23 As of 2007, one hundred and seventy-five nations have ratified the Protocol.24 The United States signed the treaty, but the Senate did not ratify it. In 2002, President Bush announced that the United States was withdrawing from the agreement because of the economic impact of implementing the changes necessary to reduce emissions and the failure to treat all polluting nations equally.25 Alternatively, the climate change debate in the United States has turned to domestic solutions. That is the debate that evangelicals have entered.

B. Evangelicals

Sociologist Michael Lindsay wrote that “[e]vangelicals are the most discussed but least understood group in America today.”26 Evangelicals are known by their religious beliefs. The term “evangel” comes from the Greek words for “good news,” and a defining characteristic of evangelicals is to

19. Id. at 7.
21. For perhaps the simplest explanation of how warming occurs, see BRIAN LOHMBOERG, COOL IT: THE SKEPTICAL ENVIRONMENTALIST’S GUIDE TO GLOBAL WARMING (2007).
live as witnesses to the gospel message articulated in the New Testament and the entire Bible. According to the National Association of Evangelical’s (NAE) statement of faith, evangelicals "believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God." At the risk of oversimplification, this view of scripture distinguishes evangelicals both from mainstream Protestants (who regard the Bible as somewhat less authoritative and are more likely to supplement it with appeals to experience, tradition and other spiritual insights) and from most Catholics (who, besides being instructed by the Bible, seek to honor the past teachings of the church). The definitional difficulty is illustrated by the fact that some Catholics fit the description of evangelicals. Whatever the distinction from other forms of Christian belief, the supremacy of the Bible has obvious implications for evangelistic attitudes toward public policy questions such as climate change, for guidance is sought from specific biblical texts and from the broader message of the scriptures. Evangelicals also “believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.” Other central beliefs include the Trinitarian concept of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit; the deity of Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit; and “the spiritual unity of believers.” Many of these beliefs are not unique to evangelicals, as I know well from my many Catholic colleagues at Notre Dame, but together they form the distinctive characteristics of evangelicals today.

Evangelicals are part of many denominations and many non-denominational churches. The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest evangelical

28. Id. at 4.
29. Id., supra note 26, at 4 (defining “evangelical as one who believes (1) that the Bible is the supreme authority for religious belief and practice, (2) that he or she has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and (3) that one should take a transforming, activist approach to faith”); Mark A. Noll, The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesley’s 15 (2003) describing the “awakening belief in the need for conversion (the new birth) and the necessity of a new life of active holiness (the power of godliness)” as the “foundation” of the evangelical movement; David Skirka, The Unbearable Lightness of Christian Legal Scholarship 1 (U. Pa. L. Sch., Public Law Working Paper No. 06-37, 2007), available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=939930 (citing David Beetham’s understanding of evangelicals as “characterized by a commitment to (1) the authority of the Bible, (2) the cross (the belief that salvation is only possible through the atoning work of Jesus Christ), (3) conversion (a believer must, like Jimmy Carter, be ‘born again’), and (4) activism (in evangelism, missions, and social work”)); D.W. Berenson, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History From the 1730s to the 1980s 2–3 (1989); The Barna Group, Americans Are Most Worried About Children’s Future, The Barga Report, Aug. 20, 2007, available at http://www.barna.org/PressPage.aspx?Page=Barna&adult&BaraId=ID177 (defining evangelicals as those who (1) are born again, (2) regard their faith as very important, (3) have a responsibility to share their beliefs, (4) believe that Satan exists, (5) believe that salvation comes through faith not works, (6) believe that Jesus lived a sinless life, (7) believe that the Bible is wholly accurate, and (8) view God as all-knowing and all-powerful) (hereinafter Americans Are Most Worried).
church in the United States, followed by a number of African-American denominations. Evangelicals are also active within mainstream Protestant churches that do not share their theological beliefs. Evangelicals are particularly active in “parachurch” organizations that transcend denominations and individual congregations, including relief organizations such as World Vision, youth ministries such as Young Life, and prison ministry services such as Prison Fellowship (founded by Chuck Colson in the aftermath of his conversion and imprisonment related to the Watergate scandal).30

Historically, evangelicals were politically active during the nineteenth century, when they comprised the dominant religious community in the United States. Evangelical influence began to wane after the Civil War, and a series of events coinciding with the Scopes trial of the 1920s convinced evangelicals to withdraw from the public square.31 Their reengagement began during the late 1940s, thanks to such figures as Christianity Today founder Carl Henry, and it quickly expanded in the 1970s in the aftermath of controversial Supreme Court decisions involving school prayer and abortion.32

Evangelicals have gained a high political profile, typically associated with issues such as abortion and international religious freedom. Lindsay reported, however, that “there remains a vibrant constituency of liberal or progressive evangelicals that has been around for decades.”33 Moreover, “the movement has been the site of deep divisions, several of which have political consequences.”34 Lindsay explained some of these divisions by distinguishing between “populist evangelicals” and “cosmopolitan evangelicals.” Populist evangelicals rely upon large campaigns for religious and political actions, derive their authority from the evangelical subculture, and see traditional believers as good and secular activities as bad. Cosmopolitan evangelicals enjoy greater influence and access to powerful institutions, are eager to act on their faith outside of the evangelical subculture, and seek to influence society and gain legitimacy over the longer term.35 Tensions exist between evangelicals along these lines, but political differences “do not follow the cosmopolitan/populist divide.”36 Climate change presents a fascinating power and the cause

C. Evangelical Ecosermon

Like the broom dress environmental in its 196

Crisis,” which he limited explorati
ted to popular au
gery, but whatever
are unconcerned
were exploring the
to the environment.38

Christian e

texts involving the

ship of the people

animals and the

other books. In A

erries of wilder

otion, although

only a modest rol

the last half of th

eming the Christian

the proposed W

warning of Polls

standing. Christian

recent debates in

The origins of

change in partic

past fifteen years

formed in 1993, Speci

Species Act and

group of more

31. See generally MARIAN, supra note 1 (describing evangelical social engagement in the early twentieth century).
33. Lindsay, supra note 26, at 27-28.
34. Id. at 62.
35. See id. at 218-21.
36. Id. at 221.
37. Lynn White
38. The best of

R. D. Barlow,

FOREST, FOR THE

LOVING NATURE: ECO

36 See John C.

40. Francis A.

41. See John C.
presents a fascinating test case for how evangelicals use their newfound power and the causes for which it should be used.

C. Evangelical Responses to Global Warming

Like the broader Christian community, evangelicals were late to address environmental issues. Lynn White, Jr. offered the most famous explanation in his 1967 Science article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," which blamed Christian teaching for encouraging an attitude of unlimited exploitation of the natural world. White's thesis has been subjected to numerous theological and historical critiques in the past forty years, but whatever its accuracy, the claim that Christianity (and Christians) are unconcerned about the environment has prompted a growing literature exploring the proper relationship between Christian teaching and the environment.

Christian environmental thinking began with the innumerable biblical texts involving the creation of the earth and all of its creatures, the relationship of the people to their often hostile environment, the rules for treating animals and the land, and the rich imagery contained in the Psalms and other books. In America, the landscape paintings of Thomas Cole and writings of wilderness enthusiast John Muir were deeply influenced by Christian thought, albeit in different ways, yet the Christian community played only a modest role in the development of modern environmental law during the last half of the twentieth century. There were some exceptions, including the Christian imagery voiced by numerous witnesses in the hearings on the proposed Wilderness Act of 1964 and Francis Schaeffer's 1970 book warning of Pollution and the Death of Man. Such exceptions notwithstanding, Christians and Christian teaching were absent from most of the recent debates about environmental law.

The origins of evangelical interest in environmental issues, and climate change in particular, are found in several events that occurred during the past fifteen years. The Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) was formed in 1993, and one year later it worked to support the Endangered Species Act and prevent changes it feared would weaken the law. In 2000, a group of more conservative evangelicals issued the Cornwall Declaration,

37. Lynn White, Jr., The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis, 155 Science 1203 (1967).
which acknowledged the need to address environmental problems but resisted greater governmental regulation. The declaration identified “three areas of common misunderstanding” that contradicted the goal of relying upon “sound theology and sound science” to guide public policymaking.42 They first criticized the view of people as “consumers and polluters” instead of as “producers and stewards,” and the resulting failure to recognize “our potential, as bearers of God’s image, to add to the earth’s abundance.”43 A second argument favored active human shaping of creation instead of leaving nature untrammeled by man. In other words, “human stewardship that unlocks the potential in creation for all the earth’s inhabitants” is “good.”44 The Cornwall Declaration’s third claim sought to distinguish environmental concerns that “are well founded and serious” from those that “are without foundation or greatly exaggerated,” listing “fears of destructive manmade global warming, overpopulation, and rampant species loss” among the latter.45

EEN returned to the spotlight in 2002 with its “What Would Jesus Drive?” campaign against SUVs and excessive car usage.46 Then, in 2005, the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (ISA) was formed to build upon the principles articulated in the Cornwall Declaration. The ISA published An Examination of the Scientific, Ethical and Theological Implications of Climate Change Policy, containing essays written by climate scientist Roy Spencer, energy and environmental policy analyst Paul Driessen, and Knox Theological Seminary professor Calvin Beisner.47 Spencer questioned the certainty of the scientific evidence linking human activities to climate change. Indeed, he emphasized that “much faith is required to extrapolate our current level of climate understanding to predictions of future warning.”48 Driessen argued that government regulation of greenhouse gas emissions would wreak havoc on the well-being of the poor around the world.49 Beisner counseled prudence in responding to climate change, and he advised Christians to more carefully explore the biblical principles regarding creation “before policy.”50

The climate proponents of re: The newly created entitled Climate Change Foundation claim that climate change will be far more severe than what is now apparent. Greenpeace, a role to play in publicizing the risk of climate change, has called for a national discussion on climate change and signed a statement on the need for early action.52 The Ecumenical Call to Action, a broad coalition of religious groups, has issued a statement on climate change and called for a global summit to address the issue.53

43. Id.
44. Id.
45. Id.
49. Paul Driessen, Global Warming and the Poor, in ISA EXAMINATION, supra note 47, at 8.
creation "before we venture to advise the world about environmental policy."50

The climate change debate among evangelicals heated up in 2006. The proponents of responding to climate change struck first. In January 2006, the newly created Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI) released a report entitled Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action.51 The report advanced four claims. First, it acknowledged that "[h]uman-induced climate change is real."52 It next recognized that "[t]he consequences of climate change will be significant, and will hit the poor the hardest."53 The third claim was that "Christian moral convictions demand our response to the climate change problem."54 The report concluded that "[t]he need to act now is urgent. Governments, businesses, churches, and individuals all have a role to play in addressing climate changes—starting now."55 The eighty-six signatories of the statement included numerous leading pastors such as Bill Hybels and Rick Warren, the presidents of Wheaton College and Calvin College, leaders of parachurch organizations such as World Vision, and individuals affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Christianity Today and the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN).

The evangelical opponents of prioritizing action to regulate climate change responded with their own statement. The ISA released an open letter to the signers of the ECI statement and addressed a strikingly different approach. The open letter questioned "the extent, the significance, and perhaps the existence of the much-touted scientific consensus on catastrophic human-induced global warming."56 The letter further asserted that "the harm caused by mandated reductions in energy consumption in the quixotic quest to reduce global warming will far exceed its benefits."57 It concluded that human efforts to stop climate change "are largely futile," that scarce


51. ECI Call to Action, supra note 3. The creation of the ECI was preceded by a November 2002 meeting of evangelical scientists. A 2002 conference in Oxford organized by the John Ray Initiative and the Ashridge Institute of Environmental Studies, the "What Would Jesus Drive?" campaign of 2002, the 2004 Sandy Cove Covenant regarding environmental stewardship, and a statement on civic responsibility issued by the National Association of Evangelicals discussing the need for environmental stewardship. See The Evangelical Climate Initiative: A History, http://www.christiansandclimate.org/history (last visited Dec. 22, 2007); NAE’s Call to Evangelicals, For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility 11-12, http://www.nae.net/images/civic_responsibility2.pdf (last visited Jan. 27, 2008).

52. ECI Call to Action, supra note 3, at 4.

53. Id. at 5.

54. Id. at 7.

55. Id. at 8.


57. Id.
resources could be better allocated to "more beneficial uses," and that adaptation is a better strategy to climate change than prevention.58 The open letter was endorsed by another lengthy list of evangelical leaders, including former Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel, Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, Michael Comarttie of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, Professor D.A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and numerous pastors, professors, and parachurch officials.

The debate continued in 2007. The first controversy centered on Richard Cizik, the policy director for the NAE. Cizik had become outspoken about the perils of climate change, appearing in a host of religious and secular venues to speak about the topic. His efforts earned him the scorn of the evangelical opponents of climate change regulations, who appealed to the NAE board to remove him from his position because "he regularly speaks without authorization for the entire organization and puts forward his own political opinions as scientific fact."59 The NAE board declined to remove Cizik,60 but he remains a controversial figure in the debate.

The next significant event occurred in June 2007, when the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on religious perspectives on climate change. Four evangelicals were among the witnesses. Before the committee: Jim Wall, the head of the EEN, who explained the conclusions of the ECI and its public policy recommendations; activist and historian David Barton, who identified the distinctive evangelical approaches to theology, science and prioritizing social issues; James Torkowski of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, who emphasized the positive value of human population and development; and Southern Baptist Seminary Dean Russell Moore, who explained why Southern Baptists were concerned about the popular demand to respond to climate change.61

It is unclear how these discussions have affected the broader community of evangelicals who are unfamiliar with climate change. A September

58. Id. at 3. The ISA also discouraged the NAE from taking an official position on climate change issues. Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, A Letter to the National Association of Evangelicals on the Issue of Global Warming, http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pdf/NAE-april%20letter.pdf (last visited Feb. 7, 2008). The ISA stated that "there should be room for Bible-believing evangelicals to disagree about the cause, severity and solutions to the global warming issue." Id. The signers of that letter included Prison Fellowship Ministries founder Charles Colson, Focus on the Family's James Dobson, and several more evangelical pastors and leaders. Id.


61. See Religious Leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14. The three other religious leaders who testified at the hearing were Katharine Jefferts Schori, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church and a former scientist; John Carr of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; and Rabbi David Saperstein of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism.

2007 poll conducted far less concern society. Only this "major" problem line Protestants evangelicals were ultion groups s one month later legislation to rec September 2007 warning widens.

In sum, we are divided abou supporters want couns counsel of other issues. the broader of the hearing featured also included e ommonous and in exaggerated.56 change as a ser discouraging. Since conflict new legal tools sweeping legis stamented design 2006 elections.

62. See Torkowski, supra note 15.

63. Evangelical Climate Policy: New Model, NEWSDATE, Oct. 11, 2006 Hearing, supra note 14, concluding that so threat to future gen.

64. Andrew 1, Sept. 78, 2007, at 1.


66. See Ten of ENVIRONMENT.
2007 poll conducted by The Barna Group indicated that evangelicals were far less concerned about climate change than any other group in American society. Only thirty-three percent of evangelicals considered climate change a “major” problem, compared to fifty-nine percent of Catholics and mainline Protestants and sixty-nine percent of atheists and agnostics. Indeed, evangelicals were “the least concerned segment among more than fifty population groups studied.” By contrast, a poll released by Ellison Research one month later found that eighty-four percent of evangelicals supported legislation to reduce global warming. Whatever the precise numbers, as of September 2007, the Wall Street Journal reported that the “split over global warming widens among evangelicals.”

In sum, evangelicals acknowledge that the earth is warming, but they are divided about what that means and what to do about it. The ECI and its supporters want to act now and to act aggressively; the ISA and its supporters counsel caution and prudence before prioritizing climate change ahead of other issues. The debate among evangelicals thus mirrors, albeit dimly, the broader debate about climate change. The congressional committee hearing featuring Al Gore’s testimony of a planetary emergency also included Bjorn Lomborg’s reply that “[s]tatesmen about the strong, ominous and immediate consequences of global warming are often wildly exaggerated.”

Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger view climate change as a serious problem, but they reject the pollution control responses advocated by most environmentalists and favor encouraging—rather than discouraging—economic development in order to arrest climate change. Such conflicting opinions have blocked the most ambitious proposals for new legal tools to respond to climate change. Congressional efforts to enact sweeping legislation aimed at curtailing greenhouse gas emissions remain stalemated despite the Democratic takeover of Congress after the November 2006 elections. States, local governments and private industry have attacked...
the issue more aggressively.67 Litigation relying upon existing laws has achieved mixed results.68 The climate change issue, in short, has gained significant public attention but yielded modest legal gains, which is why so many pastors on all sides of the issue are looking to persuade evangelicals to support their cause.

II. WHY EVANGELICALS DISAGREE

"Everybody is for stopping global warming," as climate change skeptic Charles Colson has acknowledged,69 yet the evangelical community remains divided concerning climate change. The division has become national news. What is lacking is an explanation. I will consider three possible answers in this section: understandings of theology and ethics, the role of science, and views of law and politics. I conclude that little of the division among evangelicals with respect to climate change is attributable to theology or ethics, that contrasting understandings of the science of climate change explains some of the division, and that the most profound differences among evangelicals exist in their perspectives regarding the nature of law and the political process.

A. Theology & Ethics

Theological differences would seem to be an unlikely source of disagreement among evangelical attitudes toward climate change. The popular perception of evangelicals is that they adhere to a similar theology, almost by definition. Actually, there are numerous lively theological disputes within the evangelical community, which attests to the difficulty in identifying precisely what qualifies as "evangelical." Few of these points of theological difference color evangelical views of climate change. Indeed, many of the same bibilical principles are cited by both proponents and opponents of a greater governmental response to climate change. "All sides cite the

Bible,” to echo Abraham Lincoln.70 There are, however, some subtle differences in theology among the evangelical’s who have addressed climate change issues, and those differences become more pronounced when they are translated into ethical principles.

The idea animating much recent evangelical writing about environmental protection is that the Bible commands that we care for God’s creation. The Bible teaches that God created the world, that He pronounced the creation to be good; that He is the owner of all of creation, that He gave humanity “dominion” over creation, and that He charged humanity with the responsibility of caring for creation.71 Applying these principles to climate change, the ECI proclaimed that “Christians must care about climate change because we love God the Creator and Jesus our Lord, through whom and for whom the creation was made. This is God’s world, and any damage that we do to God’s world is an offense against God Himself.”72 The ECI supports that assertion by referencing three biblical texts: the creation story of Genesis 1, David’s proclamation that “the earth is the Lord’s” in Psalm 24, and Paul’s reminder in Colossians 1:15 that all things were created by and for Christ.73

The dominion command is what troubled Lynn White in his essay blaming Christianity for the environmental crisis, and its precise meaning is still questioned among evangelicals. But most evangelicals read the first chapters of Genesis to emphasize the need for stewardship, rather than justifying dominating human exploitation of the environment.74 Indeed, the ECI cited the dominion passage in arguing that “[c]limate change is the latest evidence of our failure to exercise proper stewardship.”75 The Cornwall Declaration agreed that God commanded humans “to exercise stewardship over the earth.”76

Evangelicals agree that creation has suffered from human sin. As the Cornwall Declaration put it, “sin daffled the good creation.”77 Biblical support for the effects of human sinfulness is seen most clearly in Paul’s letter

---

70. Higgins, supra note 64, at Al. Abraham Lincoln, 6th President of the United States of America, Second Inaugural Address (Mar. 4, 1865), available at http://www.nps.gov/archsite/lincoln.htm (“Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God . . .”)


72. ECI CALL TO ACTION, supra note 3, at 7.

73. Id.

74. See Nagle, supra note 39, at 987–93 (describing recent theories of dominion and stewardship).

75. ECI CALL TO ACTION, supra note 3, at 7.

76. CORNWALL DECLARATION, supra note 42, at 2.

77. Id.
to the Romans, which speaks of how “the creation was subjected to frustration” and of creation’s “bondage to decay.”

Evangelicals further agree about the duty to care for our neighbors, especially the poor. Jesus taught his followers to “[l]ove your neighbor as yourself.” He also evidenced special concern for the plight of the poor.

The ECI thus cited its “deep commitment to Jesus Christ and his commands to love our neighbors” and “to care for the least of these” as motivating its call to action. The ECI sought “a safe and healthy future for our children,” thus invoking the theme of intergenerational responsibility that is common in international environmental law. The ECI also included “God’s other creatures” among those who could be affected by climate change.

The ISA and other skeptics of climate change regulation concur with the theological call to help our neighbors, but as I will discuss below, they offer a strikingly different view of how various policies could affect the poor.

The duty to care for our neighbors fits within the broader evangelical view of humanity. The Cornwall Declaration proclaimed that God gave humanity “a privileged place among creatures.” This makes some evangelicals leery of environmental concerns that are unrelated to the health and welfare of humanity. James Dobson, for example, objected that “[a]ny issue that seems to put plants and animals above humans is one that we cannot support.” There is particular concern about suggestions involving the relationship between human overpopulation and environmental conditions. Beisner is one of many evangelicals who insist that people are a blessing, not a curse. It is not surprising, therefore, that so many evangelicals were upset with Richard Cizik’s remark to the World Bank that “[w]e need to confront population control and we can.” Of course, such views are controversial in many quarters outside evangelical circles, but evangelicals generally agree about the biblical account of humanity’s place in creation.

The few places where evangelicals evidence some disagreement relate to their view of the earth’s present and its future. Evangelicals acknowledge that the earth as containing inferences. For the first time, the earth dammed the earth’s good house gases. The damage is rare today. Some believe that Creator has built the world. More than evangelicals agree today.

Ecological role. In debates about its possible role in debates about it, creationists have come to see that evangelicals and environmentalists have disagreed about the importance of the distinction between creation and the first event. Some have described the Bible as an account of the first evens described by the Bible. There is evidence that the earth is being destroyed by a catastrophic biotic event.

Notably about the exception that creationists have made, the current work in environmental science, specifically, the current work in this area of the world is unsuccess. Some of the evangelicals who have been

that the earth as created by God is good, but that affirmation yields conflicting
ingferences. For those concerned about climate change, the goodness of
the earth demands that people act to preserve that goodness. For skeptics,
the earth’s goodness demonstrates that it is capable of withstanding green-
house gases. Thus, Beisner has written that “[t]he irreversibility, caustic
damage is rare to nonexistent in the world’s history” because “the wise
Creator has built multiple self-protecting and self-correcting layers into His
world.” 88 Moreover, God declared the earth “good” before the fall, and
evangelicals question the effects of that fall on the earth as we experience it
today.

Eschatology—the ultimate future of the world—plays an intriguing role
debates about how Christian theology relates to current environmental
concerns. The Book of Revelation portrays numerous events whose meaning
have long been debated and continue to be debated within the evangelical
community. 89 Most of the controversy surrounding Revelation has
involved the precise timing of those events, but questions of when are
less important than questions of what in the environmental context.
Revelation culminates in “a new heaven and a new earth” after “the first heaven
and the first earth had passed away.” 90 What is this “new earth,” and what
does the passing away of the “first earth” mean? James Tonkovich has
described the Bible as “a story of re-creation,” not of “restoration,” thereby
contradicting Richard Cizik’s suggestion that God is calling us to “restore
Eden.” 91 There is also a belief that a sovereign God will not allow humans
to completely destroy His creation. God’s covenant to Noah to never de-
stroy the earth again, writes Beisner, “ought to make Christians inherently
skeptical of claims that this or that human action threatens permanent and
catastrophic damage to the Earth.” 92

Notably absent from the list of evangelical beliefs is the popular per-
ception that Christians do not care about this earth because God will replace
it when Christ returns. This eschatological argument against Christian inter-
est in environmental protection is rooted in the belief that the Bible’s—and
specifically, the Book of Revelation’s—promise of the future destruction of
the current world and the unveiling of a new earth renders care for this
world unnecessary. That is the premise of a few interviews of individual
evangelicals who were asked about their interest in environmental issues.
Notably, though, that argument has not been voiced by any of the evangeli-
cals who have been active in addressing the climate change debate. Instead,
the view of evangelicals as hostage to a particular reading of Revelation appears in a number of critiques of the Bush Administration’s environmental policy.93 “Many Christian fundamentalists feel that concern for the future of our planet is irrelevant,” wrote Glenn Scherer in an oft-quoted article in Grist Magazine, “because it has no future.”94 Scherer quoted Secretary of the Interior James Watt’s testimony before Congress in 1981 that “[a]fter the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.”95 In fact, Watt actually told Congress in that “I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns, whatever it is we have to manage with a skill to have the resources needed for future generations.”96

Actually, evangelicals object to what they describe as the secular view of the apocalypse presumed by those who are most concerned about climate change. Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth described the future effects of climate change as “almost like a nature hike through the book of Revelation.”97 Nordhaus and Shellenberger described An Inconvenient Truth as exemplifying the tendency of environmentalists to “preach terrifying stories of eco-apocalypse.”98 Likewise, Steven Hayward observed “the centrality of the apocalypse to both creeds,” both Christian and environmentalist. According to Hayward:

The crucial difference is that the Christian apocalypse... includes the promise of salvation and redemption for man and nature, while the secular escopocalypse is barren and hopeless. One irony of this comparison is the way in which it reveals a greater anthropocentric conceit on the part of fundamentalist environmentalism than fundamentalist Christianity. ... For all of the nature-worship that comes along with fundamentalist environmentalism, it is surprising that it has not developed a secular doctrine of the doomsday variety.”99

Evangelicals, however, have not always held understandings of the future that are not_maximizing, as they have frequently advocated for a future in which human beings are prepared for the return of Christ.100 In fact, many of the arguments made by environmentalists against climate change are shaped by a desire to avoid the apocalypse, which they see as a threat to the world as we know it.101

Historically, the scientific revolution, in particular when it comes to understanding the changes in the world, has had a significant impact on the way in which we view the future.102

B. Science

The impetus for change in the scientific community has been the recognition that the future of the planet is at stake, and that we must act now to prevent irreversible damage.103


101. Id. at 315.

102. See, e.g., SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT, supra note 101.


93. See, e.g., GRIST MAGAZINE, supra note 46, at 52.

94. See, e.g., GRIST MAGAZINE, supra note 46, at 52.

95. See, e.g., GRIST MAGAZINE, supra note 46, at 52.

96. See, e.g., GRIST MAGAZINE, supra note 46, at 52.


98. See, e.g., GRIST MAGAZINE, supra note 46, at 52.

99. Hayward, supra note 46, at 52.
The doctrine of resurrection based on evolution to go along with its doctrine of the eco-apocalypse.99

Evangelicals possess what Lindsay describes as an “elastic orthodoxy,” which holds core convictions while accepting those with different understandings of Christian teaching.100 This elastic orthodoxy, however, “is not a softening of conviction or a blurring of the lines that make Christianity distinctive.”101 Thus, evangelicals are able to accept diverse understandings of eschatology while rejecting the ideas of “eco-apocalypse” described above. The evangelical acceptance of an elastic orthodoxy suggests that the search for the disagreement about how to apply Christian teaching to public policy with respect to climate change must look elsewhere.

B. Science

The impetus for any response to climate change rests upon the scientific evidence that the climate is changing. Or, as the ECI put it, “[b]ecause all religious/moral claims about climate change are relevant only if climate change is real and is mainly human-induced, everything hinges on the scientific data.”102 That is a problem. Richard Cizik told an interviewer that “in the relationship between religion and science, climate change ... is the third rail, ‘you touch it, you die.’”103 Evangelical attitudes toward climate change are shaped by the unique relationship of evangelicals to contemporary scientific argumentation. Many evangelicals are often more skeptical than many other individuals about the nature of scientific claims, but again, it is difficult to explain why some evangelicals accept the popular scientific consensus regarding climate change while others do not.

Historically, evangelical Protestants were at the forefront of the scientific revolution.104 That changed over the course of several centuries, particularly when Darwin’s theory of evolution was seen to contradict the teachings of the first chapter of Genesis.105 Evangelicals are especially

99. Hayward, supra note 10, at 3 (emphasis omitted); see Religious Leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14 (testimony of Russell D. Moore) (arguing that “we cannot share a radical environmentalist’s apocalyptic scenario of ‘earth in the balance’”).
100. LINDSAY, supra note 26, at 215.
101. Id. at 217.
102. ECI CALL TO ACTION, supra note 3; see COMMENTS, CRITICAL ANALYSIS: RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND ENVIRONMENTALISM 71 (Michael Cremo, ed., 1995) (containing a statement of Ron Sider, finding it “distressing that we have not been able to get beyond enormous disagreements on the scientific data so we can deal with the ethical question”).
104. See generally EVANGELICALS AND SCIENCE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (David N. Lillingstone, D.G. Han & Mark A. Noll eds., 1999).
war of scientific claims they regard as contrary to biblical teaching. This is particularly obvious in the ongoing dispute between theories of evolution and creation. Richard Crick said that "historically, evangelicals have reasoned like this: Scientists believe in evolution. Scientists are telling us climate change is real. Therefore, I won't believe what scientists are saying."[106] In fact, there is a notable diversity of opinion among evangelicals with respect to the precise relationship between biblical teaching about creation and scientific teaching about evolution, but it is certainly true that evangelicals are more cautious in approaching evolutionary science than other segments of the public. That caution affects attitudes toward the scientific basis for climate change. "If you don't believe in the evolutionary sciences," claimed Chip Ward, "chances are you also don't heed or trust the ecological sciences that underlie environmental law and policy."[107]

Such distrust appears in contexts apart from the evolution controversy. Some in the evangelical community see scientists and environmentalists as worshiping the earth and hostile to Christianity.[108] Recent studies indicating that scientists are far more likely to be politically liberal and secular than the general population fuel such concerns.[109] Of course, there are many scientists who seek to integrate their religious beliefs and their scientific expertise.[110] There are also others who question the use of science in environmental policy without claiming any religious commitment.[111] But the conflicts between the languages, claims and authorities used by evangelical beliefs and scientific beliefs are especially profound.

Evangelicals share wider concerns about the credibility of scientific expertise funded by particular sources. That accusation has cut both ways in the climate change debate. The scientists who are skeptical of climate change have been large oil corporate house emissions, a "[T]here are strong lars on spreading the other side, critics once upon a time search for "this is much of the..."".

Evangelicals Richard Land, the Southern Baptist Convention's President, has consistently stood against climate change action, arguing that it is not supported by the scientific community and is a form of "social engineering."[112]

This skepticism is not limited to climate change. Many religious leaders and organizations have expressed concerns about the impact of climate change on their communities. Some have called for a "green" theology, which seeks to reconcile faith and environmental stewardship. Others have criticized the scientific consensus on climate change, arguing that it is based on assumptions about the causes of climate change and the role of human activity in those changes.

106. CNN Presents: God’s Christian Warriors (CNN broadcast Aug. 23, 2007). Crick added that such reasoning was "illogical." Id. Calvin Beisner, responding to Crick, stated "we are a lot of us" and challenged Crick to "offer a single documented instance of a single notable evangelical critic of his views on global warming who has argued in any way remotely like that." E. Calvin Beisner, Global Warming: Why Evangelicals Should Not Be Alarmed, REFORMED PERSEP., Sept. 2007, at 25.


108. See, e.g., Posting of Richard Crick, E-Correspondence: Can Religion and Environmentalism Find Common Ground in the 21st Century?, to Audubonmagazine.org, http://audubonmagazine.org/Correspondence/Correspondence096506.html (Sept. 5, 2006) noting the "cognitive scientific..." to "science is a synonym for faith".

109. See, e.g., LANDISAY, supra note 26 at 109 (citing studies indicating that "only 1.5 percent of elite scientists identify as evangelical, compared to anywhere from 25 to 47 percent of the general population"). Landisay concludes that "elite scientists are not likely to be evangelical, and most of them present themselves and their work as being in opposition to evangelicals and its belief system." Id.


111. See, e.g., Nordhaus & Shellenberger, supra note 56, at 138-43.
change have been criticized for accepting funding from entities—especially large oil corporations—that have a vested interest in current levels of greenhouse emissions. As British evangelical scientist Sir John Houghton stated, "[T]here are strong vested interests that have spent tens of millions of dollars on spreading misinformation about the climate change issue." On the other side, critics have suggested that scientists may be biased by their reliance on continued federal government funding for climate change research, for "this support would stop if the research community were to say that much of the concern about this issue was misplaced."

Evangelicals are also aware that scientists have been wrong in the past. Richard Land, the head of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, referred to "the loss of credibility...in my constituency over some of the wild projections of the doomsayers among the environmentalists." David Barton's testimony to Congress cited 1960s predictions of a "population bomb," exaggerated worries about DDT, fear about aerosols in the 1970s, and past warnings of a coming ice age. Barton concluded that evangelicals "tend to be comfortable with theological teachings that have endured millennia but not with science that often reverses its claims on the same issue."

This skepticism toward scientific claims affects evangelical perspectives on climate change. First, evangelicals disagree—perhaps more than others—about the causes and consequences of global warming. No one doubts that the world's climate is changing and global temperatures are rising. There is a dispute, however, about the extent of those changes and whether they are caused by human activity. The signers of the ECI acknowledged that "many of us have required considerable convincing before becoming persuaded that climate change is a real problem and that it ought to matter to us as Christians." They now fear that "[m]illions of people could die in this century because of climate change, most of them our poorest global neighbors." The signers of the ISA still are not convinced. In February 2007, Jerry Falwell preached a sermon entitled "The Myth of..."
Global Warming. The Southern Baptist Convention approved a resolution in June 2007, insisting that “[t]he scientific community is divided regarding the extent to which humans are responsible for recent global warming” and that “[m]any scientists reject the idea of catastrophic human-induced global warming.” Calvin Beisner wrote in September 2007 that the scientific “consensus” regarding climate change is “fictional.” The statement by one leading evangelical pastor that action on climate change is necessary “regardless of what the science of it is” only fueled the skepticism of such Evangelicals. Evangelicals now debate whether the debate about the science of climate change is over.

Evangelicals thus disagree about the scientific evidence concerning climate change and the ways of responding to it. Indeed, the debate has become personal; several evangelical scientists have chastised those with different perspectives on climate change for resorting to ad hominem arguments to support their conclusions. But why? Roy Spencer’s essay for the ISA rightly observed that “[s]cience does not have anything to say about the policy implications of global warming. Science, by itself, has no values or morals.” True enough, but evangelical scientists recognize as well as anyone else that scientific arguments are the preferred currency of the policy realm. Scientific claims presage legal enactments. Most evangelicals are like the vast majority of the public who have no scientific expertise but who must make a scientific judgment in order to articulate an informed policy preference. “I am quick to say that I am not a scientist,” preached Jerry Falwell shortly after Justice Scalia had admitted the same thing.

As evangelicals with no prior experience in environmental issues are faced with apparent competing scientific claims, “[u]nfortunately, the

123. See Religious Leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14, at 5 (testimony of James Tenekeshvili).
124. See id.

C. Law & Public Policy

The division may best explain why may be surprising arguments may be made among several evangelical legal scholars. Russell Moore, for example, has written in the church law as a vehicle for promoting a biblical understanding of evangelicals as a social force. Of course, this is not the first time evangelicals have considered the church as a vehicle for public policy, the appropriate roles of scripture, and the consequences among evangelicals. Moore considers the case of the conflicting church and the appropriate role of the church in responding to scientific arguments.

129. Wright, supra note 108.
130. See Moore’s Comments, supra note 126.
tom line for many will be, whom do you want to trust?"127 That was Gordon College Professor Richard T. Wright’s conclusion concerning the role of science in his 1995 survey of the status of environmental beliefs among evangelicals. Wright advised interested Christians “to search for media with no obvious ties to a political agenda.”128 That is a wise prescription, but it is far easier said than done. Wright scolds Beisner for relying upon the work of scientists who are “anti-environmentalists,” but his recommendation of journals such as Time and Newsweek as reliable sources of scientific information is unlikely to persuade evangelicals who are suspicious of such national media.129 The temptation is to follow the learning of Emory law professor and political scientist Michael Kang: individuals rely upon “heuristic cues,” such as the views of individuals and organizations that they trust to help them decide whether scientific evidence supports a proposed legal policy.130

C. Law & Politics

The division among evangelicals concerning climate change is probably best explained by different perspectives on the use of the law. Thus, too, may be surprising because most evangelicals agree about the role of religious arguments in the public square. How that is done is the subject of some debate among evangelicals, as evidenced by Southern Baptist theologian Russell Moore’s congressional testimony that “the biblical text not be used as a vehicle for a political agenda.”131 The difficulty of identifying the precise method of integrating faith and law should not obscure the fact that evangelicals accept that religious arguments should influence public policy. Of course, this distinguishes evangelicals from some other religious believers and from many secular positions that object to the injection of religious beliefs into public policy. But that is not the source of any significant differences among evangelicals concerning climate change. This section thus considers the contrasting perspectives on four interrelated issues: how to respond to scientific uncertainty in formulating public policy, political strategy, the appropriate role of the government and other institutions, and theories of jurisprudence.

127. Richard T. Wright, Tearing Down the Green Environmental Backlash in the Evangelical Sub-Culture, 47 PEWSSR. ON SCI. & CHRISTIAN FAITH 80, 80-91 (June 1995), available at http://www.asu3.org/ASAPSCF/1995/PSCF-95Wright.html; accord Andy Crouch, Environmental Wager: Christianity Today, Aug. 4, 2005, at 66 (insisting that “[s]cience is ultimately a matter of trust” because “[t]he tools, methods, and mathematical skills scientists acquire over years of training are beyond the reach of the rest of us, even of scientists in different fields.”)

128. Wright, supra note 127.

129. Id.


1. Responding to Scientific Uncertainty

Evangelicals invoke, albeit not in so many words, two familiar and sometimes competing principles of environmental law. The supporters of governmental regulation of climate change draw support from the precautionary principle. There are many understandings of that principle, but the general idea is that you should regulate possible environmental harms in the face of uncertain evidence. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) advised that nations “should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing regulatory measures.” Susan Power Brantley described the relationship between the precautionary principle and biblical teaching, especially the Book of Proverbs, suggesting that wisdom demands prudence when confronting environmental risks. Andy Crouch applied this approach to climate change in his “Environmental Wager” column in an August 2005 issue of Christianity Today, the leading popular evangelical journal. Crouch credited unnamed evangelical scientists with likening the debate over climate change to Pascal’s wager, in which Blaise Pascal claimed that the immeasurable value of belief in God overwhelms the case for disbelief.

The evangelical opponents of climate change regulation respond by invoking a different form of the precautionary principle. They call for prudence in imposing regulation that may have substantial costs. “Which one of you,” asked the ISA, quoting Jesus’ words from the Gospel of Luke, “when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he to which risks to avoid to government cautionary prima provision invoketh measures to deal sure global bene

The opponents voice guard of cost/benefit analysis to be compared to be taken. Usi regulation insist and visited us warned that red any harm result they say, will d energy use. “I a are enough to prov areas of the environ climate change they effect on species, high proximity to L climate change can t embraced any of a policymaking

2. Politics

A related duty of Christians to be judged on the intersection of culture and sexuality, for the Good News is that God’s story is one of redemption and reconciliation, where creation is restored to its original perfection. We must be wise in our actions, and should always seek to act in ways that promote the kingdom of God. This means making thoughtful and informed decisions about issues such as climate change, and working towards solutions that are not only effective but also just and equitable. The following are some examples of how we can do this:

132. The principle is rarely cited within the evangelical community’s debate about climate change. Compare Christopher Flavin, A Response, in CREATION AT RISK, supra note 102, at 59–60 (endorsing the principle), with Martin D. D’Arcy, The Great Global Warming Swindle (WAE Gov. 2007)(on the movie), Paul Deenes proclaimed that “the precautionary principle is a very interesting one. it’s basically used to promote a particular agenda and ideology. It’s always used in one direction only. It takes about the risks of using a particular technology, fossil fuels for example, but never about the risks of not using it. it never talks about the benefits of having that technology.”


135. See Crouch, supra note 127.

136. See id.; Blaise Pascal, Pensées (1669), available at http://www.galois.edu/textbook/2002/07/04/01.html#SECTION11 ("You must wager: it is not optional .... Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is .... If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation, this: He is —") (emphasis added).
cost, to see if he has enough money to complete it."157 The problem of which risks to avoid—here, those associated with climate change or attributed to government regulations—plagues the broader discussion of the precautionary principle. The UNFCC sought to finesse the problem in its provision invoking the precautionary principle by adding that “policies and measures to deal with climate change should be cost-effective so as to ensure global benefits at the lowest possible cost.”158

The opponents of aggressive governmental action against climate change voice arguments that sound like cost/benefit analyses. The premise of cost/benefit analyses is that the costs of a given proposed action should be compared to the benefits in order to determine whether the action should be taken.159 Using this approach, evangelical opponents of governmental regulation insist that the costs of controlling global warming will be huge and visited upon the poor and developing nations. Recall that the ISA warned that reducing energy consumption would be far more costly than any harm resulting from climate change.160 Global economic production, they say, will drop by one trillion dollars per year because of reduced energy use;161 “a fraction of that one trillion dollars per year amount would be enough to provide clean drinking water and sanitation to all the remaining areas of the world presently without them.”162 On the benefit side of climate change, there is increased plant growth for cultivation, the fertilizing effect of carbon dioxide, reduced desertification, expanded habitat for some species, higher real estate values in Buffalo, and South Bend’s increased proximity to Lake Michigan.163 Evangelical proponents of regulating climate change calculate the costs and benefits differently, but they have not embraced any of the abundant scholarly critiques of cost/benefit analysis as a policymaking tool.

2. Political Strategy

A related argument insists that there are more important things for Christians to be worried about. Michael Lindsay’s book identified abortion and sexuality, foreign policy issues such as human trafficking and religious

158. U.N. Framework Convention, supra note 133, at art. 3(1).
160. The Cornwall Alliance, supra note 56, at 2.
163. Okay, no one has spoken on behalf of the latter benefit, but Gregg Easterbrook noted his hometown of Buffalo’s potentially improved position. Gregg Easterbrook, Global Warming: Who Lost—And Who Won?, THE ATLANTIC, Apr. 2007, at 56.
freedom, and government funding of faith-based charitable organizations as the primary concerns of evangelical political engagement. An August 2007 poll conducted by the Barna Group indicated that evangelicals were most concerned about "enhancing the health of Christian churches, upgrading the state of marriage and families, and improving the standard of the [United States]," and least concerned about the need for environmental protection. David Barton’s congressional testimony cited other polls indicating that evangelicals are nearly uniform in their views regarding social issues, fighting AIDS and reducing poverty, while also finding "that Evangelicals are not yet cohesive about the issue of man-caused Global Warming." The more ominous charge fears that the effort to enlist evangelicals to oppose climate change is actually a calculated attempt to divert them from their primary mission. Jerry Falwell, forsaking any subtlety, preached that "[t]he alarmism over global warming . . . is Satan’s attempt to re-direct the church’s primary focus." The Southern Baptist Convention resolved in 2006 that "[e]nvironmentalism is threatening to become a wedge issue to divide the evangelical community and further distract its members from the priority of the Great Commission." The ECI countered that "we are not a single-issue movement." It challenged the premise that environmental influence will be diluted by addressing additional issues. There is an argument that the greatest priority for most evangelicals—spreading the Gospel—will be better served if Christians are perceived as being concerned about our environment among a broader range of political issues. A political argument also exists against associating with groups who typically take opposing positions on other issues of concern to evangelicals:

Convincing pro-life evangelicals to join forces with secular and left-leaning environmental groups will require overcoming a deep-rooted prejudice that associates environmentalism with paganism, pantheism and the Counterculture and New Left revolts of the 1960s—all Godzilla-sized boogeymen in the evangelical worldview. (It’s worth noting here that the distrust is mutual.)

144. See Lindsey, supra note 26, at 39-31.
145. Americans Are Most Worried, supra note 29
146. Religious Leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14, at 3 (testimony of David Barton).
147. Falwell, supra note 19.
149. The "Great Commission" is found in the parting words of Jesus to his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28:17-20.
150. IEC CALL TO ACTION, supra note 3, at 3.
153. Speaking of Faith, supra note 29, at 3.
154. See Linday, supra note 26, at 31.
Richard Cizik explained that "[e]nvironmentalists have a bad reputation among evangelical Christians" because "they rely on big-government solutions," are allied with population-control movements, "keep kooky religious company," and "tend to prophesies of doom that don’t happen."151 Indeed, Richard Wright’s 1995 study of environmental beliefs among evangelicals concluded that "Christian anti-environmentalism can be traced directly to political commitments." The biblical support for that view was offered by a 2006 Southern Baptist Convention resolution that sought to "resist alliances with extreme environmental groups whose positions contradict biblical principles," citing the warning in 2 Chronicles 19:2 not to "help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord."152 In response, Richard Cizik noted the collaboration of evangelicals with Tibetan Buddhists for international religious freedom, feminists against human trafficking, the American Civil Liberties Union against prison rape, and gays and lesbians for AIDS relief.153

More generally, numerous scholars have explored the role of Christians living in a pluralistic democratic society. For example, the cosmopolitan evangelicals described by Michael Lindsay are more likely than their populist evangelical counterparts to work with those holding different beliefs.154 Some cosmopolitan evangelicals identify with conservative economists, while other cosmopolitan evangelicals are more comfortable with traditional environmentalists. Lindsay, moreover, saw environmental issues as an area of "significant disagreement" that could help threaten the political cohesion evangelicals have enjoyed.155 The willingness or unwillingness of evangelicals to unite with other constituencies may be key to identifying the division among evangelicals with respect to climate change.

3. The Role of Government and Other Institutions

Is climate change a problem for the government or for individual actions? Calvin Beissner offered an excellent summary of the dilemma facing evangelicals who seek to be faithful stewards of God’s creation:

Emphasizing only that the Earth is the Lord’s—while neglecting or denying that He has given it to men—tends to lead toward making decisions at broad, societal levels . . . . However, emphasizing only that God has given the Earth to men, while neglecting or denying that it still ultimately belongs to God, tends to lead toward asserting human autonomy in the use of the Earth and others.

152. S. BAPTIST CONVENTION, supra note 148, 2 Chronicles 19:2.
153. Speaking of Faith, supra note 103.
154. See Lindsay, supra note 26, at 221.
155. Id. at 71.
exalting individual prerogative over the needs of the community.\textsuperscript{156} All evangelicals seem to recognize the dangers of exclusive reliance upon either collective action or individual action to respond to climate change. Indeed, the prescriptions advocated by both sides are more similar than their rhetoric would suggest. The ECI sees a role for voluntary action as well as governmental regulation; the ISA recognizes that some governmental regulation may be necessary in addition to its preferred market and voluntary solutions. Even the ECI agreed that “[w]e should use the least amount of government power necessary to achieve the objective.”\textsuperscript{157} In so doing, evangelicals resurrect the sphere sovereignty teaching of Abraham Kuyper, and they echo the Catholic teaching about subsidiarity.

Evangelicals support a variety of voluntary actions to address climate change. They sponsor programs for churches to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases. For example, Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, was named the “best green church” in the United States thanks to its reduction of air conditioning, substitution of lights, and turning off of computers—even though the church’s pastor is not convinced that climate change is a priority problem.\textsuperscript{158} Jim Ball testified that churches should educate their members, pray for our country and its leaders, and model good behavior.\textsuperscript{159} EEN established a “Cooling Creation” program through which individuals pledge to reduce their home and transportation energy use and then pay ninety-nine dollars to offset the presumed cost of the remaining emissions.\textsuperscript{160} Earlier, EEN promoted its national “What Would Jesus Drive?” campaign to encourage driving choices that would reduce air pollution generally. Some evangelical writers have targeted consumerism and materialism as the true culprits in global warming and other environmental problems, citing numerous biblical texts in calling for radical changes in lifestyle. As my colleague Amy Barrett has suggested, perhaps the next campaign will simply ask, “Would Jesus Drive?” Yet, no one believes that

\textsuperscript{156} See, \textit{Biblical Principles, supra note 50, at 14.}

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{The Evangelical Climate Initiative, Principles for Federal Policy on Climate Change, 1, available at http://pub.christiansandclimate.org/pub/PrinciplesforFederalPolicyonClimateChange.pdf} (last visited Apr. 19, 2008). The Cornwall Declaration states that “[w]e appeal to a world in which the relationships between ownership 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.” \textit{Cornwall Declaration, supra note 42, at 2.}

\textsuperscript{158} See Higgins, supra note 64, at 11.

\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Religious Leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14, at 8 (testimony of Jim Ball).}

\textsuperscript{160} See \textit{Evangelical Climate Initiative, Cooling Creation, http://www.coolingcreation.org/} (last visited Dec. 22, 2007). The S99 reflects the estimated costs of removing “an average American’s global warming pollution from the atmosphere through energy efficiency, renewable energy, and reforestation projects.” Id. The money is to be donated to organizations that promote such projects. Id.

\textsuperscript{161} Falka, supra note 152.

\textsuperscript{162} Dresen, supra note 152.

\textsuperscript{163} Tom Evans, supra note 152.

\textsuperscript{164} Id. at 1.

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Religious Ball}, supra note 64.

\textsuperscript{166} Id.

\textsuperscript{167} Smith, supra note 163.

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid., supra note 152.}

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Religious Ball}, supra note 64.

\textsuperscript{170} Dresen, supra note 152, for criticisms of it blindly accepting a climate change, and matters practice—
voluntary actions are sufficient. Richard Cizik said in 2004 that "even George Bush supporters believe you have to offer something more here than simply voluntary measures." 161

Evangelicals are especially likely to support responses to climate change laws that emphasize private market decisions. Driesen calls for an embrace of "mankind's creative genius, the promise of technology, and our amazing ability to adapt to every climate on Earth over the ages." 162 The ECI agreed that we should solve the problem utilizing market forces and by protecting private property rights. 163 The ECI elaborated that "government policies should be structured to allow the free market to solve the problem to the greatest extent possible." 164

The ECI and other evangelicals moved beyond reliance upon market forces to call for government regulation of activities that contribute to climate change. Jim Ball's congressional testimony called for "an economy-wide federal policy with mandatory targets and timetables for major sources of emissions ..." 165 He acknowledged, though, that the policy "should allow for maximum freedom for businesses and the states." 166 One commentator viewed the ECI's call to action as "a highly political statement that advocated a strong federal regulatory policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." 167 Such stringent government environmental regulations are anathema to some evangelicals. Beisner acknowledged that "laws for environmental protection are warranted, at least in principle" because of human sin, though he questioned "the degree some have gone." 168 Chuck Colson worried that "some of the global warming solutions go too far and do little good." 169

The broader argument against governmental regulation advanced by the ISA posits that such regulation will actually hurt the poor. Paul Driesen, for example, argued that putting concepts favoring the poor "into practice can be difficult" if those concepts "are defined too narrowly or their interpretation fails to identify all the likely consequences of potential policy decisions." 170 The essential contention is that the harms visited by reduced

---

163. The Evangelical Climate Initiative, supra note 157, at 2.
164. Ball, supra note 3, at 1.
165. Religious Leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14, at 9 (testimony of Jim Ball).
166. Id.
167. Smith, supra note 142, at 634.
169. Colson, supra note 69.
170. Driesen, supra note 49, at 9, see Hayward, supra note 10, at 4 (suggesting that "evangelical concern for climate change would do no favors for the suffering millions in developing nations if it blindly endorsed near-term carbon suppression in its policy preference for dealing with climate change in the nations it would reframe economic growth—and also perpetuate current bad environmental practice—in those nations").
energy availability to the poor will be much drier than the uncertain effects of climate change. The evangelical proponents of action against climate change have been slow to respond to this critique. Perhaps the best answer was offered by the EEN's Jim Boll, who told Congress that climate change "is not primarily an 'environmental' problem. It is the major relief and development problem of the twenty-first century, because it will make all of the basic relief and development problems much worse." 172 So viewed, climate change should be addressed because otherwise the billions that governments and private organizations spend to alleviate poverty will go for naught.

Much climate change scholarship presumes that the ultimate solution to climate change will be found in international law. Evangelicals are less sure. Ken Touyer of the American Scientific Affiliation is one of the few evangelicals who has written in support of the Kyoto Protocol.172 The ECI endorsed the "objective" of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, but it did not say anything about the Kyoto Protocol.173 The ISA is scowling of it. Paul Driessen's sues contends that the treaty "cost $1.3 million jobs in [United States] Black and Hispanic communities in 2012," and that "poor countries that depend on exports would lose opportunities and be forced to close factories, lay off workers, and postpone social, economic, health, and environmental improvement projects." 174 Andrew Lewis of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission referred to the "multiple flaws, scientific unknowns, and potential economic problems" of the Kyoto Protocol.175 More generally, Christianity Today—which has embraced action to address climate change—has editorialized that "international coordination is likely to slow and divert truly effective action." 176

The evangelical attitudes toward the Kyoto Protocol are influenced by broader concerns about the nature and role of international law. Evangelicals are skeptical of international organizations in other contexts, usually because of the substantial subversion of those organizations (espe-

171. Religious leaders & Climate Change Hearing, supra note 14, at 6–7 (testimony of Jim Boll).

172. Kenet J. Touyer, ASA in the 21st Century: Expanding Our Vision for Serving God: the Church and Society Through Science and Technology, 56 PERE, ON SCI. AND CHRISTIAN FAITH 82, 84 (2004) (arguing that "[t]he cooperation on an international scale will be required to avoid irreversible damage, such as the Kyoto Protocol").

173. The Evangelical Climate Initiative, supra note 157, at 1.


177. The Ev.

178. See CANTERBURY on environment.

179. See THE GUARDIAN on environment.

180. See STREET on environment.

181. See SKELTON on environment.
The uncertain effects on climate change are complex and multifaceted. One potential solution is the use of greenhouse gas reduction technologies. However, the cost of implementing these technologies is considerable, ranging from several billion dollars in the United States alone. The economic and societal impacts of climate change are significant, affecting not only the natural world but also human societies and economies.

D. Uncertainty Regarding the Nature of Jurisprudence

An evangelical response to climate change should be informed by an evangelical theory of jurisprudence. This theory recognizes the role of Christian faith in shaping legal thought. Evangelicals believe that the law is not merely a set of rules but is also a reflection of the meaning and purpose of human existence. This perspective influences the development of Christian perspectives on legal thought.

The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century writings of Dutch politician and theologian Abraham Kuyper provide another fruitful source of legal thinking for evangelicals. Building on such work, Professors David Skeel and Bill Stuntz have begun to articulate an evangelical theory of jurisprudence in their recent work. Their approach emphasizes the role of faith in shaping legal thought and practice, particularly in the context of climate change.
writings. In an article they wrote together, Skeel and Stuntz were concerned about overreliance upon the civil law to regulate human conduct.\textsuperscript{182} They distinguished between our laws and God's laws: God's laws gladden the heart, but human laws do not. God's laws are perfect, but human laws are not. Thus, "[w]hen legal codes try to play the role of moral codes, the result is that law ceases to function as law."\textsuperscript{183} Skeel and Stuntz illustrated their point by reference to a number of criminal law provisions, relating especially to business activities that demonstrate the futility of employing moralistic understandings in the civil law to change human behavior. They added that "mixing God's law and man's law may have other unfortunate consequences: distorting religious believers' understanding of the divine law even as it distorts the public's approach to the laws of code books and court decisions."\textsuperscript{184}

In a second article, Skeel critiqued the state of Christian legal scholarship and offered some initial thoughts on the development of such normative scholarship. "A properly designed legal system," Skeel explained, must "play a double game: it should restrain the worst wrongs of the citizenry, but at the same time not give unskilled discretion to regulators and prosecutors."\textsuperscript{185} Skeel also cautioned against "the perils of symbolic lawmaking," warning that "laws need to have consequences" to be compatible with the rule of law.\textsuperscript{186}

These insights may assist evangelicals, environmentalists, and others concerned about the appropriate response to climate change. Both sides within the evangelical debate have been cautious regarding the types of regulation that should be enacted, at least compared to some of the other proposals for combating climate change. Most proposed laws target electric utilities, auto manufacturers, and other large businesses whose activities result in more greenhouse gases being emitted into the air. But, as Michael Vandenbergh has demonstrated so well, much of today's pollution is the result of the cumulative actions of millions of individuals.\textsuperscript{187} Laws that fail to regulate those individuals—i.e., all of us—may simply be symbolic; laws that do regulate those individuals may encounter the same difficulties in changing behavior that Steel and Stuntz warned about. The application of such principles should be preceded by further study of precisely what qualifies as a Christian theory of jurisprudence.


\textsuperscript{183} Id. at 828.

\textsuperscript{184} Id. at 859.

\textsuperscript{185} Skeel, supra note 29, at 36.

\textsuperscript{186} Id. at 38.


\textsuperscript{188} See Amy. Working Paper 3.
III. Lessons for the Future

The climate change debate has introduced environmentalists to evangelicals in a way that previous environmental issues never accomplished. This new familiarity between the two groups has implications for each of them. For traditional environmentalist constituencies, it is important to understand the unique perspective that evangelicals bring to environmental concerns. Some of the questions involving science and law are familiar to debates about environmental law, but certain aspects of those questions are affected by the special evangelical experience. Evangelicals also bring an emphasis upon the moral implications of environmental law that has been downplayed in recent years in favor of economic and administrative concerns. Other legal scholars, such as Amy Sinden, have recognized the moral dimensions of climate change, and the theological insights of environmentalists, can add to those discussions. Evangelicals have unique perspectives on the economic and political questions that have long dominated environmental law. It is important that there be a dialogue between environmentalists and evangelicals— rather than a mere strategic political calculation of how to gain support from other groups for preferred policies.

For many evangelicals, climate change has presented the first occasion for them to consider the difficult questions presented by environmental law. The debate has crystallized evangelical thinking. It has confirmed the need to fulfill the biblical commands enjoining care for God’s creation. It has revealed the different theological, scientific and jurisprudential perspectives that exist within the evangelical community. It has, in short, demonstrated the difficulty of moving from agreement on biblical teaching to deciding appropriate public policies.

I promised that this paper would be descriptive rather than normative, but I do not want to be too coy. My tentative view is that climate change is not the most pressing environmental problem today. I would rank the need for clean water supplies in the developing world first, with climate change bunched with issues such as air pollution in Asia and the global loss of biodiversity as next in priority. Of course, each of those environmental problems is related, and climate change could affect them all under some scenarios of the future. At the same time, it appears that many lives can be saved in Africa, Asia and elsewhere by targeting such simple solutions as new domestic water supplies or shifting to less polluting fuels for residential heating and local uses.

Even so, decisive action against the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change is appropriate. There are many reasons why air pollution is bad, and a broad understanding of “pollution,” like that ex-
explored by the late anthropologist Dane Mary Douglas, holds promise for environmental law’s response to pollution claims of all sorts.189 Gordion College Professor Richard Wright supported policies to reduce fossil-fuel use as early as 1995 in part “because other societal benefits would result, such as reducing pollution and reducing our dependence on Middle East oil.”190 Moreover, the attention given to the relation of human activities to climate change is a red herring. If climate change is harmful, we should reduce it regardless of the extent to which we caused it. We have invested enormous resources to avoid other natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, so why not climate change? As one pastor preached, “No matter what has caused the earth’s temperature to elevate, the result is hurting creation and devastating people’s lives.”191

The ideal nature of that response is beyond the scope of this paper, save to note that some of the arguments described above should be considered in formulating that response. We need to provide energy to the poor without causing climate change. That could mean the greater use of solar, wind, hydro and nuclear power, even though they each present their own environmental concerns. The market approach, favored by both the ECI and the ISA, counsels that we should be careful about the government picking and choosing losers through subsidies, as my own experience researching new technologies during the last energy crisis also demonstrates.192 The ECI and Calvin Belsner also emphasize techniques for adapting to climate change, rather than only trying to prevent it.193

Finally, evangelicals champion two ideas that are especially important in addressing climate change. First, the law cannot solve all of our problems. Professors Skeel and Stuntz provided a valuable service by beginning to sketch how jurisprudence can be informed by Christian teaching, and further work on that project is essential. The second idea is that legal disputes should be conducted with humility and civility. As the NAEP put it, “we must practice humility and cooperation to achieve modest and attainable goals for the good of society. We must take care to employ the language of civility and to avoid demeaning those with whom we disagree.”194 The climate change debate will be worthwhile if it simply teaches us that.

190. CREATION AT RISK?, supra note 102, at 64 (statement of Richard Wright).
193. See The Evangelical Climate Initiative, supra note 157, at 1 (emphasizing “adaptation and mitigation assistance to least-developed countries”); “Seventeen calling measures to help the poor to adapt to climate change and other threats, including providing “reliable, affordable energy”.
194. NAEP, ANS OF EVANGELICALS, supra note 2, at 4.