

**United Nations Environmental Program**  
**Archive of E-Articles**  
**2005**

**January 11, 2005**

“Stewardship is our duty”

By Froma Harrop

For a good holiday cry, you couldn't do better than the story of the Fifth Avenue hawks, Pale Male and his mate, Lola. The tale also offers a political lesson for environmentalists: Think birds.

As all the world now knows, Pale Male had built a nest on the 12th-story ledge of a fancy Manhattan apartment house. Over 10 years, the red-tail had sired at least 23 baby hawks. A limestone cornice might seem an unlikely nesting spot for raptors, but consider the birds' point of view: Up there, the only danger is an unguided champagne cork.

Days before Christmas, the building's rich and famous deemed the nest a nuisance and removed the spikes holding it in place. The nest disintegrated. The hawks made pathetic attempts to rebuild by bringing new twigs to the cornice, but the materials just fell off. A global outcry turned a harsh spotlight on the Fifth Avenue Scrooges, and they voted to restore the spikes.

Talons all around have since relaxed, thanks to mediation by the National Audubon Society. The hawks did bring cuisine up to the nest, and that was a problem. Rat and pigeon carcasses were dropping on the gentry below. The society will now monitor the area for cleanliness. (For great Pale Male pictures, check Audubon's Web site, [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org). Donations will not be turned away.)

As this drama continued, another bird story - five time zones away in Hawaii - was having a very unhappy ending. A tiny po'ouli, probably the last one, died in its cage at the Maui Forest Bird Project. All native Hawaiian birds are facing extinction. The money Audubon is raising in Pale Male's name may help save some of them.

The point is this: Birds, trees, fish, rivers, wildflowers - these are gifts of nature to which everyone can relate. The science of ocean currents and PM2.5 air particles is tremendously important, but rather technical. Anyone can wrap his or her mind around butterflies and wildflowers. And this is the door through which most people enter the environmental movement.

Actually, the public is already inside. It just hasn't made much noise as the Bush administration has trashed decades of environmental protection.

An NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll taken right before the election found 51 percent of respondents thought the Bush administration had "fallen short" of their expectations on the environment, while only 36 percent said it had lived up to them.

They might disagree on solutions, but liberals and conservatives tend to share this fervor. And so do religious voters, according to John C. Green, a University of Akron professor who heads the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics.

"Over the last 30 years, there's no question that environmentalism has risen in all the religious traditions," says Green, who studies politics and religion. The message is that God expects his people to be good stewards of the creation.

That includes largely conservative evangelicals. Green's own polling found that more than 50 percent of evangelicals agreed with the strong statement: "Strict rules to protect the environment are necessary, even if they cost jobs or result in higher prices."

Conservative members of the environmental majority don't have more pull than they do because of the way issues get packaged. As Green puts it, "The American political system is not arranged so that you can be a pro-life environmentalist and have a candidate to vote for."

As long as Bush is in office, there will be little environmental progress on the national level. The good news is that the public is more than willing to act locally.

Wilderness Society President William H. Meadows notes that in the recent election, nearly 80 percent of local initiatives for conservation passed.

"People voted to tax themselves," he says.

Parts of the conservative West have become hotbeds of environmental activism. For example, voters in Montana's Rosebud County gave the county commissioner power over energy-development plans. Similar efforts are under way in northwest Colorado, at the Roan Plateau, and the Otero Mesa in southern New Mexico.

Meadows believes that "there's a need to move away from a debate on policy and politics to a debate on places."

Clearly, citizens already sense an inner duty to defend the miracles of nature. They have only to turn those feelings into action.

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REGIONAL: "Environment Finds Way into Church Liturgy"

MEXICO CITY - The Latin American Council of Churches, CLAI, an umbrella of religious organizations representing 10 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, has incorporated environmental issues into its liturgies.

Churches, because of their philosophies and beliefs, should advocate for protecting the planet, which is the home of everyone, Reverend Carlos Tómez, of CLAI, told Tierramérica.

The initiative is part of the Environmental Citizenship project of the United Nations Environment Program. It was launched in 2003 and also involves the International Union of Local Authorities, the World Association of Community Radios, Consumers International, the World Conservation Union and the Latin American Parliament.

The task "is complex and difficult, but we are seeing results," Lorena San Román, coordinator of the project, told Tierramérica. Thousands of people have received training on issues like protecting water resources, the ozone layer, and biodiversity and on climate change.

Officials from 48 municipalities from Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru have benefited from environmental workshops.

### **January 18, 2005**

“Why religion has become the new politics”

Financial Times. [Commentary]. Stephen Ellis, Gerrie Ter Haar 18/01/2005.

Religion is the emerging political language of our time. In the United States and the Middle East this is clear, but also throughout most of what we used to call the third world. Even in Europe, which introduced the separation of church and state, religion is taking on a new significance through the political expression of Islam.

One of the best places to see how religion operates as a political idiom is Africa. Everywhere there are signs of religion in public space, whether it is rows of kneeling men saying their midday prayers on the street in Muslim areas, or the proliferation of churches, especially Pentecostal and charismatic ones. There are also visible revivals of traditional religion, including in the numerous private armies whose young fighters wear amulets for spiritual protection. The media are full of religious stories, often concerning witchcraft and frightening spiritual experiences. Tales of people who claim to have visited the spirit world are common. Often, they concern transactions that determine the distribution of power in the material world.

Odd though it sounds, stories such as these are political comments by people who believe that all power has its ultimate origin in the spirit world. Consequently, they consider spiritual and political power to be connected. Many Africans debate issues of governance in spirit terms, a popular idiom with deep roots in local cultures. Popular stories often describe not only corrupt politicians but also international institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as purveyors of evil, without moral sense.

The separation of religious from political thought was invented in the west and exported to the rest of the world in colonial times. However, most Africans believe in the existence of a spirit world that is distinct but not separate from the material one, one that affects their daily lives. In

fact, this is the sense in which people in most continents experience religion - as a world of spiritual beings, to paraphrase the Victorian anthropologist Edward Tylor. Most westerners do not think of religion in this way. For them, religion is more a matter of ultimate meaning.

To believe in invisible forces that govern our lives is not at all eccentric. Some would argue that this is what capital is. In this view, the manipulation of spiritual forces is essentially no different from speculation on international markets. In both cases, gains and losses depend on interaction with an invisible force. Intrinsic to Europe's financial revolution more than three centuries ago was the use of mathematics as a way of calculating risk, prompted by a new theology emerging from the Reformation. The spirit of capitalist enterprise was originally associated with a religious view of the world.

In most of the world, the current religious revival and its political consequences have to be understood by reference to colonial conquest. There was nothing novel about being ruled by foreigners in most of the territories colonised by European powers in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nor was foreign influence unprecedented in places that were never formally colonised, such as Turkey or China. What was new about the European imperialism of those days was the eventual attempt by metropolitan powers to modernise and develop traditional societies. This was often associated with an ideology of the civilising mission, but it was above all an attempt to develop colonial resources for the benefit of the imperial rulers.

The golden decades of African economic development were the 1950s and 1960s, during the longest and widest economic boom in the history of the world. Millions of people moved from villages to towns. Many gained salaried employment. They sent their children to school. Development planners generally saw this as a movement from tradition to modernity but neglected the spiritual aspect of this transition, seeing religion as an obstacle to progress. But for many people, it now transpires, progress is not a material issue alone. Moreover, development has too often failed to deliver even the material benefits it promised. The end of the cold war and the new wave of democratisation made space for the re-emergence of religious ideologies. The current resurgence of religion is a modern attempt to harness traditional resources for contemporary use.

Religion has emerged as a new global language also because both the White House and al-Qaeda see themselves as locked in a cosmic struggle between good and evil. When they insist that the world is either for them or against them, they create a risk that political and social struggles everywhere will be redefined as religious battles. Politicians may encourage such a stark approach as a way of gaining support.

Religion is simultaneously a way of understanding the world and of relating to other people. These are important ways in which it is allied to politics. This fact alone should impel us to understand this new idiom.

The writers are co-authors of *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*, (Hurst/OUP 2004)

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**February 3, 2005**

THE INDEPENDENT (UK)

“Archbishop tells Church to help save the planet with green policies”

By Robert Verkaik

03 February 2005

Global warming: scientists reveal timetable; Archbishop tells Church to help save the planet with green policies

The Church of England is embarking on a green revolution, rolling out an eco-friendly policy under which organic bread and wine will be served for Holy Communion, clergy will recycle waste products and fair trade products will be sold at fêtes.

Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, will set out his vision of a greener world at a meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England later this month that will challenge Britain to tackle global warming.

In a discussion document being circulated among Synod members, the Church of England says that the world's climate is close to a "tipping point". The Church warns: "The sudden changes that would occur in weather systems, the fertility of the soil, the water and the world of living creatures if this tipping point were reached could be devastating." It points out that even if "ecological devastation" is not on the horizon "it has to be realized that growth without limit has to be curtailed".

The report, entitled *Sharing God's Planet*, argues: "Furthermore, the injustices spawned by massive growth already exist. Two-thirds of the world does not have enough to eat while the other third is trying to lose weight."

Dr Williams will introduce the report that also backs the widespread claim that industrialisation has damaged the environment by global warming. He recommends that Christians adopt "sustainable consumption", recognizing their duty "to celebrate and care for every part of God's creation".

The Synod will debate the issue on 17 February, the day after the Kyoto protocol to reduce greenhouse gases comes into force. The Church is critical of countries such as the United States which have dragged their feet over the protocol.

In a second discussion document on the environmental debate, the Synod is asked to recognise that Kyoto is not enough. "It has taken far too long to be ratified as each country fights for its own interests (the US is notable among countries which have declined to sign); its targets fall very far short of what is necessary."

At the same time, Christians will be asked to praise the work of the Body Shop which is described as a "brave exception" for getting people to consider the ethics of their shopping choices.

The Synod will also be asked to support the principle of introducing a system of quotas for CO2 emissions that take account of a country's size of population rather than its industrial strength.

But the Church of England will begin its own campaign by introducing eco-friendly policies in its churches. Among practical ideas for local churches are schemes such as recycling, car pooling and selling fairly traded products at church fêtes. Clergy will also be encouraged to use natural materials in worship such as organic bread and wine. In his foreword to *Sharing God's Planet*, Dr Williams calls on each parish to undertake an "ecological audit". He adds: "Such local internal responses are vital if our voice as a church is to have integrity."

The Synod has not debated the environment since 1992 and the only other debate took place in 1986. The discussion document adds: "A Synod debate on the environment is timely. There is increasing awareness of the urgent need to address the developing ecological crisis. It is politically opportune as one of the Government's declared priorities for its current presidency of the G8 is climate change and that concern will be carried into its priorities for its chairing of the European Union."

## February 9, 2005

“Churches should be in forefront on environment”

By David Rhoads

"An ecological time bomb is ticking away. World leaders need to recognize that climate change is the single most important long-term issue that the planet faces." So a recent Associated Press article quoted the leader of a bi-partisan coalition on the environment. Other environmental issues are also facing us: deterioration of the ozone layer, loss of forests and arable land, diminishment of biological diversity, air and water pollution, waste disposal, and population.

Where are the churches in all this? What actions are being taken by the most extensive grass roots organizations in the country to protect humans and the environment? Christians have good reason to care for creation. God created the earth and called it good. God made all creatures to thrive and glorify God. God calls people to take responsibility as caretakers of earth. Jesus died out of love for "all things" in the cosmos. The whole creation groans in travail awaiting liberation from its bondage to decay. The vision of a renewed heaven and earth portrays God dwelling on earth among humans, who are sustained by living water and the tree of life. Christians should see all members of earth community as neighbors whom we are called to love so as to preserve this earth for future generations.

So where are the churches? Perhaps they are doing more than you might think. Over a decade ago, the National Religious Partnership for the Environment was established to address ecological crises and to promote care for earth - a coalition of the Evangelical Environmental Movement, the National Catholic Conference, the Coalition of Jews for the Environment, and the National Council of Churches. Each group produced materials for its own constituency. Together they sponsor a nationwide movement to address global climate change. Most Christian

denominations have a national office and developing programs for congregations to address these issues. Many groups now provide earth-keeping resources on-line for congregations.

The problem is that it is only beginning to reach into congregations. An occasional report comes out about congregations here and there catching the significance of this movement. Some churches now celebrate Earth Day and the Blessing of the Animals on the commemoration of St. Francis. The Metro-Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a rotating loan fund to provide churches with upfront money to retrofit lights. A few congregations have gone to wind power or geothermal heating. A church in Elgin has turned most of its property back to prairie. Other congregations have a comprehensive recycling program, use non toxic cleaning products, and sponsor community gardens. Some congregations urge members to do a 1-2-3 program (lower the thermostat one degree, drive two miles slower, put three compact fluorescent light bulbs in your home).

In Racine, five Lutheran Churches have embarked on the Green Congregation Program, a process initiated by the Web of Creation at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago that provides environmental resources on-line for faith-based communities ([www.webofcreation.org](http://www.webofcreation.org)).

The Green Congregation Program seeks to renew congregational identity and mission by incorporating care for creation into every aspect of the life of the community-worship, education, building and grounds, the commitment of members at home and work, and public advocacy for earth-keeping laws, policies, and treaties. Each church has established a "green team" to give leadership and direction to the program. The hope is that congregations will see their relationship to creation in new ways and that this will lead to Christian practices and actions that make a difference.

There are a number of things that each faith community might do to be part of the efforts to restore earth: worship around themes of care for creation, hold forums about the state of the world and our Christian responsibilities, engage youth and children in earth-keeping projects, do a comprehensive "environmental audit," cut the use of gas and electricity, set up a recycling program, invite members to adopt earth-keeping practices at home and work, support a U.S. commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, and participate with organizations like Sustainable Racine and the Sierra Club to make our local community earth friendly.

Even small actions help. As an analogy for this, environmentalist Stan Hallett describes how the land was restored around Mount St. Helen's after it erupted and decimated all life around it. First the lichen appeared. Not much. But that set the conditions for small moss to appear, which in turn made it possible for underbrush to emerge. As animal life has returned, the aspens are reappearing and the landscape is being renewed. Small widespread differences can set the conditions for great changes to occur. We all need to make a commitment to examine the habits and assumptions of our lives and to change our behavior to preserve the earth for our children and grandchildren.

Where are the churches in this? Setting an example, I hope.

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“The Greening of Evangelicals: Christian Right Turns, Sometimes Warily, to Environmentalism”

By Blaine Harden

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, February 6, 2005; Page A01

SEATTLE -- Thanks to the Rev. Leroy Hedman, the parishioners at Georgetown Gospel Chapel take their baptismal waters cold. The preacher has unplugged the electricity-guzzling heater in the immersion baptism tank behind his pulpit. He has also installed energy-saving fluorescent light bulbs throughout the church and has placed water barrels beneath its gutter pipes – using runoff to irrigate the congregation's all-organic gardens.

Such "creation care" should be at the heart of evangelical life, Hedman says, along with condemning abortion, protecting family and loving Jesus. He uses the term "creation care" because, he says, it does not annoy conservative Christians for whom the word "environmentalism" connotes liberals, secularists and Democrats.

"It's amazing to me that evangelicals haven't gone quicker for the green," Hedman said. "But as creation care spreads, evangelicals will demand different behavior from politicians. The Republicans should not take us for granted."

There is growing evidence -- in polling and in public statements of church leaders -- that evangelicals are beginning to go for the green. Despite wariness toward mainstream environmental groups, a growing number of evangelicals view stewardship of the environment as a responsibility mandated by God in the Bible.

"The environment is a values issue," said the Rev. Ted Haggard, president of the 30 million-member National Association of Evangelicals. "There are significant and compelling theological reasons why it should be a banner issue for the Christian right."

In October, the association's leaders adopted an "Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility" that, for the first time, emphasized every Christian's duty to care for the planet and the role of government in safeguarding a sustainable environment.

"We affirm that God-given dominion is a sacred responsibility to steward the earth and not a license to abuse the creation of which we are a part," said the statement, which has been distributed to 50,000 member churches. "Because clean air, pure water, and adequate resources are crucial to public health and civic order, government has an obligation to protect its citizens from the effects of environmental degradation."

Signatories included highly visible, opinion-swaying evangelical leaders such as Haggard, James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship Ministries. Some of the



signatories are to meet in March in Washington to develop a position on global warming, which could place them at odds with the policies of the Bush administration, according to Richard Cizik, the association's vice president for governmental affairs.

Also last fall, Christianity Today, an influential evangelical magazine, weighed in for the first time on global warming. It said that "Christians should make it clear to governments and businesses that we are willing to adapt our lifestyles and support steps towards changes that protect our environment."

The magazine came out in favor of a global warming bill -- sponsored by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) -- that the Bush administration opposed and the Republican-controlled Senate defeated.

Polling has found a strengthening consensus among evangelicals for strict environmental rules, even if they cost jobs and higher prices, said John C. Green, director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron. In 2000, about 45 percent of evangelicals supported strict environmental regulations, according to Green's polling. That jumped to 52 percent last year.

"It has changed slowly, but it has changed," Green said. "There is now a lot of ferment out there."

Such ferment matters because evangelicals are politically active. Nearly four out of five white evangelical Christians voted last year for President Bush, constituting more than a third of all votes cast for him, according to the Pew Research Center. The analysis found that the political clout of evangelicals has increased as their cohesiveness in backing the Republican Party has grown. Republicans outnumber Democrats within the group by more than 2 to 1.

There is little to suggest in recent elections that environmental concerns influenced the evangelical vote -- indeed, many members of Congress who receive 100 percent approval ratings from Christian advocacy groups get failing grades from environmental groups. But the latest statements and polls have caught the eye of established environmental organizations.

Several are attempting to make alliances with the Christian right on specific issues, such as global warming and the presence of mercury and other dangerous toxins in the blood of newborn children.

After the election last fall, leaders of the country's major environmental groups spent an entire day at a meeting in Washington trying to figure out how to talk to evangelicals, according to Larry Schweiger, president of the National Wildlife Federation. For decades, he said, environmentalists have failed to make that connection.

"There is a lot of suspicion," said Schweiger, who describes himself as a conservationist and a person of faith. "There are a lot of questions about what are our real intentions."

Green said the evangelicals' deep suspicion about environmentalists has theological roots.

"While evangelicals are open to being good stewards of God's creation, they believe people should only worship God, not creation," Green said. "This may sound like splitting hairs. But evangelicals don't see it that way. Their stereotype of environmentalists would be Druids who worship trees."

Another reason that evangelicals are suspicious of environmental groups is cultural and has its origins in how conservative Christians view themselves in American society, according to the Rev. Jim Ball, executive director of the Evangelical Environmental Network. The group made its name with the "What Would Jesus Drive?" campaign against gas-guzzling cars but recently shifted its focus to reducing global warming.

"Evangelicals feel besieged by the culture at large," Ball said. "They don't know many environmentalists, but they have the idea they are pretty weird--with strange liberal, pantheist views."

Ball said that the way to bring large numbers of evangelicals on board as political players in environmental issues is to make persuasive arguments that, for instance, tie problems of global warming and mercury pollution to family health and the health of unborn children. He adds that evangelicals themselves -- not such groups as the Sierra Club or Friends of the Earth, with their liberal Democratic baggage -- are the only ones who can do the persuading.

"Environmental groups are always going to be viewed in a wary fashion," Ball said. "They just don't have a good enough feel for the evangelical community. There are landmines from the past, and they will hit them without knowing it."

Even for green activists within the evangelical movement, there are landmines. One faction in the movement, called dispensationalism, argues that the return of Jesus and the end of the world are near, so it is pointless to fret about environmental degradation.

James G. Watt, President Ronald Reagan's first interior secretary, famously made this argument before Congress in 1981, saying: "God gave us these things to use. After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back." The enduring appeal of End Time musings among evangelicals is reflected in the phenomenal success of the Left Behind series of apocalyptic potboilers, which have sold more than 60 million copies and are the best-selling novels in the country.

Haggard, the leader of the National Association of Evangelicals, concedes that this thinking "is a problem that I do have to address regularly in talking to the common man on the street. I tell them to live your life as if Jesus is coming back tomorrow, but plan your life as if he is not coming back in your lifetime. I also tell them that the authors of the Left Behind books have life insurance policies."

This argument is apparently resonating. Green said the notion that an imminent Judgment Day absolves people of environmental responsibility is now a "fringe" belief.

Unusual weather phenomena, such as the four hurricanes that battered Florida last year and the melting of the glaciers around the world, have captured the attention of evangelicals and made many more willing to listen to scientific warnings about the dangers of global warming, Haggard said.

At the same time, activists such as Ball from the Evangelical Environmental Network are trying to show how the most important hot-button issue of the Christian right -- abortion and the survival of the unborn -- has a green dimension.

"Stop Mercury Poisoning of the Unborn," said a banner that Ball carried in last month's antiabortion march in Washington. Holding up the other end of the banner was Cizik, the National Association of Evangelicals' chief lobbyist.

They handed out carefully footnoted papers that cited federal government studies showing that 1 in 6 babies is born with harmful levels of mercury. The fliers urged Christians not to support the "Clear Skies" act, a Bush administration proposal to regulate coal-burning power plants that are a primary source of mercury pollution.

Although Cizik carried the banner and handed out literature that implicitly criticized Bush's policy on regulating mercury, he conceded that many evangelicals find it difficult to criticize the president.

"It is hard to oppose him when he has the moral authority of the office of the president and a record of standing with us on moral issues like abortion," Cizik said.

In Seattle, Hedman says that evangelicals should worry less about the moral authority of the president and more about their biblical obligation to care for Earth.

"The Earth is God's body," Hedman said in a recent sermon. "God wants us to look after it."

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The Boston Globe

"Official chides Christian right: Moral Majority called aberration"

By Michael Paulson, Globe Staff | February 5, 2005

SOUTH HAMILTON -- Evangelical Protestants, despite enjoying increasing cultural influence as a result of their perceived electoral clout, have sometimes "lost their perspective" by paying too little attention to social concerns such as the environment and poverty, leading evangelicals said yesterday.

A top official of the National Association of Evangelicals told reporters gathered at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary that the Moral Majority, a 1980s political movement dominated

by Christian conservatives, was "an aberration and a regrettable one at that," even though it drew evangelicals into the political process, because the organization was "fatally flawed by a hubris that made the movement condescending and more than a bit judgmental."

"The Moral Majority lacked a servant heart of Christ born out of humility and compassion for a fallen humanity," said the official, Robert Wenz, who is vice president of national ministries for the National Association of Evangelicals.

"Instead, it was all about making America a nice place for Christians to live. This is not the kind of social involvement that we need or that evangelicals espouse."

Instead, Wenz cited as a positive sign what he described as "a reemergence of the evangelical church in the inner city" with programs addressing substance abuse, parenting, and "healing ministries of all kinds." He said those churches have emerged at a time when many of the more visible evangelical churches, the so-called megachurches, have located in suburban areas.

Wenz spoke at the first of a series of courses that evangelicals, basking in attention following polls suggesting that moral values played a role in President Bush's reelection, are holding in an effort to explain the influential religious movement to news reporters. Organizers plan similar sessions at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., next month, and then at seminaries in Dallas and Los Angeles.

Wenz said it is important for evangelicals to be clear that they have no allegiance to the Republican Party and that the GOP owes them nothing. In an interview, he said evangelicals, for example, are increasingly concerned about environmental issues, not an issue traditionally associated with the Republican Party.

"Global warming is a reality and is not a bunch of liberal hype," Wenz said in an interview.

John Jefferson Davis, a professor of systematic theology and Christian ethics at Gordon-Conwell, said, "The Democratic Party is now saying, 'We've got to recover moral language,' but I would also like to see a Republican Party whose Christian component has a more holistic understanding of moral values. . . ."

"Evangelicals are diverse in their concerns for moral values, abortion, gay marriage, and stem cell research, but also an important part of tradition says matters of race, poverty, and the environment are, or should be, part of our ethic."

The scholars defined evangelical Protestants as those who believe that Scripture is authoritative and that salvation comes only through Jesus. They said it has become difficult to count evangelicals in the United States, but various measures have estimated that from 44 million to 126 million of roughly 300 million Americans can be described as evangelical.

Scholars who study black and Hispanic evangelicals in the United States said that both groups remain far more politically liberal than white evangelicals and that the leadership of evangelical

Protestant organizations in the United States has often failed to recognize the economic and social justice concerns of nonwhite evangelicals.

Rodney L. Cooper, a professor of discipleship and leadership at Gordon-Conwell, said he was admitted to Dallas Theological Seminary as an African-American student after years in which that seminary had refused to admit black students. And even today, he said, "there are very few African-Americans in the top evangelical seminaries."

He also said that white evangelicals have tended to focus on "private salvation," rather than the concerns of the broader community. By contrast, he said, African-American Protestants, whom he described as almost universally evangelical in their theology, "believe salvation is not only for the sweet by and by, but also for the nasty now and now."

Eldin Villafane, a professor of social ethics at Gordon-Conwell, offered a similar critique, saying that even though Hispanic leaders in Boston have assisted white evangelicals on such matters as battling same-sex marriage and abortion, the efforts have not been reciprocated when it comes to registering voters or fighting poverty.

"There are divisions on justice issues," he said. "Your social location impacts you ideologically."

Wenz acknowledged a rift between black and white evangelicals, which he attributed to the failure of white evangelicals to support the civil rights movement that began in the late 1950s. As a result, he said, black evangelicals formed their own organization, the National Black Evangelical Association, and many black religious leaders avoid the word evangelical.

"The total lack of evangelicals in the civil rights movement continues to be an embarrassing failure from which we have not fully recovered," Wenz said.

"The lack of involvement in the civil rights movement meant that evangelicals surrendered that role to mainline churches. We should have been in Birmingham, but we were not."

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Published on Sunday, February 6, 2005 by the Independent/UK

“Apocalypse Now: How Mankind is Sleepwalking to the End of the Earth”

Floods, storms and droughts. Melting Arctic ice, shrinking glaciers, oceans turning to acid. The world's top scientists warned last week that dangerous climate change is taking place today, not the day after tomorrow. You don't believe it? Then, says Geoffrey Lean, read this...

by Geoffrey Lean

Future historians, looking back from a much hotter and less hospitable world, are likely to play special attention to the first few weeks of 2005. As they puzzle over how a whole generation

could have sleepwalked into disaster - destroying the climate that has allowed human civilization to flourish over the past 11,000 years - they may well identify the past weeks as the time when the last alarms sounded.

Last week, 200 of the world's leading climate scientists - meeting at Tony Blair's request at the Met Office's new headquarters at Exeter – issued the most urgent warning to date that dangerous climate change is taking place, and that time is running out.

Next week the Kyoto Protocol, the international treaty that tries to control global warming, comes into force after a seven-year delay. But it is clear that the protocol does not go nearly far enough.

The alarms have been going off since the beginning of one of the warmest Januaries on record. First, Dr Rajendra Pachauri - chairman of the official Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - told a UN conference in Mauritius that the pollution which causes global warming has reached "dangerous" levels.

Then the biggest-ever study of climate change, based at Oxford University, reported that it could prove to be twice as catastrophic as the IPCC's worst predictions. And an international task force - also reporting to Tony Blair, and co-chaired by his close ally, Stephen Byers – concluded that we could reach "the point of no return" in a decade.

Finally, the UK head of Shell, Lord Oxburgh, took time out - just before his company reported record profits mainly achieved by selling oil, one of the main causes of the problem - to warn that unless governments take urgent action there "will be a disaster".

But it was last week at the Met Office's futuristic glass headquarters, incongruously set in a dreary industrial estate on the outskirts of Exeter, that it all came together. The conference had been called by the Prime Minister to advise him on how to "avoid dangerous climate change". He needed help in persuading the world to prioritize the issue this year during Britain's presidencies of the EU and the G8 group of economic powers.

The conference opened with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Margaret Beckett, warning that "a significant impact" from global warming "is already inevitable". It continued with presentations from top scientists and economists from every continent. These showed that some dangerous climate change was already taking place and that catastrophic events once thought highly improbable were now seen as likely (see panel). Avoiding the worst was technically simple and economically cheap, they said, provided that governments could be persuaded to take immediate action.

About halfway through I realized that I had been here before. In the summer of 1986 the world's leading nuclear experts gathered in Vienna for an inquest into the accident at Chernobyl. The head of the Russian delegation showed a film shot from a helicopter, and we suddenly found ourselves gazing down on the red-hot exposed reactor core.

It was all, of course, much less dramatic at Exeter. But as paper followed learned paper, once again a group of world authorities were staring at a crisis they had devoted their lives to trying to avoid.

I am willing to bet there were few in the room who did not sense their children or grandchildren standing invisibly at their shoulders. The conference formally concluded that climate change was "already occurring" and that "in many cases the risks are more serious than previously thought". But the cautious scientific language scarcely does justice to the sense of the meeting.

We learned that glaciers are shrinking around the world. Arctic sea ice has lost almost half its thickness in recent decades. Natural disasters are increasing rapidly around the world. Those caused by the weather - such as droughts, storms, and floods - are rising three times faster than those - such as earthquakes - that are not.

We learned that bird populations in the North Sea collapsed last year, after the sand eels on which they feed left its warmer waters - and how the number of scientific papers recording changes in ecosystems due to global warming has escalated from 14 to more than a thousand in five years.

Worse, leading scientists warned of catastrophic changes that once they had dismissed as "improbable". The meeting was particularly alarmed by powerful evidence, first reported in *The Independent* on Sunday last July, that the oceans are slowly turning acid, threatening all marine life.

Professor Chris Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, presented new evidence that the West Antarctic ice sheet is beginning to melt, threatening eventually to raise sea levels by 15ft: 90 per cent of the world's people live near current sea levels. Recalling that the IPCC's last report had called Antarctica "a slumbering giant", he said: "I would say that this is now an awakened giant."

Professor Mike Schlesinger, of the University of Illinois, reported that the shutdown of the Gulf Stream, once seen as a "low probability event", was now 45 per cent likely this century, and 70 per cent probable by 2200. If it comes sooner rather than later it will be catastrophic for Britain and northern Europe, giving us a climate like Labrador (which shares our latitude) even as the rest of the world heats up: if it comes later it could be beneficial, moderating the worst of the warming.

The experts at Exeter were virtually unanimous about the danger, mirroring the attitude of the climate science community as a whole: humanity is to blame. There were a few skeptics at Exeter, including Andrei Illarionov, an adviser to Russia's President Putin, who last year called the Kyoto Protocol "an interstate Auschwitz". But in truth it is much easier to find skeptics among media pundits in London or neo-cons in Washington than among climate scientists. Even the few contrarian climatologists publish little research to support their views, concentrating on questioning the work of others.

Now a new scientific consensus is emerging - that the warming must be kept below an average increase of two degrees centigrade if catastrophe is to be avoided. This almost certainly involves keeping concentrations of carbon dioxide, the main cause of climate change, below 400 parts per million.

Unfortunately we are almost there, with concentrations exceeding 370ppm and rising, but experts at the conference concluded that we could go briefly above the danger level so long as we brought it down rapidly afterwards. They added that this would involve the world reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2050 - and rich countries cutting theirs by 30 per cent by 2020.

Economists stressed there is little time for delay. If action is put off for a decade, it will need to be twice as radical; if it has to wait 20 years, it will cost between three and seven times as much.

The good news is that it can be done with existing technology, by cutting energy waste, expanding the use of renewable sources, growing trees and crops (which remove carbon dioxide from the air) to turn into fuel, capturing the gas before it is released from power stations, and - maybe - using more nuclear energy.

The better news is that it would not cost much: one estimate suggested the cost would be about 1 per cent of Europe's GNP spread over 20 years; another suggested it meant postponing an expected fivefold increase in world wealth by just two years. Many experts believe combating global warming would increase prosperity, by bringing in new technologies.

The big question is whether governments will act. President Bush's opposition to international action remains the greatest obstacle. Tony Blair, by almost universal agreement, remains the leader with the best chance of persuading him to change his mind.

But so far the Prime Minister has been more influenced by the President than the other way round. He appears to be moving away from fighting for the pollution reductions needed in favor of agreeing on a vague pledge to bring in new technologies sometime in the future.

By then it will be too late. And our children and grandchildren will wonder - as we do in surveying, for example, the drift into the First World War - "how on earth could they be so blind?"

## WATER WARS

What could happen? Wars break out over diminishing water resources as populations grow and rains fail.

How would this come about? Over 25 per cent more people than at present are expected to live in countries where water is scarce in the future, and global warming will make it worse.

How likely is it? Former UN chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali has long said that the next Middle East war will be fought for water, not oil.



## DISAPPEARING NATIONS

What could happen? Low-lying island such as the Maldives and Tuvalu – with highest points only a few feet above sea-level - will disappear off the face of the Earth.

How would this come about? As the world heats up, sea levels are rising, partly because glaciers are melting, and partly because the water in the oceans expands as it gets warmer.

How likely is it? Inevitable. Even if global warming stopped today, the seas would continue to rise for centuries. Some small islands have already sunk for ever. A year ago, Tuvalu was briefly submerged.

## FLOODING

What could happen? London, New York, Tokyo, Bombay, many other cities and vast areas of countries from Britain to Bangladesh disappear under tens of feet of water, as the seas rise dramatically.

How would this come about? Ice caps in Greenland and Antarctica melt. The Greenland ice sheet would raise sea levels by more than 20ft, the West Antarctic ice sheet by another 15ft.

How likely is it? Scientists used to think it unlikely, but this year reported that the melting of both ice caps had begun. It will take hundreds of years, however, for the seas to rise that much.

## UNINHABITABLE EARTH

What could happen? Global warming escalates to the point where the world's whole climate abruptly switches, turning it permanently into a much hotter and less hospitable planet.

How would this come about? A process involving "positive feedback" causes the warming to fuel itself, until it reaches a point that finally tips the climate pattern over.

How likely is it? Abrupt flips have happened in the prehistoric past. Scientists believe this is unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, but increasingly they are refusing to rule it out.

## RAINFOREST FIRES

What could happen? Famously wet tropical forests, such as those in the Amazon, go up in flames, destroying the world's richest wildlife habitats and releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide to speed global warming.

How would this come about? Britain's Met Office predicted in 1999 that much of the Amazon will dry out and die within 50 years, making it ready for sparks - from humans or lightning - to set it ablaze.

How likely is it? Very, if the predictions turn out to be right. Already there have been massive forest fires in Borneo and Amazonia, casting palls of highly polluting smoke over vast areas.

### THE BIG FREEZE

What could happen? Britain and northern Europe get much colder because the Gulf Stream, which provides as much heat as the sun in winter, fails.

How would this come about? Melting polar ice sends fresh water into the North Atlantic. The less salty water fails to generate the underwater current which the Gulf Stream needs.

How likely is it? About evens for a Gulf Stream failure this century, said scientists last week.

### STARVATION

What could happen? Food production collapses in Africa, for example, as rainfall dries up and droughts increase. As farmland turns to desert, people flee in their millions in search of food.

How would this come about? Rainfall is expected to decrease by up to 60 per cent in winter and 30 per cent in summer in southern Africa this century. By some estimates, Zambia could lose almost all its farms.

How likely is it? Pretty likely unless the world tackles both global warming and Africa's decline. Scientists agree that droughts will increase in a warmer world.

### ACID OCEANS

What could happen? The seas will gradually turn more and more acid. Coral reefs, shellfish and plankton, on which all life depends, will die off. Much of the life of the oceans will become extinct.

How would this come about? The oceans have absorbed half the carbon dioxide, the main cause of global warming, so far emitted by humanity. This forms dilute carbonic acid, which attacks corals and shells.

How likely is it? It is already starting. Scientists warn that the chemistry of the oceans is changing in ways unprecedented for 20 million years. Some predict that the world's coral reefs will die within 35 years.

### DISEASE

What could happen? Malaria - which kills two million people worldwide every year - reaches Britain with foreign travelers, gets picked up by British mosquitos and becomes endemic in the warmer climate.

How would this come about? Four of our 40 mosquito species can carry the disease, and hundreds of travelers return with it annually. The insects breed faster, and feed more, in warmer temperatures.

How likely is it? A Department of Health study has suggested it may happen by 2050: the Environment Agency has mentioned 2020. Some experts say it is miraculous that it has not happened already.

## HURRICANES

What could happen? Hurricanes, typhoons and violent storms proliferate, grow even fiercer, and hit new areas. Last September's repeated battering of Florida and the Caribbean may be just a foretaste of what is to come, say scientists.

How would this come about? The storms gather their energy from warm seas, and so, as oceans heat up, fiercer ones occur and threaten areas where at present the seas are too cool for such weather.

How likely is it? Scientists are divided over whether storms will get more frequent and whether the process has already begun.

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## February 16, 2005

### OPEN FORUM

“Kyoto Protocol Debuts: Should religion have a voice?”

Sally Bingham

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

Every mainstream religion has a mandate to care for creation. We were given natural resources to sustain us, but we were also given the responsibility to act as good stewards and preserve life for future generations.

Mounting scientific evidence suggests that we are damaging the earth and that our continued inaction will disproportionately harm the poorest among us. We have heard the scientists, whom we view as modern-day prophets, tell us that excessive amounts of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, are the likely cause for the current changes in climate. Even the Pentagon has called global warming a major threat to global security, raising the specter of millions of climate refugees and wars over water and other resources.

Yet, our dependency on foreign oil is increasing. Without cooperative action around the world, scientists tell us that our rapidly changing climate could create a global crisis. If the United States continues our current "wait and see" approach, it will be far too late to take action.

The moral and ethical implications of these impending global changes are not lost on the religious community. While our nation emits more greenhouse gases than any other, we are also one of the only developed countries to reject the Kyoto Protocol -- an international treaty designed to reduce global-warming pollution. The Kyoto Treaty goes into effect today without the participation of the United States. This is not a responsible position for the world's richest nation and sole superpower.

It is particularly important for us to recognize that the poorest countries will feel a disproportionate negative impact from global warming. Yet these are the countries that can least handle disruptions to their food and water supplies. And, unlike the wealthier nations, they are the least able to pioneer solutions.

There is some good news, however. Six New England governors and five premiers of eastern Canadian provinces signed a regional climate action plan to reduce global warming emissions across the region. The governors of California, Oregon and Washington are working on a plan for our region that may include similar goals. A number of cities have set reduction goals for themselves.

But there is bad news as well. In addition to not signing the Kyoto Protocol, the United States has not shown any leadership in finding real global solutions. Each passing day is jeopardizing our future.

If the United States had sent an interfaith coalition of clergy to the Kyoto Protocol meetings to address global warming, we would be participating in this historic treaty. Once the religious community became aware of the dire global situation, we began collaborating. We have only just begun to make our position known, but we are loud, active and everywhere.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has written a statement on climate change responding to Pope John Paul II's concerns that climate change will adversely affect people. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, leader of the Greek Orthodox Church, has declared environmental degradation a sin. The Franciscan order of Roman Catholic priests has called for action on global warming and the Anglican Church is writing a response to climate change. The Rev. Ted Haggard, president of the 30 million-member national Association of Evangelicals said, "There are significant and compelling theological reasons why environment should be a banner issue for the Christian right." The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, recently announced that the Church of England is embarking on a green revolution, rolling out eco-friendly policies. One thousand clergy and congregational leaders in 35 states recently signed a statement that expressed disagreement with the present position of our government on climate change.

The united voice of the faith community is heartening, as there are few subjects where such a diverse group sings in unison. Our political leaders should learn this hymn.

The Rev. Sally Bingham, an Episcopal priest at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, is executive director of the Regeneration Project ([www.TheRegenerationProject.org](http://www.TheRegenerationProject.org)).

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**February 17, 2005**

“Religions mark Kyoto accord to stem global climate change”

Hisashi Yukimoto

Tokyo (ENI). An interfaith service in Kyoto Cathedral was one of many events to mark the coming into force on Wednesday of the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement signed in 1997 in the Japanese city that bears its name and which aims to slow global warming.

"It will start with blowing a conch-shell horn and include silent prayers after representatives of different religions in the region ring a bell before marching to Yasaka Shinto Shrine," said the Rev. Yukio Saeki, president of the interfaith group and chairman of the Kyoto Christian Council.

The Kyoto accord is intended to stem rising temperatures that many scientists say will cause more storms droughts and floods and raise world sea levels. It requires developed countries to reduce their output of heat-trapping gases produced by industry, cars and power plants. More than 140 nations have signed the accord but not Australia, China, India, Saudi Arabia and the United States who fear it could damage economic growth.

The UN Environment Programme warns that global warming is set to intensify the vulnerability of the world's small islands to extreme weather events, including storm surges and increased wave action, as well as rising seal levels.

Churches in the Pacific where many of the islands are located called for prayers in advance of the coming into force of the accord. "If we do not change our lifestyle soon we, the people of the Pacific, will suffer the most" the churches noted in their call to prayer. "The rising sea-levels, the increasing number of cyclones, the droughts, the pollution in our air, the increased extreme weather conditions - we can already feel it."

Still, "It is not only about our own responsibility in the Pacific," the churches said. "Members of all nations especially from the industrialised countries contribute with their consumption-based lifestyles to the climate change world-wide."

The targets of the protocol vary regionally with the European Union committed to cutting emissions to 8 per cent below 1990 levels by 2012. The United States had agreed to a 7 per cent reduction before President George W. Bush denounced the pact in 2001.

That proposal was opposed by the US Senate so adamantly the protocol was never submitted for ratification by then-President Bill Clinton.

In Washington DC, a group of theologians convened by the US National Council of Churches on Monday released an open letter urging Christians to repent of "social and ecological sins" and to change destructive attitudes and actions concerning the environment.

"God's creation delivers unsettling news. Earth's climate is warming to dangerous levels," the theologians said in the statement they said was an attempt to refute a "false gospel" about the environment.

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“Archbishop seeks help in cleanup of lead pollution”

By Sara Shipley  
Of the Post-Dispatch  
02/16/2005

Archbishop Pedro Barreto from the Huancayo archdiocese in Peru.

A Catholic archbishop from Peru visited St. Louis this week as part of a growing international effort to address health and environmental problems surrounding a local company's lead smelter in the Andes Mountains.

Archbishop Pedro Barreto said he hoped the response to the "grave problems" in La Oroya, Peru, would provide a model of collaboration among public, private and religious groups.

"In this global world in which we live, solidarity must also be global," Barreto said in Spanish through a translator.

High levels of lead contamination in the Peruvian city where the Maryland Heights-based Doe Run Co. has a smelter have drawn increasing attention from around the world. Barreto is helping to lead an effort that now includes the Presbyterian and Catholic churches, St. Louis University, Oxfam International and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a federal public health agency.

During his visit to the United States, Barreto visited other organizations to ask for support, including Catholic Relief Services and the U.S. ambassador to Peru. He also visited with SLU scientists who have agreed, at his invitation, to conduct an environmental study in La Oroya later this spring.

Barreto, a Jesuit, thanked the Jesuit university for doing the study, which he said would provide a foundation for solving La Oroya's problems.

Doe Run, which also operates a lead smelter in Herculaneum, Mo., had no comment on the archbishop's visit or the study.

Company spokeswoman Barbara Shepard said the company had worked hard to reduce emissions and improve public health at the Peruvian complex it bought from the government in 1997. The facility produces lead, copper, silver and gold. "We're working on solving the problem, not studying the problem," Shepard said.

She said that blood-lead levels among workers at the complex have dropped 31 percent since the company bought the plant, and that blood-lead levels among high-risk children identified in a company-sponsored study have dropped 17 percent.

"Do we have a ways to go? Absolutely. Our goal is all the children in La Oroya do not have a blood-lead issue," Shepard said.

She said the company welcomes "constructive dialogue."

Plenty of dialogue is sure to come from ongoing efforts to monitor and improve environmental health in La Oroya, where a study by independent public health workers in 2002 found that nearly 100 percent of La Oroya's 18,000 children have lead poisoning. Doe Run's own tests in 2000 found an average blood lead level of 36.7 micrograms per deciliter in children up to 3 years old.

In the United States, a blood lead level of 10 micrograms per deciliter is considered a concern. Even at low levels, lead has been linked to behavioral problems, decreased intelligence and developmental difficulties.

SLU's School of Public Health will look at lead, along with cadmium, arsenic and other heavy metals, in its study. Fernando Serrano, an expert in lead poisoning prevention, said scientists would take samples in La Oroya and another city in Peru that would act as a control. Blood and urine samples will be analyzed in the United States by the CDC, which is serving as a technical adviser.

"It's a very big collaboration that's going on," David Sterling, director of the school's division of environmental and occupational health. "People have been very good in terms of lending their time, advice and, in some cases, materials."

Who's helping:

The Presbyterian and Catholic churches

St. Louis University

Oxfam International

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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## **February 22, 2005**

“Eco-Islam hits Zanzibar fishermen”

By Daniel Dickinson

BBC News, Pemba, Tanzania

The Koran is not widely known as a source of guidance on environmental and conservation issues, but that has not stopped one development organisation in Tanzania from using it to help conserve an island marine park.

Fishing methods were destroying marine wildlife on the coral reef  
 Religious leaders have been asked to promote conservation messages using the texts of the Koran - an approach which has proved a great deal more successful than government regulations.

The island of Misali is just a small dot in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Pemba.

The coral reef surrounding it is home to a rich variety of fish and turtles.

Misali is uninhabited, but where there are fish, there are fishermen - and just a few years ago this fragile island paradise was under serious threat.

Religious awareness

Destructive fishing methods were damaging the corals and harming species that lived there.  
 Government bans had little impact.

The fishermen who launch their wooden dugout canoe from the windswept shores of Misali, like 99% of the population of the Zanzibar archipelago, are Muslims.

Tourism, too, will benefit from the new scheme to protect marine life

Once they realised that catches were falling dramatically, the non-governmental organisation Care International stepped in to persuade them to take better care of their environment - through a scheme based on Islamic principles.

"People didn't experience environmental destruction in their areas until very recently," says Ali Thani, Care's project director.

"And after what they are experiencing, they feel that Islamic environmental ethics might be better to create awareness in the community to protect their environment."

These fishermen have learned the benefits of fishing in a sustainable manner without harming the island's bio-diversity.

Tourist destination

Salum Haji has fished these waters for as long as he can remember.

"There have been a lot of bad things happening here," he says.

"People have used dynamite and guns to fish here. This has destroyed the coral.

"I am happy that now we have learnt that the Koran tells us to protect everything in this world, including the environment.

"I am more dedicated to protecting the environment now and a more committed Muslim as well."



With sustainable fishing, catches have increased.

Local fishermen have embraced the new Koran-based ethics

And the underwater life is so rich that the island has also become a tourist destination, with money paid by visitors being put back into community development on Pemba.

It is thought this is the first time the teachings of the Koran have been used in Tanzania to promote conservation.

Local religious leaders like Shehe Mlekwa Lissani Bambi are now highlighting Islamic teachings about conservation in their sermons, though a certain amount of interpretation has been necessary, he says.

"Everything we see in the world is in the Koran," he says.

"We have not changed what is in it as this cannot be changed, but we are reading it with more knowledge.

"We are the guardians of God's creation. He asks us to protect what he created and we can do this by looking after the environment."

'God's law'

Shehe Mlekwa Lissani Bambi feels it is fitting that Misali island was chosen to pioneer the use of Islamic ethics to conserve the environment. Misali is steeped in Islamic myth, including one surrounding a saintly figure known as the Prophet Hadhara.

"The island is very important in our history. Once Prophet Hadhara arrived at Misali and asked fishermen for a prayer mat.

"As there was no mat, Hadhara said the island itself was like a prayer mat since it exactly points towards Mecca.

"He prayed and then disappeared. Since then the island is called Misali, which means prayer mat."

Project director Ali Thani says religious leaders play a crucial role

Care International project director Ali Thani says it was only possible to convince people with the help of the sheha and shehe - the religious leaders. So far, he says, the project appears to be working.

One local fisherman summarised neatly why the religious message has succeeded where government decrees failed: It is easy to ignore the government, he said, but no-one can break God's law.

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### **March 9, 2005**

#### “Charles Townes Wins 2005 Templeton Prize”

NEW YORK, MARCH 9 - Charles Townes, the Nobel laureate whose inventions include the maser and laser and who has spent decades as a leading advocate for the convergence of science and religion, has won the 2005 Templeton Prize. The prize, valued at more than \$1.5 million, was announced today at a news conference at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York.

Townes, 89, secured his place in the pantheon of great 20th-century scientists through his investigations into the properties of microwaves which resulted first in the maser, a device which amplifies electromagnetic waves, and later his co-invention of the laser, which amplifies and directs light waves into parallel direct beams. His research, for which he shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1964, opened the door for an astonishing array of inventions and discoveries now in common use throughout the world in medicine, telecommunications, electronics, computers, and other areas.

It was the 1966 publication of his seminal article, “The Convergence of Science and Religion” in the IBM journal THINK, however, that established Townes as a unique voice - especially among scientists - that sought commonality between the two disciplines. Long before the concept of a relationship between scientific and theological inquiry became an accepted arena of investigation, his nonconformist viewpoint jumpstarted a movement that until then few had considered and even fewer comprehended. So rare was such a viewpoint at the time that Townes admitted in the paper that his position would be considered by many in both camps to be “extreme.” Nonetheless, he proposed, “their differences are largely superficial, and...the two become almost indistinguishable if we look at the real nature of each.”

The article was generated from a talk delivered by Townes in 1964 before a congregation at New York’s famed Riverside Church, known for its embrace of groundbreaking perspectives on philosophy, theology and social activism.

The Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities was founded in 1972 by pioneering global investor and philanthropist Sir John Templeton. Given each year to a living person to encourage and honor those who advance knowledge in spiritual matters and valued at 795,000 pounds sterling, the Templeton Prize is the world’s best known religion prize and the largest annual monetary prize given to an individual. The prize’s monetary value is in keeping with Sir John’s stipulation that it always be worth more than the Nobel Prizes to underscore his belief that research and advances in spiritual discoveries can be quantifiably more significant than those recognized by the Nobels.

The Duke of Edinburgh will award the prize to Townes in a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 4th. Townes says he intends to give a major portion of the prize money to Furman University, with substantial amounts to also go to the Pacific School of Religion, the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, the Berkeley Ecumenical Chaplaincy to the Homeless, and the First Congregational Church of Berkeley.

In remarks prepared for the news conference, Townes said, "Science and religion have had a long history of interesting interaction. But when I was younger, that interaction did not seem like a very healthy one."

Townes, Professor in the Graduate School at the University of California at Berkeley, noted that, as a graduate student at the California Institute of Technology, the professor directing his research "jumped on me for being religiously oriented." After the THINK article was reprinted in *The Technology Review*, published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the journal's editor received a letter from a prominent alumnus who threatened to have nothing more to do with MIT if it ever again printed anything like it on religion.

Rather than being dampened by such hostility, Townes said it only further stoked his interest, a burning issue he continues to aggressively examine in books, journals and lectures at venues ranging from UNESCO to the world's major institutes of higher learning. "I believe there is no long-range question more important than the purpose and meaning of our lives and our universe," Townes said in his remarks, noting that the Templeton Prize founder had been particularly instrumental in that work. "Sir John has very much stimulated its thoughtful consideration, particularly encouraging open and useful discussion of spirituality and the meaning of life by scientists."

Charles Hard Townes was born in Greenville, South Carolina in 1915 to Ellen and Henry Townes, an attorney. Raised in a Baptist household that embraced an open-minded approach to biblical interpretation, Townes received a B.A. in modern languages and a B.S. in physics summa cum laude from Furman University in Greenville when he was 19. Two years later, he received an M.A. in physics from Duke and, in 1939, a Ph.D. in physics from the California Institute of Technology with a thesis on isotope separation and nuclear spins.

That same year, Townes became a member of the technical staff at Bell Labs, the powerhouse of modern technology that produced such advances as the transistor, solar cells, and fiber optics, where he specialized in microwave generation, vacuum tubes, and solid-state physics. During World War II, he helped develop radar systems that effectively performed in the humid conditions of the Pacific Theater.

After the war, he became associate professor of physics at Columbia University and met Arthur L. Schawlow, who had come to the university on a fellowship and became Townes' research assistant. The two would eventually combine their energies (and, coincidentally, become brothers-in-law) to make major advances in the field of microwave spectroscopy, including designing masers and lasers in the 1950s.

Townes often cites his discovery of the principles of the maser - an insight that suddenly occurred to him as he sat on a park bench in Washington, D.C. in 1951 - as a “revelation” as real as any revelation described in the scriptures, and as a striking example of the interplay of “how” and “why” that both science and religion must recognize.

In nominating Townes to the international, interfaith panel of nine judges that awards the prize, David Shi, president of Furman University, wrote, “He points out that both scientists and theologians seek truth that transcends current human understanding, and because both are human perspectives trying to explain and to find meaning in the universe, both are fraught with uncertainty. Scientists propose hypotheses from postulates, from ideas that ultimately cannot be proven. Thus, like religion, science builds on a form of faith.”

Shi added, “Charles Townes helped to create and sustain the dialogue between science and theology. Thus he has made a profound contribution to the world's progress in understanding - and embracing - the wonder of God's creation.”

Townes, who became an Officer of the French Legion of Honor in 1990, is also the recipient of the Niels Bohr International Gold Medal and nearly 100 other honors and awards, and holds honorary degrees from more than 25 universities. During the administration of Ronald Reagan, he served as a member of the Committee on the Contributions of the Behavioral and Social Sciences to the Prevention of Nuclear War and, as chairman of Reagan's commission on the MX missile, helped convince the president to reject widespread placement of that weapon.

Most recently, Townes has been a champion of optical searches for extraterrestrial intelligence, using methods he first proposed in a paper in the journal *Nature* in 1961, one year after scientists had launched the first search for radio transmissions from distant solar systems. His current work uses lasers to help combine images from distant telescopes. Townes' most recent book, *How the Laser Happened: Adventures of a Scientist*, was published in 1999 to wide acclaim.

Townes and his wife of 63 years, the former Frances H. Brown, live in Berkeley, California. They are the parents of four daughters and six grandchildren.

For more information on the Templeton Prize and the John Templeton Foundation, go to [www.templetonprize.org](http://www.templetonprize.org) and [www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org).

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### **March 10, 2005**

“Evangelical Leaders Swing Influence Behind Effort to Combat Global Warming”

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN

Published: March 10, 2005

A core group of influential evangelical leaders has put its considerable political power behind a cause that has barely registered on the evangelical agenda, fighting global warming.

These church leaders, scientists, writers and heads of international aid agencies argue that global warming is an urgent threat, a cause of poverty and a Christian issue because the Bible mandates stewardship of God's creation.

The Rev. Rich Cizik, vice president of governmental affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals and a significant voice in the debate, said, "I don't think God is going to ask us how he created the earth, but he will ask us what we did with what he created."

The association has scheduled two meetings on Capitol Hill and in the Washington suburbs on Thursday and Friday, where more than 100 leaders will discuss issuing a statement on global warming. The meetings are considered so pivotal that Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, Democrat of Connecticut, and officials of the Bush administration, who are on opposite sides on how to address global warming, will speak.

People on all sides of the debate say that if evangelical leaders take a stand, they could change the political dynamics on global warming.

The administration has refused to join the international Kyoto treaty and opposes mandatory emission controls.

The issue has failed to gain much traction in the Republican-controlled Congress. An overwhelming majority of evangelicals are Republicans, and about four out of five evangelicals voted for President Bush last year, according to the Pew Research Center.

The Rev. Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, an umbrella group of 51 church denominations, said he had become passionate about global warming because of his experience scuba diving and observing the effects of rising ocean temperatures and pollution on coral reefs.

"The question is, Will evangelicals make a difference, and the answer is, The Senate thinks so," Mr. Haggard said. "We do represent 30 million people, and we can mobilize them if we have to."

In October the association paved the way for broad-based advocacy on the environment when it adopted "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility," a platform that included a plank on "creation care" that many evangelical leaders say was unprecedented.

"Because clean air, pure water and adequate resources are crucial to public health and civic order," the statement said, "government has an obligation to protect its citizens from the effects of environmental degradation."

Nearly 100 evangelical leaders have signed the statement.

But it is far from certain that a more focused statement on climate change would elicit a similar response.

In recent years, however, whenever the association latched onto a new issue, Washington paid attention, on questions like religious persecution, violence in Sudan, AIDS in Africa and sex trafficking of young girls.

Environmentalists said they would welcome the evangelicals as allies.

"They have good friendships in places where the rest of the environmental community doesn't," Larry J. Schweiger, president and chief executive of the National Wildlife Federation, said. "For instance, in legislative districts where there's a very conservative lawmaker who might not be predisposed to pay attention to what environmental groups might say, but may pay attention to what the local faith community is saying."

It is not as if the evangelical and environmental groups are collaborating, because the wedge between them remains deep, Mr. Cizik said. He added that evangelicals had long been uncomfortable with what they perceived to be the environmentalists' support for government regulation, population control and, if they are not entirely secular, new-age approaches to religion.

Over the last three years, evangelical leaders like Mr. Cizik have begun to reconsider their silence on environmental questions. Some evangelicals have spoken out, but not many. Among them is the Rev. Jim Ball of the Evangelical Environmental Network, who in 2002 began a "What Would Jesus Drive?" campaign and drove a hybrid vehicle across the country.

Mr. Cizik said that Mr. Ball "dragged" him to a conference on climate change in 2002 in Oxford, England. Among the speakers were evangelical scientists, including Sir John Houghton, a retired Oxford professor of atmospheric physics who was on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a committee that issued international reports.

Sir John said in an interview that he had told the group that science and faith together provided proof that climate change should be a Christian concern.

Mr. Cizik said he had a "conversion" on climate change so profound in Oxford that he likened it to an "altar call," when nonbelievers accept Jesus as their savior. Mr. Cizik recently bought a Toyota Prius, a hybrid vehicle.

Mr. Cizik and Mr. Ball then asked Sir John to speak at a small meeting of evangelical leaders in June in Maryland called by the Evangelical Environmental Network, the National Association of Evangelicals and Christianity Today, the magazine. The leaders read Scripture and said they were moved by three watermen who caught crabs in Chesapeake Bay and said their faith had made them into environmentalists.

Those leaders produced a "covenant" in which 29 committed to "engage the evangelical community" on climate change and to produce a "consensus statement" within a year.

Soon, Christianity Today ran an editorial endorsing a bill sponsored by Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, along with Mr. Lieberman, that would include binding curbs on heat-

trapping gases. Mr. Ball said the strongest moral argument he made to fellow evangelicals was that climate change would have disproportionate effects on the poorest regions in the world. Hurricanes, droughts and floods are widely expected to intensify as a result of climate change.

Evangelical leaders of relief and development organizations had been very receptive, he said.

"Christ said, 'What you do to the least of these you do to me,' " Mr. Ball said. "And so caring for the poor by reducing the threat of global warming is caring for Jesus Christ."

Among those speaking at the two meetings this week are Sir John and Dr. Mack McFarland, environmental manager for DuPont, who is to describe how his company has greatly reduced emissions of heat-trapping gases.

Such an approach appeals to evangelicals, Mr. Haggard said, adding, "We want to be pro-business environmentalists."

Mr. Cizik said he was among many evangelicals who would support some regulation on heat trapping gases.

"We're not adverse to government-mandated prohibitions on behavioral sin such as abortion," he said. "We try to restrict it. So why, if we're social tinkering to protect the sanctity of human life, ought we not be for a little tinkering to protect the environment?"

Mr. Lieberman added: "Support from the evangelical and broader religious community can really move some people in Congress who feel some sense of moral responsibility but haven't quite settled on an exact policy response yet. This could be pivotal."

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### **March 11, 2005**

"A new gospel on global warming By Laurie Goodstein The New York Times"  
Friday, March 11, 2005

For American evangelicals, it's a Christian fight and issue

NEW YORK A core group of influential evangelical leaders has put its considerable political power behind a cause that has barely registered on the evangelical agenda: fighting global warming.

These church leaders, scientists, writers and heads of international aid agencies argue that global warming is an urgent threat, a cause of poverty and a Christian issue because the Bible mandates stewardship of God's creation.

The Reverend Rich Cizik, vice president of governmental affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals and a significant voice in the debate, said, "I don't think God is going to ask us how he created the earth, but he will ask us what we did with what he created."

The association has scheduled two meetings on Capitol Hill and in the Washington suburbs on Thursday and Friday, at which more than 100 leaders will discuss issuing a statement on global warming.

The meetings are considered so pivotal that Senator Joseph Lieberman, Democrat from Connecticut, and officials of the Bush administration, who are on opposite sides of the debate on global warming, will speak at them.

People on all sides of the debate say that if evangelical leaders take a stand, they could change the political dynamics on global warming. The administration has refused to join the international Kyoto Treaty and opposes mandatory emissions controls.

The issue has failed to gain much traction in the Republican-controlled Congress. An overwhelming majority of evangelicals are Republicans, and about four out of five evangelicals voted for President George W. Bush last year, according to the Pew Research Center.

The Reverend Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, a group of more than 50 church denominations, said he had become passionate about global warming because of his experience scuba diving and observing the effects of rising ocean temperatures and pollution on coral reefs.

"The question is, Will evangelicals make a difference, and the answer is, The Senate thinks so," Haggard said. "We do represent 30 million people, and we can mobilize them if we have to."

In October, the association paved the way for broad-based advocacy on the environment when it adopted "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility," a platform that included a position on "creation care" that many evangelical leaders say was unprecedented.

"Because clean air, pure water and adequate resources are crucial to public health and civic order, government has an obligation to protect its citizens from the effects of environmental degradation," the statement said.

It has been signed by nearly 100 evangelical leaders.

It is far from certain that a more focused statement on climate change would elicit a similar response.

In recent years, however, whenever the association has taken up a new issue - like religious persecution, violence in Sudan, AIDS in Africa and sex trafficking of girls - Washington has paid attention.

Environmentalists have said they would welcome the evangelicals as allies. "They have good friendships in places where the rest of the environmental community doesn't," said Larry Schweiger, president and chief executive of the National Wildlife Federation. "For instance, in legislative districts where there's a very conservative lawmaker who might not be predisposed to



pay attention to what environmental groups might say, but may pay attention to what the local faith community is saying."

It is not as if the evangelical and environmental groups are collaborating, because the wedge between them remains deep, Cizik said. He added that evangelicals had long been uncomfortable with what they perceived to be the environmentalists' support for government regulation, population control and, if they are not entirely secular, a nontraditional approach to religion.

Cizik said he was among many evangelicals who would support some regulation of emissions that contribute to global warming.

"We're not adverse to government-mandated prohibitions on behavioral sin such as abortion," he said. "We try to restrict it. So why, if we're social-tinkering to protect the sanctity of human life, ought we not be for a little tinkering to protect the environment?"

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New York Times

"Evangelicals Open Debate on Widening Policy Questions"

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN

Published: March 11, 2005

WASHINGTON, March 10 - The National Association of Evangelicals, with 30 million members in 45,000 churches, opened a debate on Thursday on a document intended to expand the political platform of evangelicals beyond the fight against abortion and same-sex marriage.

The authors of the paper, "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility," said they reached a consensus between liberals and conservatives by adopting public policy goals, but not prescribing strategies to achieve them. At a luncheon held by the association on Thursday on Capitol Hill, however, some evangelical leaders voiced concern that the new platform could dilute the focus of the evangelical movement by taking on too many issues.

The document urges evangelicals to address issues like racial injustice, religious freedom, poverty in the United States and abroad, human rights, environmentalism and advancing peace through nonviolent conflict resolution.

The "Evangelical Call" is an effort to bridge some of the fault lines running through the evangelical world, between Republicans and Democrats, between those who welcome political involvement and those who shun it and between those who say social problems are a result of personal sin and those who say they are a result of systemic inequity.

"Evangelicals have sometimes been accused of having a one- or two-item political agenda," said the Rev. Ronald J. Sider, who helped draft the document and is the president of Evangelicals for

Social Action, a group affiliated with the liberal wing. "This document makes it very clear that a vast body of evangelicals today reject a one-issue approach."

At the luncheon, several speakers said the document was necessary because evangelicals risked being seen as merely a Republican voting bloc. Several of those speakers identified themselves as Republicans.

Barbara Williams-Skinner, president of the Skinner Leadership Institute, a Christian training center in Tracy's Landing, Md., criticized evangelicals who decide their votes using abortion and same-sex marriage as a litmus test.

"The litmus test is the Gospel, the whole of it," said Ms. Williams-Skinner, an African-American who told the group that she is a Democrat who opposes abortion.

Ms. Williams-Skinner was the sole speaker to draw a standing ovation.

Diane Knippers, a Republican who helped draft the document, warned Democrats not to try to win over religious voters by trying to mobilize the religious left.

"The religious left is political smoke and mirrors," said Ms. Knippers, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

She attended the meeting but had lost her voice. A colleague read her statement.

Critics indicated that the new smorgasbord approach could hit resistance.

Tom Minnery, vice president of Focus on the Family, an influential ministry based in Colorado Springs, stood up at the luncheon and warned the other leaders, "Do not make this about global warming."

"The issues of marriage, the issues of pro-life are the issues that define us to this day," he added.

A. James Reichley, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, warned the National Association of Evangelicals not to travel the same route as mainline Protestant denominations that adopt resolutions at their national meetings on a wide range of questions, from foreign policy to budget cuts.

"We can responsibly disagree" on specific issues, "and that's fine," Mr. Reichley said.

Others, however, said they welcomed the document because it could change the tenor and direction of the evangelical movement.

"There is a consensus here, but some of us haven't had the nerve to do what needs to be done," said John C. Holmes, director of government affairs for the Association of Christian Schools International, which represents Christian teachers and schools.

In a sign of power after an election campaign in which President Bush worked hard to mobilize religious support, the session drew prominent figures from both parties.

Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, Democrat of Connecticut, also spoke to the group and said that as an observant Jew he applauded the platform plank about caring for the environment. He urged support for a bill he has sponsored with Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, to combat global warming with binding curbs on heat-trapping gases.

Senator Sam Brownback, Republican of Kansas, praised evangelicals for lobbying on issues like prison rape and human rights abuses in Sudan.

"This is a young movement," he said later in an interview, "and it's just starting to get its sea legs. I think you'll now see it spread out into a whole lot of areas."

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The New York Review of Books  
Volume 52, Number 5 · March 24, 2005

“Welcome to Doomsday”

By Bill Moyers

1.

There are times when what we journalists see and intend to write about dispassionately sends a shiver down the spine, shaking us from our neutrality. This has been happening to me frequently of late as one story after another drives home the fact that the delusional is no longer marginal but has come in from the fringe to influence the seats of power. We are witnessing today a coupling of ideology and theology that threatens our ability to meet the growing ecological crisis. Theology asserts propositions that need not be proven true, while ideologues hold stoutly to a world view despite being contradicted by what is generally accepted as reality. The combination can make it impossible for a democracy to fashion real-world solutions to otherwise intractable challenges.

In the just-concluded election cycle, as Mark Silk writes in *Religion in the News*, “the assiduous cultivation of religious constituencies by the Bush apparatus, and the undisguised intrusion of evangelical leaders and some conservative Catholic hierarchs into the presidential campaign, demonstrated that the old rule of maintaining a decent respect for the nonpartisanship of religion can now be broken with impunity.”

The result is what the Italian scholar Emilio Gentile, quoted in Silk's newsletter, calls "political religion"—religion as an instrument of political combat. On gay marriage and abortion—the most conspicuous of the "non-negotiable" items in a widely distributed Catholic voter's guide—no one should be surprised what this political religion portends. The agenda has been foreshadowed for years, ever since Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and other right-wing Protestants set out to turn white evangelicals into a solid Republican voting bloc and reached out to make allies of their former antagonists, conservative Catholics.

What has been less apparent is the impact of the new political religion on environmental policy. Evangelical Christians have been divided. Some were indifferent. The majority of conservative evangelicals, on the other hand, have long hooked their view to the account in the first book of the Bible:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

There are widely varying interpretations of this text, but it is safe to say that all presume human beings have inherited the earth to be used as they see fit. For many, God's gift to Adam and Eve of "dominion" over the earth and all its creatures has been taken as the right to unlimited exploitation. But as Blaine Harden reported recently in *The Washington Post*, some evangelicals are beginning to "go for the green." Last October the National Association of Evangelicals adopted an "Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility," affirming that "God-given dominion is a sacred responsibility to steward the earth and not a license to abuse the creation of which we are a part." The declaration acknowledged that for the sake of clean air, clean water, and adequate resources, the government "has an obligation to protect its citizens from the effects of environmental degradation."

But even for green activists in evangelical circles, Harden wrote, "there are landmines."

Welcome to the Rapture!

There are millions of Christians who believe the Bible is literally true, word for word. Some of them—we'll come back to the question of how many—subscribe to a fantastical theology concocted in the nineteenth century by two immigrant preachers who took disparate passages from the Bible and wove them with their own hallucinations into a narrative foretelling the return of Jesus and the end of the world. Google the "Rapture Index" and you will see just how the notion has seized the imagination of many a good and sincere believer (you will also see just where we stand right now in the ticking of the clock toward the culmination of history in the apocalypse). It is the inspiration for the best-selling books in America today—the twelve novels in the *Left Behind* series by Christian fundamentalist and religious-right warrior Tim LaHaye, a co-founder with Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority.

The plot of the Rapture—the word never appears in the Bible although some fantasists insist it is the hidden code to the Book of Revelation—is rather simple, if bizarre. (The British writer George Monbiot recently did a brilliant dissection of it and I am indebted to him for refreshing my own insights.) Once Israel has occupied the rest of its "biblical lands," legions of the Antichrist will attack it, triggering a final showdown in the valley of Armageddon. As the Jews who have not been converted are burned the Messiah will return for the Rapture. True believers will be transported to heaven where, seated at the right hand of God, they will watch their political and religious opponents writhe in the misery of plagues—boils, sores, locusts, and frogs—during the several years of tribulation that follow.

I'm not making this up. Like Monbiot, I read the literature, including *The Rapture Exposed*, a recent book by Barbara Rossing, who teaches the New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and *America Right or Wrong*, by Anatol Lieven, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. On my weekly broadcast for PBS, we reported on these true believers, following some of them from Texas to the West Bank. They are sincere, serious, and polite as they tell you they feel called to help bring the Rapture on as fulfillment of biblical prophecy. To this end they have declared solidarity with Israel and the Jewish settlements and backed up their support with money and volunteers.

For them the invasion of Iraq was a warm-up act, predicted in the Book of Revelation, where four angels "bound in the great river Euphrates" will be released "to slay the third part of man." A war with Islam in the Middle East is not something to be feared but welcomed—an essential conflagration on the road to redemption. The last time I Googled it, the Rapture Index stood at 144—approaching the critical threshold when the prophecy is fulfilled, the whole thing blows, the Son of God returns, and the righteous enter paradise while sinners will be condemned to eternal hellfire.

What does this mean for public policy and the environment? Listen to John Hagee, pastor of the 17,000-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, who is quoted in Rossing's book as saying: "Mark it down, take it to heart, and comfort one another with these words. Doomsday is coming for the earth, for the nations, and for individuals, but those who have trusted in Jesus will not be present on earth to witness the dire time of tribulation." Rossing sums up the message in five words that she says are basic Rapture credo: "The world cannot be saved." It leads to "appalling ethics," she reasons, because the faithful are relieved of concern for the environment, violence, and everything else except their personal salvation. The earth suffers the same fate as the unsaved. All are destroyed.

How many true believers are there? It's impossible to pin down. But there is a constituency for the End Times. A Newsweek poll found that 36 percent of respondents held the Book of Revelation to be "true prophecy." (A Time/CNN poll reported that one quarter think the Bible predicted the 9/11 attacks.) Drive across the country with your radio tuned to some of the 1,600 Christian radio stations or turn to some of the 250 Christian TV stations and you can hear the Gospel of the Apocalypse in sermon and song. Or go, as The Toronto Star's Tom Harpur did, to the Florida Panhandle where he came across an all-day conference "at one of the largest Protestant churches I have ever been in," the Village Baptist Church in Destin. The theme of the day was "Left Behind: A Conference on Biblical Prophecy about End Times" and among the speakers were none other than Tim LaHaye and two other leading voices in the religious right today, Gary Frazier and Ed Hindson. Here is what Harpur wrote for his newspaper:

I have never heard so much venom and dangerous ignorance spouted before an utterly unquestioning, otherwise normal-looking crowd in my life.... There were stunning statements about humans having been only 6,000 years on Earth and other denials of contemporary geology and biology. And we learned that the Rapture, which could happen any second now, but certainly within the next 40 years, will instantly sweep all the "saved" Americans (perhaps one-half the population) to heaven....

But these fantasies were harmless compared with the hatred against Islam that followed. Here are some direct quotes: "Islam is an intolerant religion—and it's clear whose side we should be on in the Middle East." Applause greeted these words: "Allah and Jehovah are not the same God.... Islam is a Satanic religion.... They're going to attack Israel for certain...." Gary Frazier shouted at the top of his lungs: "Wake Up! Wake Up!" And roughly eight hundred heads (at \$25.00 per) nodded approval as he added that the left-wing, anti-Israel media—"for example, CNN"—will never tell the world the truth about Islam. According to these three, and the millions of Americans they lead, Muslims intend ultimately "to impose their religion on us all." It was clear, Harpur wrote: "A terrible, final war in the region is inevitable."

You can understand why people in the grip of such fantasies cannot be expected to worry about the environment. As Glenn Scherer writes in his report for the on-line environmental magazine *Grist*, why care about the earth when the droughts, floods, famine, and pestilence brought by ecological collapse are signs of the apocalypse foretold in the Bible? Why care about global climate change when you and yours will be rescued in the Rapture? Why bother to convert to alternative sources of energy and reduce dependence on oil from the volatile Middle East? Anyway, until Christ does return, the Lord will provide.

Scherer came upon a high school history book, *America's Providential History*, which is used in fundamentalist circles. Students are told that "the secular or socialist has a limited resource mentality and views the world as a pie...that needs to be cut up so everyone can get a piece." The Christian, however, "knows that the potential in God is unlimited and that there is no shortage of resources in God's Earth.... While many secularists view the world as overpopulated, Christians know that God has made the earth sufficiently large with plenty of resources to accommodate all of the people."

While it is impossible to know how many people hold these views, we do know that fundamentalists constitute a large and powerful proportion of the Republican base, and, as Anatol Lieven writes, "fundamentalist religiosity has become an integral part of the radicalization of the right in the US and of the tendency to demonize political opponents as traitors and enemies of God and America"—including, one must note, environmentalists, who are routinely castigated as villains and worse by the right. No wonder Karl Rove wandered the White House whistling "Onward Christian Soldiers" as he prepared for the 2004 elections.

2.

I am not suggesting that fundamentalists are running the government, but they constitute a significant force in the coalition that now holds a monopoly of power in Washington under a Republican Party that for a generation has been moved steadily to the right by its more extreme variants even as it has become more and more beholden to the corporations that finance it. One is foolish to think that their bizarre ideas do not matter. I have no idea what President Bush thinks of the fundamentalists' fantastical theology, but he would not be president without them. He suffuses his language with images and metaphors they appreciate, and they were bound to say amen when Bob Woodward reported that the President "was casting his vision, and that of the country, in the grand vision of God's master plan."

That will mean one thing to Dick Cheney and another to Tim LaHaye, but it will confirm their fraternity in a regime whose chief characteristics are ideological disdain for evidence and theological distrust of science. Many of the constituencies who make up this alliance don't see eye to eye on many things, but for President Bush's master plan for rolling back environmental protections they are united. A powerful current connects the administration's multinational corporate cronies who regard the environment as ripe for the picking and a hard-core constituency of fundamentalists who regard the environment as fuel for the fire that is coming. Once again, populist religion winds up serving the interests of economic elites.

The corporate, political, and religious right's hammerlock on environmental policy extends to the US Congress. Nearly half of its members before the election—231 legislators in all (more since the election)—are backed by the religious right, which includes several powerful fundamentalist leaders like LaHaye. Forty-five senators and 186 members of the 108th Congress earned 80 to 100 percent approval ratings from the most influential Christian Right advocacy groups. Not one includes the environment as one of their celebrated "moral values."

When I talk about this before a live audience I can see from the look on the faces before me just how hard it is for a journalist to report on such things with any credibility. So let me put on a personal level what sends the shiver down my spine.

I myself don't know how to be in this world without expecting a confident future and getting up every morning to do what I can to bring it about. I confess to having always been an optimist. Now, however, I remember my friend on Wall Street whom I once asked: "What do you think of the market?" "I'm optimistic," he answered. "Then why do you look so worried?" And he answered, "Because I am not sure my optimism is justified."

I'm not, either. Once upon a time I believed that people will protect the natural environment when they realize its importance to their health and to the health and lives of their children. Now I am not so sure. It's not that I don't want to believe this—it's just that as a journalist I have been trained to read the news and connect the dots.

I read that the administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency has declared the election a mandate for President Bush on the environment. This for an administration:

- \* that wants to rewrite the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act protecting rare plant and animal species and their habitats, as well as the national Environmental Policy Act that requires the government to judge beforehand if actions might damage natural resources;
- \* that wants to relax pollution limits for ozone, eliminate vehicle tailpipe inspections, and ease pollution standards for cars, sport utility vehicles, and diesel-powered big trucks and heavy equipment;
- \* that wants a new international audit law to allow corporations to keep certain information about environmental problems secret from the public;
- \* that wants to drop all its New-Source Review suits against polluting coal-fired power plants and weaken consent decrees reached earlier with coal companies;

\* that wants to open the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to drilling and increase drilling in Padre Island National Seashore, the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world and the last great coastal wild land in America;

\* that is radically changing the management of our national forests to eliminate critical environmental reviews, open them to new roads, and give the timber companies a green light to slash and cut as they please.

I read the news and learned how the Environmental Protection Agency plotted to spend \$9 million—\$2 million of it from the President's friends at the American Chemistry Council—to pay poor families to continue the use of pesticides in their homes. These pesticides have been linked to neurological damage in children, but instead of ordering an end to their use, the government and the industry concocted a scheme to offer the families \$970 each, as well as a camcorder and children's clothing, to serve as guinea pigs for the study.

I read that President Bush has more than one hundred high-level officials in his administration overseeing industries they once represented as lobbyists, lawyers, or corporate advocates—company insiders waved through the revolving door of government to assure that drug laws, food policies, land use, and the regulation of air pollution are industry-friendly. Among the "advocates-turned-regulators" are a former meat industry lobbyist who helps decide how meat is labeled; a former drug company lobbyist who influences prescription drug policies; a former energy lobbyist who, while accepting payments for bringing clients into his old lobbying firm, helps to determine how much of our public lands those former clients can use for oil and gas drilling.

I read that civil penalties imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency against polluters in 2004 hit an fifteen-year low, in what amounts to an extended holiday for industry from effective compliance with environmental laws.

I read that the administration's allies at the International Policy Network, which is supported by Exxon-Mobil and others of like mind and interest, have issued a report describing global warming as "a myth" at practically the same time the President, who earlier rejected the international treaty outlining limits on greenhouse gases, wants to prevent any "written or oral report" from being issued by any international meetings on the issue.

I read not only the news but the fine print of a recent appropriations bill passed by Congress, with obscure amendments removing all endangered species protections from pesticides, prohibiting judicial review for a forest in Oregon, waiving environmental review for grazing permits on public lands, and weakening protection against development for crucial habitats in California.

I read all this and look up at the pictures on my desk, next to the computer —pictures of my grandchildren: Henry, age twelve; Thomas, ten; Nancy, eight; Jassie, three; SaraJane, one. I see the future looking back at me from those photographs and I say, "Father, forgive us, for we know not what we do." And then the shiver runs down my spine and I am seized by the realization: "That's not right. We do know what we are doing. We are stealing their future. Betraying their trust. Despoiling their world."



And I ask myself: Why? Is it because we don't care? Because we are greedy? Because we have lost our capacity for outrage, our ability to sustain indignation at injustice?

What has happened to our moral imagination?

On the heath Lear asks Gloucester: "How do you see the world?" And Gloucester, who is blind, answers: "I see it feelingly."

I see it feelingly.

Why don't we feel the world enough to save it—for our kin to come?

The news is not good these days. But as a journalist I know the news is never the end of the story. The news can be the truth that sets us free not only to feel but to fight for the future we want. The will to fight is the antidote to despair, the cure for cynicism, and the answer to those faces looking back at me from those photographs on my desk. We must match the science of human health to what the ancient Israelites called *hochma*—the science of the heart, the capacity to see and feel and then to act as if the future depended on us.

Believe me, it does.

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### **March 15, 2005**

“A natural devotion: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s faith inspired his children's book”

By Michael Paulson, Globe Staff | March 15, 2005

MOUNT KISCO, N.Y. -- The first sign of devotion to St. Francis is right there in the driveway, a small statue on a stone wall standing like a sentry in front of the Kennedy home.

There's another statue in the backyard where four peacocks roam, a set of illustrations depicting scenes from Francis's life upstairs, and an icon in the den stashed among the water buffalo skull and the taxidermal blowfish and the dried skin of the giant anaconda that was beheaded in Colombia for eating a pet deer.

But the Franciscan iconography is just the most visible manifestation of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s devotion to the popular saint, a childhood hero transmitted from famous father to famous son beginning with that middle initial, F, for Francis.

Today, at 51, Kennedy is a big-shot environmental lawyer, a charismatic figure who dances on the edge of New York state politics, and who is now, for the first time, the author of a children's book, a biography of St. Francis of Assisi.

Kennedy inherits his public side from his fabled family -- he is, of course, one of 11 children left fatherless in 1968 when his dad, Robert F. Kennedy, was gunned down while running for

president. He is a nephew of President John F. Kennedy, assassinated five years earlier, and of Edward M. Kennedy, who has represented Massachusetts in the US Senate since 1962.

But there is a private side as well, a deeply devout Catholic who attends daily Mass, a blue state Democrat who prays nightly with his wife and six children and who doesn't need a consultant to help him talk passionately and convincingly about the role of faith in his life, a thoroughly modern man who is unashamed to talk about his old-world devotion to saints.

"At this point we're being sold role models like Donald Trump -- television is saying this is a guy that we ought to be apprenticing for and modeling our lives after," Kennedy said in an interview in the sprawling home here he acquired 21 years ago. "I think we need some positive role models as well, that stress what's important about life -- that we're not just materialistic beings, we're not just biological beings, we are spiritual beings as well. . . . It's tough living with one foot in the spiritual world and another foot in the material world, and the saints were people who showed us how to do that."

For Kennedy, the obvious role model is St. Francis, who in the early 13th century gave up a life of privilege to devote his life to preaching to the poor, and who has been designated the patron saint of ecology because of a deep connection to nature represented in stories that recount Francis preaching to birds.

Kennedy has devoted his own professional life to environmental protection, particularly as a fierce advocate for safeguarding New York's Hudson River. But he also has a deep connection to animals, particularly birds. As a child, Kennedy wanted to be a veterinarian; at 10, he picked up his fascination with falconry by reading T.H. White's "The Goshawk." Today he trains and hunts with red-tailed hawks, keeps an owl in his den, and is licensed to operate a wildlife refuge from his house, where he nurses injured and orphaned animals and birds back to health. Animals are everywhere, alive and deceased -- his property includes a mew, where hawks sleep, and a garage in which, on a recent visit, were the skin of a coyote that had been run over nearby and the shell of a leatherback turtle sent to Kennedy by his mother, Ethel. Kennedy said his mother's brothers were all hunters and fishermen; he confesses some conflictedness about his own willingness to kill and eat animals, saying, "I've kind of reconciled myself to the idea that an animal has given its life so that I can have a meal, but I'm ambivalent about it."

"To me, the environmental work is spiritual work -- we have a biological drive to consume the planet, to compete, and ultimately to destroy what God has created, and that can only be overcome with a spiritual fire," Kennedy said. "I don't think nature is God, or that we ought to be worshiping it as God, but I do believe it's the way that God communicates to us most forcefully."

#### Devotion to social justice

The estate where Kennedy grew up, Hickory Hill in Virginia, had a lot of Franciscan iconography, Kennedy said. Today not only does he have the statues and pictures, but his children each join him in reciting the prayer of St. Francis every night.

"Francis is the obvious saint for me because . . . he's a patron saint for me and for my family really, and I'm named after Francis," Kennedy said. "His love for animals and wildlife is

something that resonated with me from when I was a little kid, and then also, his devotion to social justice issues essentially is something that continues to have appeal to me."

Kennedy's book, titled simply "Saint Francis of Assisi: A Life of Joy," is being published this month by Hyperion Books for Children. The illustrator, Dennis Nolan, lives in Williamsburg, Mass., just north of Northampton, and teaches illustration at the University of Hartford. When Disney called Nolan to ask him to work on the book, it turned out the illustrator was about to leave to lead a painting workshop in Assisi, which was Francis's hometown.

Kennedy sees Francis as a historical figure who challenged both an out-of-touch church hierarchy and the influence of fundamentalism on the broader culture -- two issues he believes are very much present today.

"At the level of the hierarchy, at least in this country, what's happened to the Catholic Church has been disheartening to me, particularly with the pedophile scandals," Kennedy said. "I don't even blame the priests who were doing this, because they're pathetic creatures, but I do blame the bishops who were moving them around. . . . And then, when the whole thing exploded, some of these fellas put their own careers ahead of the institution, after putting the institution ahead of people, and that was really dismaying for a lot of Catholics who believe that the church is supposed to embody the teachings of Jesus Christ."

As he talked about the Catholic Church today, Kennedy leaned forward on his couch. He said he is content to focus on elements of the church that he loves, and that he considers many priests to be role models, but he is impatient with the church's leadership. Kennedy, who describes himself as "pro-life," appears particularly incensed by the argument put forward by some Catholic bishops that last year's Democratic nominee for president, Senator John Kerry, should have been denied Communion because of his support for abortion rights. "The debate was a silly one, to try to deprive people of their opportunity to get closer to God, when we should be encouraging people to get closer to God, and to commune with the community," Kennedy said.

Kennedy describes his parents as "extremely devout." ("We went to Mass daily from when we were kids, sometimes twice.") He says his parents had their children say daily prayers, grace before and after meals, read from the Bible, and attend retreats.

A recovered heroin addict, Kennedy describes his piety as a necessary way to keep himself on the right path. "I don't do it because I'm a holy person or a particularly good person, but because I've got a constant struggle going on in my head between doing good things and bad things, and I need a lot of help in order to do the right thing on a day-to-day basis," he said when asked why he attends daily Mass.

Kennedy, who has written books about the environment for adults, said he decided to write a children's book because he wanted something to read to his kids and he couldn't find a good book about saints. He is among an increasing number of celebrities who have tried their hands at children's books in recent years, including two of his first cousins, Maria Shriver and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg.

Children are everywhere in the Kennedy house -- the youngest, 3-year-old Aidan, sports a red streak of makeup on his forehead so he can look like Harry Potter, and points visitors to the owl, named Hedwig, after Harry's loyal pet. The house features a mix of memorabilia, including a stuffed Sumatran tiger shot by Sukarno and presented to Kennedy's father; a shrinelike table with photos of the late Michael Kennedy, who died in a skiing accident in 1997, and John F. Kennedy Jr., who died in a plane crash in 1999; a hallway lined with letters signed by famous Americans including Henry Clay, Andrew Johnson, John Tyler, and Earl Warren; and a stack of videos ranging >from "The Little Mermaid" to "Pirates of the Caribbean."

"The more I learn about fatherhood, the less I know," said Kennedy, whose children range in age from 3 to 20. "One of the central functions for me of parenthood is to try to imbue children with noble thoughts and heroic thoughts, and I think that you've got to give them role models who acted heroically during their lives and made sacrifices."

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Washington Jewish Week  
March 3, 2005

“To Be Young, Jewish and Green — Confab Draws Environmentally Aware Jews to DC”  
By Paula Amann

WASHINGTON, March 3 (JTA) — Visitors thronged the bima of Temple Emanuel in Kensington, Md., as Rabbi Warren Stone unrolled a Torah with a poignant story. The Jews of Slonim, Belarus, buried the scroll in a chest in a field outside the town during the 1920s when the Soviet regime quashed Jewish life there. Later, during the Holocaust, the invading German Nazis slaughtered most of the town's Jews and torched the Jewish quarter.

The Torah, unearthed by survivors in the 1990s, has found a home at Temple Emanuel. The story of the earth sheltering a Torah in time of danger seemed to resonate for this gathering of Jews bent on guarding the earth from human depredation.

The field trip to Temple Emanuel was part of this year's Jewish Environmental Leadership Institute, held mostly at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington this week. The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life sponsored the three-day meeting.

The youthful cast of its participants — most looked under 40 — seemed to signal a growing move toward ecology by North American Jews, said participants. From across the United States and Canada, COEJL conference-goers ranged from the secular to the observant, and included Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Orthodox Jews.

“It is incredibly exciting,” Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation of Bethesda, Md., said about the meeting, and about how young the participants were.

“More than any other aspects of Jewish life with which I’m involved, this both speaks to younger Jews and, in turn, gets helped by their presence and their energy.” Among the participants was Evonne Marzouk, 28, director of the recently created Orthodox environmental organization Canfei Nesharim (Wings of Eagles) and chair of the Green Group at Washington’s Congregation Keshet Israel. Her Orthodox congregation has just begun raising \$25,000 to clean up Israel’s Alexander Stream, which is both an important source of water and the soft turtle’s habitat.

While attuned to nature, the conference also addressed its global and political context. In a keynote address, “Against a Sea of Troubles: When Bad Things Happen to Good Planets (and What We Can Do In Response),” Rabbi Michael Feshbach said of last December’s tsunami, “The evil was not in the water, but the waste — the hoarding of resources, the disparity between rich and poor, the absence of protection so carefully cultivated an ocean to the east, the lives lost that could have been saved, all those people who did not need to die.” Feshbach is rabbi of the Reform Temple Shalom in Chevy Chase, Md.

Much of COEJL’s agenda this week turned on a pilot project backed by a trio of Jewish family foundations to help three New Jersey congregations build environmental programs. The Greening Synagogues program involves Conservative Congregation Agudath Israel in West Caldwell, Reform Congregation Sharey Tefilo-Israel in South Orange and Reconstructionist B’nai Keshet in Montclair. Talks are underway with an Orthodox shul, said COEJL’s executive director Adam Stern.

While the conference touched on environmental scholarship and education, sessions featured practical ways to translate green concerns into concrete practices. At a workshop on Greening Synagogues, panelist Mike Hansen, an activist in Cambridge, Mass., showed how to cut both energy waste and light pollution “by aiming and reducing intensity of exterior lighting.” Washington-area activist Bill Walsh of the Healthy Building Network urged congregations to use vinyl-free construction materials that match their mission. “Choosing a carpet can be a religious experience,” said Jewish environmental filmmaker Judith Helfand.

Attendees toured Temple Emanuel and Adat Shalom, both cited by the Environmental Protection Agency for their green policies. Quoting Helfand, a conference presenter, Dobb urged his fellow Jews: “Don’t just build a building — build a just building.” Asked how to persuade synagogue boards to spend funds on greening their buildings, Stone cited fiscal advantages. “We save money,” he said, adding that his synagogue monitors lighting, heating, cooling and energy efficiency in every room. “It’s to their benefit and they will save by thinking about these things,” he added.

Dobb, meanwhile, said he regretted the ways in which Adat Shalom’s construction fell short of its green values, noting that though leaders searched out building materials free of dioxin-generating polyvinyl chloride, in the end they resorted to composite tile, with 7.5 percent virgin vinyl. “I don’t know what I’d say to someone from Lake Charles, La., whose communities of color have cancer rates 10 times higher than the national norm, because of the vinyl industry,” Dobb said.

COEJL attendee Nili Simhai, 32, of Millerton, N.Y., who directs the Teva Learning Center, a Jewish environmental education center near the Berkshire Mountains, saw green issues as a draw for disconnected Jews. “While this was not our goal,” Simhai said, “we’re attracting people who are trying to find their niche in the Jewish community.”

Sitting across from Simhai at Monday’s lunch, Simcha Schwartz seemed a case in point. A Teva trainee, the Chicago-born Schwartz, 26, lives and works on an organic farm in Serenbe, Ga. He and his four Jewish partners in the venture sell most of their fruits and vegetables to nearby Atlanta’s Jewish institutions, he says. “If it wasn’t for Judaism’s natural context, I don’t think I would be as committed to my faith and Jewish practice,” Schwartz said. “Because we’re such an urban people, [Jews] don’t realize how connected the Torah is to nature.”

In his remarks, Feshbach questioned his own Reform movement’s omission of a passage about crops and rain and their dependence on human acts from Judaism’s central prayer, the Shema. In such places as Ethiopia, he suggested, war and deforestation seem to have caused or hastened erosion, drought and famine. “Might we actually have been wrong, to toss out the wisdom of our ancestors, in our rush to a rationality we only thought we understood?” Feshbach said. “We have more power than we thought — to till and to tend, to harm and to heal.”

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### **March 18, 2005**

“Church fights Alaska drilling: Episcopal bishop tells of threat to way of life of native ethnic group”

By Kevin Eckstrom

Religion News Service

March 18, 2005

WASHINGTON -- The bishops of the Episcopal Church, concerned about oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, dispatched an emissary to the U.S. Senate with a simple message: Leave our people--and their caribou--alone.

Bishop Mark McDonald of Alaska said President Bush's plan to allow drilling--which the Senate supported Wednesday in a 51-49 vote—would destroy the habitat of the native Gwich'in people, 90 percent of whom are Episcopalians.

The bishops, meeting in Navasota, Texas, had sent McDonald to Washington on Tuesday with a stern message that drilling would cause untold damage to "this unspoiled web of life" for the Gwich'in and the caribou herds on which they rely.

"To risk the destruction of an untouched wilderness and an ancient culture violates our theological mandate to be caretakers of creation," the bishops said in a statement from Texas.

McDonald appeared with Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) in support of her motion to deny Bush the \$2.5 billion in drilling leases that is part of the president's proposed 2006 budget. Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) is among those who support drilling.

Bush, who has made drilling in Alaska central to his energy policy, said last week that oil could be pumped "with almost no impact on land or wildlife." Skeptics contend there is far less oil under the tundra than supporters say.

There are about 7,000 Gwich'in people in the United States and Canada, McDonald said, and they predominate in about a dozen of the 50 parishes in his frontier diocese.

Episcopalians have frequently been the most outspoken faith group opposed to drilling in the refuge, in part because of their connection with the Gwich'in.

A Canadian missionary first spread the gospel among the Gwich'in in 1860 and within a decade had translated the Bible into the Gwich'in language.

The Gwich'in live in about 15 isolated communities along the migration paths of the 120,000-strong porcupine caribou herds. The herds provide food and income, and drilling in northeast Alaska would disrupt their herding and birthing grounds, McDonald said.

He argued there's an equal danger for indigenous rights for native peoples. "It's a clear case of where the environment and human rights are both at stake," he said in an interview. "There's no hiccup of a doubt about that."

Luci Beach, a Gwich'in and director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee, said the area is not just a pristine wilderness, but a sacred place held in high regard in native spirituality.

"This is a blessed place we've been given; how can we even contemplate desecrating this sacred place?" she asked.

The drilling proposal has become a key skirmish between Republicans and Democrats. GOP supporters inserted the provision into a budget document that is immune from a Democratic filibuster. Even with Wednesday's Senate vote, both chambers of Congress still must agree on a budget this year in order to stave off a future filibuster on the issue.

Victory for either side is far from clear. With many Alaskans—including the powerful Stevens--favoring drilling, McDonald conceded he has an uphill fight.

"To be for the Gwich'in and the [Arctic refuge] is not a popular position in Alaska," he said. "It's not always easy and certainly oftentimes hard."